

**Community Participation in Infrastructural Projects in Community Day
Secondary Schools in Chilumba Educational Cluster in Karonga District**

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**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Leadership and
Management**

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DECLARATION

I, Bruno Pilirani Julanthowa Katepeska, declare that the organisation and writing of this thesis is entirely my own and has been carried out at Mzuzu University under the supervision of Dr. M.M. Mdolo. It has not been, nor it is being concurrently submitted for any other degree than the Master of Education (Educational Leadership and management) of Mzuzu University.

All reference materials contained here have been duly acknowledged.

Signed



(Student)

Date : 3rd May, 2025

Signed _____

(Supervisor)

Date _____

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my only daughter, Felicity Tiyanjane, for enduring my physical absence and material deprivation due to my commitment to the studies; mum and dad for the seed of hard-working and responsibility they sowed in me; brothers and sisters for their speckled support.

ABSTRACT

It is undeniable that availability of adequate and good-quality school infrastructures is one of the factors that lead to high quality education. However, Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs), which outnumber conventional secondary schools in Malawi, have relatively poor infrastructures. This, among other factors, makes CDSSs compromise the quality of education they offer. Bearing in mind that the government alone cannot manage to provide adequate and relevant school structures to such schools, the need to actively indulge local communities in the same becomes imperative. In the light of this, this study was undertaken to investigate the extent to which local people take part in infrastructural projects in CDSSs in Chilumba Educational Cluster (CEC). The study adopted qualitative approach in the interpretive paradigm. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and documentary review. The researcher analysed the data thematically. The study revealed that local people were mainly engaged in school projects by contributing local materials and strategising some school projects through PTA and SMC. However, it was observed that in some projects, local people are not involved as an integral part and that some communities are not very keen to contribute to school development. Therefore, the researcher recommended that the government should seriously enforce the policy that funding agencies should actively involve local communities in all stages when carrying out school projects. Apart from this, the policy of community contribution to school projects should be strongly enforced.

Key words: asset based approach, community participation, participation, engagement, involvement, asset mapping and asset mobilisation.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	:	Area Development Committee
CDC	:	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
CDSS(s)	:	Community Day Secondary School(s)
CEC	:	Chilumba Educational Cluster
EDM	:	Educational Division Manager
EDOs	:	Educational Divisional Offices
EMIS	:	Education Management Information System
ESIP	:	Education Sector Implementation Plan
FGD(s)	:	Focus Group Discussion(s)
GVH	:	Group Village Headman
MoEST	:	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
NED	:	Northern Educational Division
NESP	:	National Educational Sector Plan
PTA	:	Parent-Teachers Association
SDF	:	School development Fund
SMC	:	School Development Committee
UNICEF	:	United Nations Children Education Funds
TA	:	Traditional Authority
VDC	:	Village Development Committee
VH	:	Village Head

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Action Group: A task force or pressure group that enforces different aspects of development in an area under a Group Village Head.

Area Development Committee: The body that spearheads different developmental activities in an area under a Traditional Authority (TA).

Assets: Skills, knowledge, experiences, talents and capabilities in individuals and communities.

Asset Based Approach: An approach that emphasizes the use of local assets to promote positive social change.

Asset Mapping: refers to identifying local skills, talents, lived experiences and capabilities to bring about positive change in a society.

Asset Mobilisation: involves putting together the identified local capacities to sort out community problems.

Community Participation or Engagement: The practice of involving stakeholders in issues that interest or affect them.

Parent-Teacher Association: A body that connects teachers and parents and oversees macro construction projects in schools.

Participation or Engagement or Involvement: The act of taking part in an activity.

School Development Management: The body that looks at how teaching and learning occurs in schools and also spearheads minor construction and rehabilitation of school structures.

Stakeholders: People or a group of people who have interest in an issue.

Village Development Committee: A body that champions developmental issues in areas under Group Village Head.

Village Head: A person in charge of a village. This paper has disregarded traditional seniority like Principal Group Village Head, Senior Group Village Heads, Group Village Heads and Village Heads and considered all these as Village Heads as they all manage a village regardless of its size.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is a general overview of a study on community participation in infrastructural projects in CDSSs in Malawi. The chapter includes study background, problem statement, purpose, objectives, rationale, significance, limitation and delimitation of the study.

1.2 Background information

Community engagement is a process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest or similar situation to address issues affecting their well-being (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1997). Similarly, Kintz (2011) views community participation as including both the processes and activities that allow members of an affected population to be heard, empowering them to be part of the decision making processes, and enabling them to take direct action on educational issues. This implies that community participation is generally about involving community members in solving problems that affect them directly or indirectly.

Community participation is generally based on the understanding that development initiatives should be community-driven, adaptable to the local context, use local assets and engage all local people (Kintz, 2011; Haggins, Valerio, Larkins & Ferry, 2013). This helps to infuse into the community the ownership spirit over the initiatives and eventually makes such initiatives sustainable.

It is viewed that policy makers, educators and all stakeholders involved in education should seek ways to utilise limited resources efficiently and effectively in order to identify and solve problems in the educational sector and provide quality education to all children (Uemura, 1999). The efforts have contributed to realising the significance and benefits of community participation in education, and have recognised community participation as one of the strategies to improve access to education and its quality (Uemura, 1999). This proves the point that communities have an important role to play in identifying and resolving problems in the educational sector. It is for this reason that community engagement in education is now widely accepted as a standard best practice in addressing barriers to education and is therefore becoming an integral component of most educational improvement initiatives (Kintz, 2011).

School infrastructures and sanitation have direct impacts on access, quality, efficiency and equity of education. Good infrastructures and sanitary facilities are vital tools in attracting student attendance especially girls (MoEST, 2018). However, inadequacy of and inferior educational infrastructures is one of the challenges facing the education sector in Malawi (MoEST, 2008). For example, in 2016 classroom pupil ratio in primary schools was 122.0 and in 2017 it declined to 121.4 (MoEST, 2018) against the government target of 60:1 (MoEST, 2015). In secondary schools, the national student permanent classroom ratio has been increasing from 54.8 in 2013 to 63.2 in 2016 and declined to 58.7 in 2017 (MoEST, 2018) against the government target of 40:1 (MoEST, 2014). Much as high learner-classroom ratio can also be attributed to shortage of teachers among other factors, classroom deficit stands to be one of the major contributing factors. However, the classrooms deficit has the high potential of affecting the quality of teaching and learning. This is so not only because it causes students to be squeezed in the available classrooms but also makes some schools to have lessons in temporary structures and in open air (MoEST, 2014). Since such environments are not conducive to teaching and learning, the quality of education is greatly compromised.

Furthermore, traditionally, the Malawian school set up includes houses for teachers. As student enrolment increases, more teachers are required per school, implying that more houses are needed. The need has now stifled the government capacity to provide accommodation to all teachers. For example, in primary schools, by 2014, there were a total of 56,534 teachers against 14,267 houses. Similarly, there were a total of 11,701 teachers against 3,416 teachers' houses in secondary schools by 2014 (MoEST, 2015). As such, teachers are forced to look for their own accommodation outside school perimeters. However, most sites for schools are far from areas where such accommodation can be sought. Long walking distances for teachers bring in the problem of unpunctuality to school and sometimes leads to absenteeism especially during rainy season (MoEST, 2015). Over and above this, many teachers especially in rural areas can hardly find houses which they can rent in the vicinity of the schools (MoEST, 2015). However, shortage of teachers' houses is a serious factor affecting availability of teachers in many schools. For instance, most teachers, especially newly deployed ones, are usually very averse to go to schools which have no houses (MoEST, 2018). As a result, such schools are likely to suffer from shortage of teachers since accommodation becomes a great challenge. This therefore affects the quality of education in such schools as they do not have adequate and well-qualified teachers.

The problem is worse in CDSSs. These unconventional schools were introduced in 1998, replacing Distance Education Centres (DECs), in an attempt to increase access to formal secondary school education in the country (Republic of Malawi, 2007). However, despite the fact that CDSSs are in majority, the schools provide low quality education (Republic of Malawi, 2007). This is partly a result of infrastructural problems facing the schools. The schools do not have adequate classrooms, and those few that are available are overcrowded. Further to that, the schools suffer shortage of teachers' houses and they lack library and science laboratory facilities (Republic of Malawi, 2007). It is therefore imperative that decision makers should take as a priority to provide relevant and standard infrastructures in the schools if quality education is to be attained.

For any meaningful infrastructural development to be achieved in CDSSs, there is need for adequately funding such projects. Depending solely on the government as the financier will not be realistic if we pay cognizance to economic hurdles most third world countries including Malawi are facing. In this respect, it is necessary to move towards a collaborative model, where communities play a supportive role to the government in its attempt to provide education (Williams, 1994). It is therefore not surprising that governments are increasingly recognising the value of working with communities and sharing responsibility for and ownership of educational system because communities can be effective tools for developing solutions to their particular situation (Kintz, 2011).

It is against this background that the study was designated to find out how local residents in CEC are engaged in addressing the problem of shortage of and sub-standard school structures in CDSSs.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Most schools, both primary and secondary, in CEC are facing the challenge of deficiency of and poor school infrastructures. For example, most schools have inadequate and/or poor classrooms, teachers' houses and sanitary facilities. Some schools do not have libraries and laboratories at all. This ultimately affects the teaching and learning process as pointed out earlier on. This is where communities are expected to come in and offer assistance. When actively engaged, community members can mobilise resources to contribute towards infrastructural development upon realising that these schools educate their children (Dekker, 2010). Besides, it is the Malawi's government policy that community should contribute 25 % of resources to a project, with contributions of labour and materials valued at their market rates

(Rose, 2003). In view of this, school administrators through school committees are expected to mobilise and influence local people to meet the demand. To effectively do this, school managers should adopt distributed leadership model which considers a group as a system which comprises different sectors in a community. In this regard, all local people need to be involved in promoting school development. Local people's involvement ranges from mere contribution of local materials to contribution of ideas in making decisions regarding school development. This calls for school managers through the school committees to identify and mobilise local capacities in promoting school development. However, some communities in CEC are not positive enough to take part in infrastructural development of their local schools.

In the like manner, some schools in the area have received funds from donors to undertake some construction projects. More often than not, local people have shown the tendency not to care for such donor-funded projects, and where the funding partially covers the requirements, the incomplete structures have remained in such a state for a long time hence defeating the purpose of such projects. This only confirms that communities lack a sense of ownership for such projects.

It is therefore a wonder how funding agencies involve the locals in such projects. As Berg, Melaville and Blank (2006) maintain, if community members are meaningfully involved in school projects, they develop ownership spirit which in turn brings a sense of responsibility. This eventually leads to caring for school infrastructures. A responsible community even makes efforts to provide the required infrastructures. Failure of local communities to take part in school development and failure to take care of the available school infrastructures makes the schools continue having shortage of and poor school infrastructures. This in turn lowers the quality of education offered in the schools.

It is against this background that the researcher sought to investigate how local residents are involved in infrastructural projects in CDSSs in CEC in an attempt to address the problem of deficit of and poor school infrastructures in the area so that eventually recommendations could be made on how to redress the challenging situation.

1.4 Purpose of the study

This study explored ways in which local people are engaged in infrastructural projects in CDSSs in CEC so that recommendations could be made on how best local residents could be used to resolve the problem of infrastructures common to such a category of schools. To achieve this

general objective, the main research question was: To what extent are local people engaged in infrastructural projects in Community Day Secondary Schools in Chilumba Educational Cluster?

1.5 Objectives of the study

This study sought to:

1. Investigate ways in which local residents in CEC are engaged in infrastructural projects in the CDSSs.
2. Examine factors that affect local people in CEC to get involved in infrastructural projects in CDSSs.
3. Find out what can be done to improve participation of community members in infrastructural projects in CDSSs in CEC.

1.6 Significance of the study

The findings of this study will help to unveil that community participation in school infrastructural projects leads to sustainability of the constructed structures. This happens as local people when involved in school development, they assume ownership spirit over the constructed structures. This eventually makes them care for the structures hence making them sustainable. Similarly, the results of the study will enable office bearers to make local people to be a solution to the problems of infrastructures facing their local schools. Eventually, this can help to solve the problem of shortage and poor infrastructures characterising CDSSs in the country. This in turn is expected to improve the quality of education offered in this category of schools. This is possible since it will enable the schools to have good student-classroom ratio and the schools can attract and retain more productive work force when teachers' houses are abundant and in good state. Over and above this, the results of the study will add substance to the existing literature in the field of community participation in general and community participation in educational projects in particular.

1.7 Theoretical framework: asset based theory

This study was guided by asset based approach as a theoretical lens. The use of the theory was justifiable as it guided the researcher in collecting and analysing data on community participation in infrastructural projects in CDSSs in CEC. Application of the theory can help

office bearers in schools to actively involve local people when embarking on school infrastructural projects. This can be a product of the realisation that local people have valuable assets which if systematically identified and tapped can help to solve the problem of school infrastructures facing their local schools.

Assets refer to factors or resources which are used to promote positive health and social change (Foot and Hopkins, 2010; Glasgow Centre for Health Population, 2012). Assets fall into such categories as local residents, local associations, local institutions, physical or natural assets and local economies (Kretzmann and McKnight, 2005; Greenthan, 2010; Foot and Hopkins, 2010). According to Foot and Hopkins (2010), local residents' assets include personal skills, knowledge, passion, interest and lived experiences.

An asset based approach is about developing communities from inside out by focusing on strengths, abilities, capabilities, skills, resources, knowledge and lived experiences that are already existent in a local context for positive change (Ryan , 2008). Mathie and Cunningham (2005) add that asset based approach operates on the premise that neighbourhoods can drive the development process themselves by identifying and mobilizing existing, but often unrecognized, assets thereby responding to and creating local opportunities for positive change. The authors perceive asset based approach as focusing on the positive side of individuals and communities to address community problems. This shows that asset based approach appreciates the fact that much as communities have problems or deficiencies, they also have capabilities to sustainably solve the problems they encounter. This theory, therefore, fitted in the study which was based on this very same understanding that local people can be useful tools to solve the problem of shortage of and/or poor school infrastructures if they are actively involved in school development.

Considering the wideness of the theory, the study zeroed in on the use of local residents as assets of the communities under study to sort out infrastructural problems in their schools. Bearing in mind that local people participate in school projects through PTAs and SMCs, and that they participate by contributing local materials, among other things, the study also incorporated local associations and physical assets. In other words, the study did not embrace the whole theory as it only included physical and local residents' assets as well as local associations.

1.8 Limitation and delimitation of the study

1.8.1 Limitation

Limitation identifies potential weaknesses of a study (Pajares, 2007). In the course of conducting this research, a few challenges were stumbled upon.

Firstly, in this study some questions touched on the performance of different respondents. This made them to have reservations in sharing their views openly. However, probes and follow-up questions were used to get a true picture of the issues under investigation.

Secondly, Senior Group Village Head (SGVH) of school A died soon after the study began. As such the person acting in this position was incorporated in the study to replace the deceased. This became a limitation as the acting SGVH was not conversant with some issues under investigation. Owing to this, the researcher had to triangulate some questions so that responses from other informants could cover up the created gaps.

The other challenge relates to applicability of the findings. The study was conducted in only two schools which are CDSSs in CEC in Karonga district. As such the findings of the study may not be applicable to other secondary schools. However, the findings do give an insight on the challenges associated with community participation in school projects and the possible solutions could be universal.

1.8.2 Delimitation

Delimitation addresses how a study is narrowed in scope or how it is bound (Pajares, 2007). This study was delimited to CDSSs not only because they are the ones facing much infrastructural problems but they are also directly controlled by communities. Similarly, despite a wide range of educational projects, the study focused on school infrastructural projects. This was done with an aim of unearthing experiences regarding ways in which communities handle such projects. This was viewed as an important step towards making recommendations on how to improve the problem of deficit of and poor school infrastructures common to CDSSs in CEC and Malawi in general. In this regard, the study dealt with almost all school infrastructural projects in the two schools in order to appreciate how villagers take part in a wide range of infrastructural projects in CDSSs.

1.9 Summary

In this chapter, what has been presented is the background to the problem, the problem statement, purpose, objectives, rationale, significance, limitation and delimitation of the study. Precisely, this chapter has shown that CDSSs are facing the challenge of shortage and poor school infrastructures. This in the long run, compromises the quality of education such schools offer. Therefore, the researcher wished to investigate how community participation in infrastructural projects could help in addressing the problem.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents what scholars have written on community participation by principally focusing on its meaning, principles, importance, levels and challenges in educational sector context. Furthermore, the chapter discusses asset based approach, the theoretical framework adopted in this study. Theories of leadership and management have also been discussed in this chapter. The reviewed literature has been organised thematically in order for readers to easily follow the discussion. In this paper, the terms community participation and community engagement have been used interchangeably.

2.2 Leadership and management theories

2.2.1 Leadership Theories

Leadership is a process and ability to mobilise and influence others to accomplish a common goal (Jayner, 2001). To achieve this end, leaders use different styles. Several theories of leadership have been developed in an attempt to explain complexities of leadership styles which different leaders employ. While many different leadership theories have emerged, most can be classified as one of eight major types which are discussed below.

2.2.1.1 Great Man Theory

Great man theories assume that the capacity for leadership is inherent, that great leaders are born, not made. These theories often portray leaders as heroic, mythic and destined to rise to leadership when needed (Amanchukwu, Stanley & Ololube, 2015). The term “great man” was used because, at the time, leadership was thought of primarily as a male quality, especially military leadership (Ololube, 2013).

2.2.1.2 Trait Theory

Similar in some ways to great man theories, the trait theory assumes that people inherit certain qualities or traits that make them better suited to leadership. Trait theories often identify particular personality or behavioural characteristics that are shared by leaders (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). However, sometimes there are inconsistencies in the relationship between leadership traits and leadership effectiveness. This gap led scholars to shift paradigms in search of new explanations for effective leadership. This led to development of modern theories of leadership discussed below.

2.2.1.3 Situational Theory

This approach sees leadership as specific to the situation in which it is being exercised. That is, the theory proposes that leaders choose the best course of action based upon situational conditions or circumstances (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). For example, whilst some situations may require an autocratic style, others may need a more participative approach.

2.2.1.4 Contingency Theories

This theory is a refinement of the situational viewpoint and focuses on identifying the situational variables which best predict the most appropriate or effective leadership style to fit the particular circumstances. Contingency theories of leadership focus on particular variables related to the environment that might determine which particular style of leadership is best suited for the situation (Lamb, 2013). That is, in light of the theory there is no leadership style which is best in all situations. Success depends upon a number of variables, including the leadership style, qualities of the followers and aspects of the situation.

2.2.1.5 Behavioural Theory

Behavioural theories of leadership are based on the belief that great leaders are made, not born. This leadership theory focuses on the actions of leaders, not on intellectual qualities or internal states. According to the behavioural theory, people can learn to become leaders through training and observation (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Naylor (1999) noted that interest in the behaviour of leaders has been stimulated by a systematic comparison of autocratic and democratic leadership styles. It has been observed that groups under these types of leadership perform differently.

2.2.1.6 Participative Theory

Participative leadership theories suggest that the ideal leadership style is one that takes the input of others into account (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). A manager who uses participative leadership, rather than making all the decisions, seeks to involve other people, thus improving commitment and increasing collaboration, which leads to better quality decisions and a more successful business (Lamb, 2013). Involving one's subordinates in decision making leads to ownership of the decisions made which in turn makes group members committed to the decisions.

2.2.1.7 Transactional or Management Theory

Transactional theories, also known as management theories, focus on the role of supervision, organization and group performance and the exchanges that take place between leaders and followers (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). These theories base leadership on a system of rewards and punishments (Charry, 2012). In other words, the theory lies on the notion that a leader's job is to create structures that make it abundantly clear what is expected of followers and the consequences (rewards and punishments) associated with meeting or not meeting expectations (Lamb, 2013). When employees are successful, they are rewarded and when they fail, they are reprimanded or punished (Charry, 2012).

2.2.1.8 Relationship or Transformational Theory

Relationship theories, also known as transformational theories, focus on the connections formed between leaders and followers. In these theories, leadership is the process by which a person engages with others and is able to create a connection that results in increased motivation and morality in both followers and leaders (Lamb, 2013). Relationship theories are often compared to charismatic leadership theories in which leaders with certain qualities, such as confidence, extroversion, and clearly stated values, are seen as best able to motivate followers (Lamb, 2013). Relationship or transformational leaders motivate and inspire people by helping group members see the importance and higher good of the task. These leaders are focused on the performance of group members, but also on each person to fulfilling his or her potential. Leaders of this style often have high ethical and moral standards (Charry, 2012).

2.2.2 Management Theories

Management is a process of working with or through others to effectively achieve organisational goals. Managers carry out their work differently and theories have been developed to help managers in the pursuit of their work. There are several management theories like Scientific Management, Classical Management, Bureaucratic Model, Administrative Management, Contingency, System and Human Relations Theories. However, this paper will focus on only three theories which are relevant to this study. These are Human Relations theory, System theory and Contingency theory.

2.2.2.1 Contingency Theory

This theory advocates that management approach should differ depending on the prevailing situation. According to contagious technique, the manager's job is to find which technique will

work in a particular situation, under particular circumstances and at what particular time (Themmozhi, n.d).

2.2.2.2 System Theory

This theory views an organisation as a unified, purposefully system composed of integral parts. This approach gives managers a way of looking at an organisation as a whole and as a part of a longer activity of every other segment. System theory states that the activity of any segment of an organisation affects in a varying degree the activity of every segment (Themmozhi, n.d).

2.2.2.3 Human Relations Theory

The theory advocates the importance of manager-worker relations in the pursuit of achieving organisational goals (Shanahan, 2018). In view of the theory, managers try all their level best to promote good relations with their workers if they are to increase productivity and efficiency of their workers. In this regard, managers should realise that salary and good working conditions are less important for employees. What matters most according to the theory is good relationships that obtains between managers and their subjects.

Some of the above discussed leadership and management theories are embodied in distributed leadership model. Suchlike theories include; system, participative, human relations and relationship theories. Essentially, distributed leadership boils down to allow small teams or individuals to decide how they want to accomplish their objectives, as opposed to simply executing the commands of a single superior (Spillane, 2006). In the like manner, Bennett et al. 2003 view distributed leadership as involving empowering people to take leadership at every level in an organisation. This entails that distributed leadership involves bottom-top approach where group members are given opportunity to contribute and participate in decision making and to establish concerted action. This enables all individuals to be responsible and accountable for their contributions to the collective result (Elmore, 2000). When applied to community participation, the model implies that local people should participate in solving their local problems. It is for this reason that this study was situated in distributed leadership model since the study rested on the fact that community members have the capability of solving the infrastructural problems facing their local schools. For this end to be realised, office bearers in the school need to use bottom-up approach so that they should be able to identify local priorities and capacities which can be used to sort out the problem of school infrastructures common to CDSSs in the country. In the same light, Asset Based Approach which guided the study was well-fitted in distributed leadership model. This was the case since like distributed leadership

model, asset based approach advocates the use every community member to sort out local challenges.

2.3 Community participation

2.3.1 Meaning of Community Participation

Different scholars have expounded community participation or community engagement from different perspectives. For example, Berg et al. (2006) conceptualise community engagement as a two-way street where a school, families and a community actively work together thereby creating networks of shared responsibility for students' success. Community participation can also be defined as the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest or similar situation to address issues affecting their well-being (CDC, 1997). Similarly, Kintz (2011) views community participation as including both the processes and activities that allow members of an affected population to be heard, empowering them to be part of the decision making processes, and enabling them to take direct action on educational issues. In all the definitions, one thing is common: the involvement of community members on issues affecting them. This entails that community participation is about involvement of local residents to solve problems that affect them directly or indirectly. In spite of the diversity of problems affecting the community, this study was narrowed down to the participation of community members in infrastructural projects in CDSSs.

2.3.2 Principles of Effective Community Participation

In this section eight principles of effective community participation are brought to light. The first principle is establishing and maintaining trust. Kintz (2011) argues that this is the foundation for all productive and mutually beneficial relationships. The importance of establishing trust applies to all parties engaged in the school environment. In this case, we may look at funding agencies and communities being bound in mutual trust. This may also apply to community representatives and community members at large (Kintz, 2011). Establishing and maintaining trust is an essential step in ensuring effective community participation since community members are reluctant to participate in developmental projects at a school when they have no trust in their representatives and/or teachers.

The second principle is community-driven initiatives. According to Kintz (2011), this implies that efforts to improve the school environment should arise from and led by communities

themselves. Haggins et al. (2013) add that community problems and solutions should be defined by the community. This calls for the need to consult all community members, including those that are excluded unadventurously. This will help to assess the situation as it stands, raise the community's expectations and develop a common purpose for the benefit of the community at large. As a matter of fact, community members need to participate in all aspects of the initiative; assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects in their community to ensure genuine ownership and long-term sustainability (Haggins et al. 2013). In this regard, external parties can provide assistance in terms of facilitating community initiatives only and not controlling the process or being directive for effective outcomes (Kintz, 2011). This indisputably enables communities to take an active role in solving their problems. This study was based on this very same conviction that local people can be reliable machinery in redressing the problem of insufficient and/or poor school structures in the country.

The third principle is the need for inclusive engagement strategies. This means that development partners should actively seek to involve all groups in the community, with particular emphasis on the inclusion of women and other marginalised groups like ethnic and religious minorities, refugees, and those living with HIV/AIDS (Kintz, 2011). Haggins et al. (2013) support Kintz's view by arguing that diversity in terms of culture, experience, education and economic status needs to be considered in the planning, designing and implementing community engagement approaches. Kintz(2011) also suggests that there is need to include such groups as religious leaders, youths, and private sector representatives who are not necessarily parents. In other words, Kintz and Huggins et al. are suggesting that all members of a community need to be involved in educational initiatives. This principle is in line with this study which views every community member as having assets which can collectively contribute to effectiveness of school projects.

The fourth principle is seeking and sustaining cooperation with local government to enhance program sustainability. According to Kintz (2011) this is based on the fact that long-term sustainability of education improvements often depends on cooperation of local leaders. Coordination with local government, community leaders and other implementing agencies operating in a local area is also important as community members may be hesitant to engage in programs initiated by outside agencies unless they know that the local leadership has been consulted and has given its approval (Kintz, 2011). This means that funding agencies should

work hand in hand with local leaders in educational initiatives to increase local people's buy-in and to make the initiatives sustainable.

The fifth principle is capacity development or capacity building. Kintz (2011) argues that this involves training community members in specific skills like participatory planning, project design and management, and financial management. This gives community members opportunities to expand their existing skills and acquire new skills as well as increased confidence needed to participate, plan, manage and evaluate community projects. This in turn leads to long term sustainability of the projects as local people are able to manage them effectively. It should be pointed out that while it is important to make use of existing capacity, it is equally essential to put efforts and resources into building the capacity of stakeholders since lack of capacity is one of the obstacles to sustainability of projects (The MDG Center for East and Southern Africa, 2007). In this case, it is essential that school administrators and local leaders are trained on project management for them to fruitfully carry out their work. Besides, capacity building enables community members to take greater levels of responsibility.

The sixth principle is flexibility in approach that allows adaptation to local contexts. Kintz (2011) maintains that this focuses on adapting a particular model to local context and circumstances to increase the likelihood of community ownership while also adapting community plans to fit a change in circumstances within that community. This is based on the understanding that communities are organic and differ widely hence their community engagement in education should take different forms depending on specific circumstances, needs, beliefs and goals in a particular community (Kintz, 2011). This entails that solutions to problems in a particular community should depend on the prevailing circumstances rather than copy-pasting models from other contexts as what works successfully in one environment may not work in the same way in a different context. Thus, Haggins et al. (2013) conclude that community engagement strategies, plans and products should change depending on the feedback received.

Another principle is use of community assets. Haggins et al. (2013) maintain that community engagement should focus on identifying and mobilising community assets, resources and strengths. This is based on the understanding that communities are rich in assets which can be used, if identified, to solve problems that have been identified in a particular community.

The last principle is long-term commitment required for genuine community ownership of educational initiatives (Kintz, 2011). Huggins et al. (2013) agree with this and suggest that sustained community commitment can be realised by building capacity of those involved and allocating sufficient resources. This can help to sustain the commitment of community members as they are equipped with necessary resources, skills and knowledge to carry out their assigned roles.

2.3.3 Levels of Community Participation

This section discusses five levels or spectrum of community participation.

The first level is informing. This involves providing stakeholders with balanced and objective information to assist them to understand the problem, proposed solutions, what is going to happen or has happened (Chappel, 2008; Flint River Watershed Coalition, 2014). Rower and Frewer (2000) call this public communication and state that it involves flow of information from the sponsor to public representatives. This level engages community members in a passive way as they are reduced to nothing more than mere recipients of top-down information. However, it should be noted that if properly used, this level can enable local residents to voluntarily participate in a project having being given all the necessary information (Kintz, 2011).

The second level is consultation. This involves obtaining input and feedback from community members to help in identifying needs and assets, set priorities or make decisions (Health Communities Consortium in Mirza, Vodden & Collins, 2012; Rower and Frewer, 2005). Mnarana (2010) adds that at this level of participation, external professionals define both problems and solutions, and local people are consulted such that problems and solutions are modified in the light of people's responses. That is to say, this level involves flow of information from public representatives to sponsor. This level also makes community members participate in educational enterprises passively as they are reduced to mere providers of information which development agencies can use to alleviate community problems. That is, much as the level considers locals as valuable sources of information, it falls short as it leaves them out in planning, implementation and evaluation of their priorities. Mnarana (2010) in agreement to this argues that at this level, a community is denied the ability to decide, implement and responsibility as such they become passive recipients of decisions made by others.

The third level is involving. This is a participatory process designed to help in identifying issues and views to ensure that their people's concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to decision making (Chappel, 2008; Flint River Watershed Coalition, 2014). This implies that at this level, community members are actively involved in issues affecting them since they have a role to play in identifying their priorities.

The fourth level is collaboration or interactive participation. At this level, stakeholders are partnered with funding agencies in each aspect of decision making process including development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solutions (MooraBool Shire Council, 2007). Sullivan-Owomoyela and Brannelly (2009) call this structural participation and argue that at this level, a community is engaged as an integral part of a project, and its participation becomes the ideological basis for the project itself. As such, people participate in joint analysis and development of action plans using local institutions (Mnaranara, 2010). In this way, external agencies and local people work hand in hand in every aspect of a project. According to Mnaranara (2010), this form of participation enables people to take control over local decisions and determine how resources are used. This according to Mnaranara (2010) promotes a spirit of self-reliance which helps to break the mentality of dependence which characterises most of community developmental projects. This study is based on the same tenet that local residents have the potential which can be used to solve the problem of school infrastructures common in the country.

The last level of community engagement is empowering. This involves providing support to enable community members to define issues and create solutions: community members lead and control the process (Bracknell Forest Partnership, 2013). This level is characterised by placing final decisions in the hands of the stakeholders (MooraBool Shire Council, 2007). This can be done through community coalitions, citizen committees and neighbourhood associations (Health Communities Consortium in Mirza et al., 2012). In a school setting, this is mainly done through PTA and SMC. This form of participation values local talents and skills and acknowledges their capacity to be decision makers in their own lives (Chappel, 2008). However, this level of engagement can hardly be effective to communities which have not mastered project management skills. Thus, it is crucial that development agencies should equip local people with project management skills, among other things, to enable them effectively manage community projects.

It can therefore be concluded that the degree of community participation increases as we go down the ladder. In light of this study, involving, consulting and empowering communities are viewed as effective ways of engaging local people in an attempt to enable them address the problem of shortage of and poor school infrastructures in the country.

2.3.4 Importance of Community Participation

Different scholars have acknowledged the significant role played by the participation of community members in public work in general and in education in particular.

Firstly, it promotes sustainability of projects. In this light, Mirza et al. (2012) argue that stakeholders and citizens are more likely to assume responsibility of implementing a plan if they had a say in its development. Berg et al. (2006) add that when community members are engaged in educational projects, they have ownership spirit over such projects. This, in turn, creates a sense of responsibility towards the projects. This shows that when local people are involved in addressing their problems, they assume ownership of the initiatives hence they take care of the realised structures. Besides that, community engagement creates a self-reliance attitude which helps to maintain programs even if external interventions are stopped (Lovell, 1992). This in turn makes the projects sustainable.

Secondly, it helps communities to be part of solutions to their problems. It has been argued that complex issues do not have simple solutions hence a community of interested and affected citizens must take part in identifying appropriate solutions (Lenihan, 2012). This is based on the understanding that community members have valuable assets that can be used to identify and implement solutions to problems in their communities. Thus, leaving them out in the identification and implementation of the solutions may make such initiatives ineffective and unsustainable. Besides, involvement of members of the local communities in identifying solutions to their problems leads to contextual planning as community residents know their local contexts better than outsiders (Kent, 1981). This creates more viable solutions as problems that look unsolvable at a national level can be managed at a school level (Kintz, 2011). This means that when local residents are involved in strategising community initiatives, there is high likelihood of having successful projects as they take into account prevailing local factors which outsiders tend to overlook.

Community participation also helps to effectively utilise limited resources. In support of this, Uemura (1999) argues that although some communities have historically been involved in their

children's education, it hasn't been fully recognised that communities themselves have resources to contribute to education, and that they can be resources themselves by providing local knowledge for their children. Kintz (2011) is in harmony with this and asserts that even countries living in entrenched poverty have intellectual, physical, social and material resources that they can leverage to support educational initiatives. This implies that despite the fact that communities have problems, they have positive aspects which have to be identified and mobilised to solve community problems, educational ones inclusive. Members of local communities willingly contribute these resources usually when they have a sense of ownership and an understanding that the programme is for the betterment of their children and the community at large (Kintz, 2011). This illustrates that local people have the capabilities which have to be identified and mobilised to sort out the problem of school infrastructures in the country. This understanding forms the basis of this study.

Apart from this, community participation helps to increase accountability. Uemura (1999) asserts that parental involvement in education, particularly so in school governance, is seen as a means of making schools more accountable to the society which funds them. This is so because community members through PTA and SMC are able to know how school funds are used. Kintz (2011) states that accountability to stakeholders increases quality. This is the case as community members feel committed to educational initiatives when they are convinced that school funds are used as required. Similarly, when there is accountability, there is no misuse of funds and materials. For this reason, there is no compromise to the standards of school structures since materials are used effectively and efficiently.

Finally, community participation promotes cooperation among members. Kintz (2011) contends that the process of community engagement can strengthen community relations as it brings together people of different backgrounds. Issues of gender bias are also addressed as men and women work as partners in such projects.

2.3.5 Challenges and Limitations of Community Participation

There are several challenges and limitations surrounding community engagement and this section will look at some of them.

The first challenge is the exclusion of some traditionally marginalised groups. Kintz (2011) argues that some marginalised groups like women, minorities, youths and children are excluded from decision making process due to the deep-rooted prejudicial attitudes towards them. This

often limits their freedom to participate in community-wide initiatives. Uemura (1999) concurs with Kintz and maintains that even though marginalised and minority groups like females, landless and lower caste people may be physically present during discussions, they are not necessarily given chance to express their views to the same degree as others. However, the exclusion of some community groups in decision making process makes community projects susceptible to ineffectiveness as the success of any project is very much dependent on collaborative effort. Consequently, this study emphasised on the involvement of every community member in school infrastructural initiatives since each one of them has inherent assets which can contribute to the success of such projects if there is a very good collaboration.

The second challenge is entrenched power structures. Kintz (2011) contends that some local leaders are reluctant to share power and in some cases they are motivated by a desire to receive kickbacks or other unfair benefits from their participation in the partnership. In other words, there is unequal access to participation in bodies such as SMCs and PTAs according to socio-economic status, race, caste, social class, location, political affiliation and gender (Dunne et al., 2007). It is on this conviction that Crewe and Harrison (1998) state that community initiative approaches are designed based on false assumptions that communities, groups or households are homogenous, or have mutually compatible interests forgetting that differences occur in respect to age, gender, wealth, ethnicity, language, culture, and race. This shows that some influential individuals dominate the participation process thereby leaving out other members as passive participants. This study proved that this predisposition is wrong as every community member ought to be viewed as an asset and can therefore positively contribute towards sustainable change in communities if there is partnership.

The third constraint is learned helplessness or apathy. Kintz (2011) maintains that continually funded communities develop a dependency syndrome as they fail to take initiatives to solve community problems since they expect external agencies or government to do everything for them. Apart from this perception, they may also just accept a situation as it is. This implies that lack of community participation can make local people lazy and parasitic. This study emphasized on the contributions of local people to solve infrastructural problems in their local schools. In other words, the study has argued against the dependency on external support so that community members can be empowered to take an active role in solving the problems they face.

The other constriction is sustained poverty that may initially limit participation. According to Kintz (2011), illiteracy, lack of economic or material resources and ill-health are some of the contributors to sustained poverty that can limit community members' participation in community-wide plans. Kintz maintains that this is so because individuals are focussed on their daily survival hence are unable to set aside time, energy or resources needed for engaging in long term plans. This makes sense as everyone intrinsically focuses on personal issues first before thinking of sorting out broader problems. It is therefore important that meaningful approaches should be employed to convince community members to take part in educational initiatives despite their commitments to personal issues.

Parental reluctance to participate is another challenge. Many rural families do not see the relevance of education to their lives hence their disinclination to partake in educational enterprises (Kintz, 2011). Rockel (2008) states that this is so due to time constraints, lack of knowledge and resources as well as language or cultural barriers. In this respect, parents need to be empowered to take charge of educational development with an aim of promoting high quality education for their children.

Initial challenges may also cause constraints in participation. Kintz (2011) holds that cultivating participation spirit takes time especially in the early stages due to lack of or limited experience in implementing developmental schemes. For instance, Vision Action, an international NGO, and the Local Chapter Forum for African Women Educationists (FAWE) working together in Liberia indicated that it was not uncommon to spend a year or more in a community before a project began to gain trust and a better understanding of the local environment (Kintz, 2011). This calls for endurance and training on project management so that educational initiatives should be accepted by community members.

The other challenge is dependence on external resources. Experience has shown that many public schools depend much on donor aid to embark on school construction projects. Nevertheless, Kintz (2011) contends that to promote sustainability of community projects, members should depend much on internal resources. When local people contribute local materials, they develop a sense of responsibility towards the constructed structures thereby making such projects sustainable. No wonder, it is the government's policy that communities must contribute 25% for educational projects. This is mainly in form of provision of local materials like sand and bricks. This implies that dependence on external resources as is the case in many public schools weakens local people's ownership spirit and therefore there is absolutely

no responsibility over the constructed projects. This in turn makes such projects less sustainable. However, this is not to deny the fact that external resources are needed to supplement internal resources where necessary.

Finally, lack of teacher and school leadership support in promoting parental and community engagement in school decision making are also viewed as significant barriers for effective participation (Afridi, Anderson & Mundy, 2014). Usually, schools involve parents only if there is a problem with a child's behaviour or performance (Rockel, 2008; Marphatia, Edge, Legault & Archer, 2010). While appreciating the role of parents in the discipline of students, parental involvement should go beyond that by looking at the environment in which their children learn.

In an attempt to solve problems associated with community engagement, Uemura (1999) suggests the following solutions. The first one is to understand the nature of the community. This helps to successfully carry out community participation ventures as it enables all prevailing factors to be considered in strategising community participation. Secondly, agencies responsible for promoting community involvement need to understand the importance of the same and communities should understand the importance of collaborating with schools and the resultant benefits. Furthermore, there is need to promote financial capability, technical skills and knowledge to run schools. This can help to successfully manage school projects. Finally, there must be political will to cooperate with the funding agencies responsible for implementing the efforts of community residents in addressing the problems they face.

2.3.6 Community Participation in Educational Projects in Malawi

Having looked at broad community participation, it is important to now zero in on community participation in educational infrastructures in Malawi.

In Malawi from the commencement of formal education, self-help was recognised as important by both Missions and the colonial administration. This was essentially done with the aim of supplementing the insufficient resources available in education as well as of making people more involved in the education of their children (Rose, 2002). Community participation was mainly in form of contribution of labour and local materials like bricks, stones and sand. However, self-help projects were mainly in rural areas due to the assumption that self-help was difficult in urban areas. Thus, public resources were prioritised to promote school development in urban areas. This has contributed to uneven development of schooling opportunities which have continually favoured urban areas (Rose, 2002).

During the reign of Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Youth Week System was used to construct and rehabilitate socio-economic infrastructures like roads, hospitals and schools (Phiri, 2000). This saw the construction of several classrooms and teachers' houses in the country. The work was spearheaded by Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP) who equipped the youth with various skills which opened their employment windows. However, Youth Week System was abolished after the dawn of democratic era in 1994 (Phiri, 2000).

Currently, parents continue to contribute to school development principally by contributing local materials like bricks, sand and stones (Dekker, 2010). It is the government policy that local communities should contribute 25% of total development cost of a school project. This is mainly in form of contributing local materials (Rose, 2003). School committees have also been instituted to be involved in making decisions in schools and in acting as a bridge between local people and local schools (Phiri, 2000).

In 2010, Mnarana carried out her study on community participation in primary school infrastructures in Tanzania. She found out that communities under her study area mainly participated in school development by contributing local materials. In the same year Dekker conducted a similar research in primary schools in Southern Malawi. The findings of Dekker were not far from that of Mnarana. The work studies of these two scholars were close to ours. However, their researches did not focus on CDSSs and they were not conducted in the Northern Region of Malawi. This justifies the necessity of conducting this study.

2.4 Summary

In this chapter, literature on community participation in education has been reviewed by mainly looking at its meaning, principles, importance, spectrum and challenges. Based on the literature review, it has been observed that much as a lot has been written on community participation in education in general, less has been done on community engagement in school infrastructural projects and in particular in infrastructural projects in CDSSs in Malawi. Closest to the study are the works of Mnarana and Dekker. Mnarana in 2010 did her research on community participation in primary school infrastructures in Tanzania. In the same year Dekker conducted a similar research in primary schools in Southern Malawi. As said earlier on, even the studies did not focus on community participation in infrastructural projects in CDSSs in Malawi. This shows that there is a gap in literature regarding community participation in infrastructural projects in CDSSs in the country. This necessitated this study so as to narrow the gap that exists

in literature on this neglected area while also making recommendations on improving infrastructural problems that schools in the area are facing.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines how this study was conducted. Precisely, the section describes the research paradigm, approach and design that the study adopted, including the study population, sampling techniques as well as ways of collecting, analysing and presenting data. The section

has also captured ethical issues that were followed in this study as well as approaches that were used to make the research valid and reliable.

3.2 Research paradigm

According to Dill and Romiszowski (1997), one of the functions of paradigms is to define how the world works, how knowledge is extracted from this world and how one is to think, write and talk about this knowledge. Generally, there are four commonly used research paradigms namely; positivism, interpretivism, pragmatism and critical research. However, this study was underpinned by interpretive paradigm. The main tenet of the paradigm is that reality can never be objectively observed from the outside; rather it must be observed from the inside through the direct experiences of people who live it day to day (Mack, 2010). That is, the ontological assumption of interpretive paradigm is that social reality is seen by multiple people who interpret events differently leaving multiple perspectives of an incident (Mack, 2010). This presupposes that reality is subjective rather than objective since people interpret social phenomena and construct meaning out of it differently.

According to Schwandt (2000), interpretive paradigm is ideal for research as it emphasises the goal of understanding the lived experiences from the point of view of those who live it day to day. Therefore, the researcher found this paradigm fitting this study which explored participants' views about ways in which local people are involved in infrastructural projects in CDSSs and the related experiences. This ultimately led to diverse viewpoints as each participant related his or her own experiences.

In this regard, positivism, which holds that reality exists absolutely (Creswell, 2009), fell short on this study. Furthermore, since the study chiefly used qualitative methods, positivism and post-positivism that mainly use quantitative methods, were not appropriate for this study. Similarly, critical paradigm which serves to emancipate oppressed groups and transforming existing power relations (Creswell, 2009) fell short on this study since this study did not intend to change the status quo nor was it set to liberate any group. Lastly, while appreciating that both pragmatism and constructivism seek to understand a phenomenon from the perspectives of the participants, the former was not adopted in this study as it uses mixed methods (Creswell, 2009). This is to say, since the study employed qualitative approach only, pragmatism which uses mixed methods was not relevant to the study.

Interpretive paradigm has commonly been challenged because its ontological assumption is subjective and abandons the scientific procedures, consequently making the results not to be generalized to other situations (Mack, 2010). While appreciating the criticism, the study employed the paradigm since it was meant to explore the subjective experiences of a small number of local people in order to get holistic and in-depth data on the topic under study. Generalising the findings, which is a central feature in quantitative research, was inapplicable to this study as it requires a large sample. This could have impeded deeper and holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study. It should also be noted that generalizability of research findings is not the only drive of research (Mack, 2010). This notwithstanding, the conclusions made were validated by cross-triangulating the collected data.

3.3 Research approach

There are three research approaches namely; qualitative, quantitative and mixed approaches. Nevertheless, this study employed qualitative approach.

In qualitative research, the focus is on understanding a given research problem from the perspectives of a local population (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2011) who have multiple perspectives. Correspondingly, the approach employs inductive data analysis where conclusions are made based on particularised views of respondents (Creswell, 2009). This approach therefore fitted this study which was destined to explore experiences of local people in CEC regarding their involvement in school infrastructural projects and conclusions were drawn based on the views of the participants. In this case, quantitative approach, which focuses on the use of statistical analysis to allow talking about how likely something is true for a given population in an objective and measurable sense (Creswell, 2009), was unsuitable to the study. This was so because the study did not aim at finding out the likelihood of a certain reality; rather it aimed at finding out how things happen as they do.

Furthermore, in qualitative research, the researcher is the chief instrument for gathering and analysing data (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). As the researcher was the one collecting and analysing data, the study was placed in qualitative approach.

Additionally, according to Silverman (2005), qualitative research tends to work with relatively small number of cases. Silverman further argues that qualitative researchers are prepared to sacrifice scope for detail. This suited this study which covered only two cases in order to get a

deeper understanding of community participation in school infrastructural projects in the study area. These cases were the two CDSSs in the study area.

Qualitative research has been criticised mainly because the results of the study may not be generalised to a larger population because the sample size is small and the participants are not randomly chosen (Hancock, Ockllefjord, & Windridge, 2007). Much as this cannot be denied, the study employed qualitative approach. This was done since the study was not meant to generalise the findings; rather it sought an in-depth understanding on the topic. This could be realised only through the use of a small sample. Hence, the researcher felt safe to use the approach. After all, as pointed out earlier, generalizability of research findings is not the only drive of research.

3.4 Research design

Research design is a plan that guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting observations (or data) (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992 as cited in Yin, 2009). Qualitative research designs include narratives, ethnographic, phenomenological, grounded theory and case studies. Nonetheless, the study employed case study design.

A case is defined as a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate more general principles (Nisbet and Watt 1984 as cited in Cohen et al., 2007). Rose, Spinks and Canhoto (2015) argue that a case can be relatively concrete like an organisation, a group or an individual, or something more abstract like an event, a management decision or a change or a program. In this study, the cases were two selected schools in CEC.

Case studies are strategies of inquiry in which a researcher explores a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals in depth (Creswell, 2009). Case studies can be singular or plural. Singular case studies examine one case while multiple or plural case studies examine more than one case but each case is studied as a singular case and then compared to other case studies (Yin, 2003). This study adopted multiple case studies. As pointed out earlier, the cases were the two selected CDSSs in CEC. Multiple cases were chosen in order to compare the findings from the two selected schools. Rose et al. (2015) support the stand by arguing that multiple cases allow triangulation of findings, which according to Yin (2009) is the major strength of case studies.

The researcher adopted case study design in order to get in-depth and holistic data about the phenomenon under study. Zainal (2007) supports the view by arguing that detailed accounts

are often produced in case studies to explain the complexities of real-life situations which may not be captured through experimental or survey research. Besides, case study helped the researcher to better understand the phenomenon under study as examination of data in case studies often occurs within the context in which an event takes place (Zainal, 2007).

As Yin (1994) noted, case study design has mainly been challenged because it provides very little basis for scientific generalisation since it uses a small number of subjects. While appreciating the criticism, the researcher felt it was safe and sound to use this design for the reason that the study was not meant to generalise the findings; rather it was set to investigate the topic under study in detail and holistically. For this end to be realised, case study design was thought to be necessary.

3.5 Study population, sample size and sampling techniques

3.5.1 Study Area and Population

The study was confined to CEC in Karonga district. Chilumba is under Traditional Authority Wasambo. The area is to the South of Karonga district; 70 Kilometres away from Karonga Boma and it is dominated by Tumbuka speaking people. The area has a total of eight secondary schools; six CDSSs, one district boarding secondary school and one conventional secondary school.

According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2005), careful selection of a research site helps to ensure success of a research study. In this light, the schools under study were selected on the basis of accessibility in terms of transport and communication. That is, it was easy to reach the chosen schools due to good transport system in the area. Communication was also easy as people in the area speak Tumbuka which is the researcher's first language.

CDSSs were chosen for investigation because as said before, this category of schools offers poor quality education partly due to compromised school infrastructures. This necessitated this study with the view that the recommendations could be used to address the challenges.

The area under study was chosen because the researcher had observed prior to the study that several schools in the area had the challenge of infrastructures. That is, most schools in the area were noted to have shortage of and poor teachers' houses, classrooms and sanitary facilities. Some schools did not have any libraries and/or laboratories at all. As a result, the researcher wanted to investigate the role of local people in straightening out this problem. Besides that,

some schools in the area have been lucky enough to have accessed donor-funded projects. This inspired the researcher to investigate the way local residents have been involved in such projects. The area was also chosen for convenience's sake since the researcher comes from the area.

This study incorporated only two CDSSs in the area in order to get holistic data on the topic under investigation. The choice of two schools was also meant to compare experiences in the schools which are in different contexts. Yin (2003) supports this view and argues that having more cases provides more convincing test than just one as it helps to explore similarities and differences of cases. For confidentiality's sake, the schools were only identified as school A and school B. The two schools were chosen based on their convenience as it has been explained on sampling techniques section.

In the chosen schools, the focus was on chairpersons of PTA and SMC, school administrators as well as traditional leaders as they are charged with the responsibility of making developmental decisions in schools. Ordinary people were also taken on board since they are the ones carrying out developmental projects in schools. The study also embraced the area's Traditional Authority (TA) who is also the chairperson of Area Development Committee (ADC). This was done because the body (ADC) champions developmental decisions regarding the distribution of Local Development Fund (LDF) which, among other things, is used to finance educational projects. Besides, the TA was chosen as he is the one who disciplines village heads and ordinary villagers who may choose to be evasive when it comes to communal responsibilities. As such, the researcher sought the TA's related experiences on the same. The two councillors in the area were included in the sample as they are responsible for local developmental issues, of which education is one of such crucial spheres. Both councillors in the area were chosen as the study was conducted in two different wards. Representatives of funding agencies were also incorporated into the sample in order to get an insight into how funding agencies involve local people in school construction projects. The researcher also sought to solicit experiences of the funding agencies as they work with local people in such projects. In this case, Coordinator of Change Her World in Chilumba and Director of Determined to Develop were consulted.

3.5.2 Profile of the Sampled Schools

School A has two streams and it has girls' boarding facilities while school B is single-streamed and without boarding facilities. Both schools do not have standard infrastructures. For example,

school A has ten teachers' houses but most of them are small and in bad condition. School B has only four houses that do not have electricity. Similarly, school A has two good conditioned classrooms, four poor conditioned classrooms and two classrooms under construction but the school is a double-streamed one. In school B, there are only four sub-standard classrooms. At school B, there is no laboratory and the library does not have adequate space for all learners. At school A, the library is also small and the laboratory is by all standards far from meeting minimum standards of a laboratory. In terms of toilets, school A has three toilets for girls' boarding, one for boys, one for day scholars and open girl students and one for teachers. At school B, there are only three toilets; one for teachers, one for girls and one for boys.

The infrastructural state of the schools corresponds with the findings of MoEST (2008) that shortage of and/or poor school infrastructures are some of the major challenges facing the educational sector in Malawi.

3.5.3 Sample Size

The study incorporated forty-five participants as follows: for each school, the study included Chairperson of PTA and SMC, one school administrator, one village head, a councillor and sixteen local people. This means that in each school, the sample size was twenty-one respondents. In addition to these, there was the TA of the area and two representatives of funding agencies. This added up to a sample size of forty-five respondents.

3.5.4 Sampling Techniques

A sample is a sub-group of a population or a representative test of a group (Letham, 2007). Letham also defines sampling as the ability of the researcher to select a portion of a population that is a true representative of the said population. This means that in sampling, a researcher has to choose study sites and participants using a certain technique or techniques. There are different sampling techniques but this study employed convenience, purposive and stratified random sampling techniques.

In convenience sampling, a researcher chooses a sample according to ease of access (Etikan, Abubakar, &Alkassim, 2014). The study area was chosen using convenience sampling as the researcher lives in the area. The cases were also chosen based on the fact that there were no hindrances in terms of transportation and communication.

Purposive sampling involves selecting a sample on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the population, elements and nature of the research (Babbie, 1990) or on the basis of the researcher's judgment of their practicality (Cohen et al., 2000). Besides the ease of transportation and communication, the study's cases were chosen using purposive sampling as the researcher intentionally wanted to compare local people's participation in the two schools which are in different contexts. In the same way, this study employed purposive sampling to choose PTA and SMC chairpersons, school administrators, traditional leaders and councillors. That is, the respondents were intentionally included into the sample as they were considered to have good knowledge about community involvement in school projects since they are the ones responsible for developmental issues in schools. Thus, in the two selected cases, the researcher calculatedly focussed on the aforementioned respondents in order to surface their lived experience regarding community participation in infrastructural projects in their neighbourhood school.

Stratified sampling, which involves assigning each member of the study population to a group or stratum and then selecting simple random sampling from each stratum (Latham, 2007), was used when choosing ordinary people. In this study, the strata included women, and men as well as parents with and without children in the schools under study. Village Heads of the two selected schools helped the researcher in identifying the ordinary people to be incorporated in the above-mentioned strata. Then the identified members in each stratum were given a number. Four men and four women with children at the schools and four men and four women without children at the schools were picked. The chosen respondents were then categorised into two Focussed Groups Discussions in each school. That is, each FGD comprised two men and two women with children at the school and two men and women without children at the schools.

3.6 Data collection

3.6.1 Pilot Study

A pilot study is a mini-version of a full scale study or a trial that is done in preparation for a complete study that is to take place (Gall, Gall, Borg, 2007). As Gall et al. (2007) suggest, the

researcher conducted a pilot study in order to practice researching skills, check the activity of guiding questions, and assess the feasibility of the topic and data collection instruments as well as to check how tape recordings work. In this regard, a pilot study involving PTA and SMC chairpersons of a certain school, and two focus group interviews with ordinary people was done prior to the main study. In order to yield equitable data, questions for pilot study were the same as those in the actual study (Gall et al., 2007). Likewise, the choice of the school and participants in the pilot study, ways of contacting them and interview procedures were similar to those in the main study.

The major challenge the investigator faced in the pilot study was failure to use probing questions which failed him to gather detailed information. The researcher also experienced difficulties in controlling the conversation especially when informants talked uncontrollably. This experience prepared grounds for the success of this study as adjustments were made in the main study based on the flaws experienced in the pilot study.

In the actual study, the researcher used such qualitative data collection techniques as semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The researcher preferred triangulating data collection methods in order to obtain authentic data.

3.6.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews, according to Ary et al. (2010), are a type of investigations where the area of interest is chosen and questions are formulated but the interviewer modifies the format of questions during the interview process. Semi-structured interviews are conducted on the basis of a loose structure made upon open-ended questions (Green, 2007) and yields detailed information as the interviewer uses probes which enable interviewees to elaborate their points or give more details (Hancock et al., 2007). As such, semi-structured interviews were chosen with the aim of getting in-depth information through asking open-ended and follow-up questions. Open-ended questions gave chance for respondents to express themselves in detail. As Borg and Gall (1989) put forward, the study also employed semi-structured interviews because they are reasonably objective and permit a more thorough understanding of the respondents' opinions. The flow of the discussions was controlled using interview guide and probes. Structured interviews which are rigid in structure and allow only yes or no answers (Creswell, 2009) did not fit the study as they could hardly lead to getting in-depth data. Similarly, unstructured interviews fell short on this study as unlike them, this study used interview guide.

One-to-one interviews were used to interview chairpersons of PTA and SMC, traditional leaders, head teachers, ward councillors, and representatives of funding agencies. This was done to get detailed information from each one of them. The one-to-one interviews also helped respondents to freely tell their experiences without any hindrance as this is not the case in focus group discussions (FGDs).

To get information from ordinary people, the researcher used focus group discussions. This was done to get a shared view of ordinary people on their experiences on how they are involved in infrastructural projects in CDSSs. The researcher conducted two focus group discussions in each school. Each focus group comprised of eight respondents. This was done because as Green (2007) argues, it may be difficult to sustain the discussion if the group is less than six, but also it may be difficult to control a group of more than ten interviewees. Each focus group deliberations originated one transcript since it was one interview.

Prior to interviews, the participants were contacted either in person or through phones. In both cases, when the sampled respondents consented that they would participate, appointments for interviews were made. Generally, all respondents were cooperative and nobody refused to participate in the study.

In both one-to-one and FGD interviews, the researcher used digital audiotapes for him to concentrate better on the discussions. Field notes were also taken in order to capture experiences during interviews. For example, field notes captured non-verbal cues in the event that the participant would get distracted, or would seem reluctant to discuss a subject area and get disturbed in the course of interviews as Mack et al. (2011) advocate. Similarly, brief notes about interviews were taken to act as back-ups in cases where audiotapes could malfunction. Before audio-taping the interview, consent was sought from the respondents and recordings were properly secured to prevent them from falling into wrong hands that might misappropriate them or reveal the contents to unauthorised people.

Interviews were chosen as data collection tools because they enable participants to express their own thoughts and feelings (Berg et al., 2006). However, the researcher was aware of the possibility that interviews make respondents say what the investigator needs or the opposite of that (Creswell, 2012). Having this in mind, the researcher used follow-up questions and triangulated some questions in order to generate objective data.

During the process of the interview, the investigator started by welcoming the participants and stated the purpose of the interview and objectives of the study that helped to form the ground of the study (McNamara, 2009). All interviews were started by reassuring the participants that the collected data was for the purpose of writing the thesis only. In this case, the participants were assured that everything discussed would be treated with utmost confidentiality and that their identities would remain anonymous, and when the study is over the recorded materials would be deleted (Gall et al., 2003; Gall et al., 2007; Cohen et al., 2007 & Kvale, 1996). As such in the write up, participants were either identified by their positions or just as participants, with no names, as a way of concealing their identities.

3.6.3 Document Analysis

In order to complement semi-structured interviews, documentary review was done. Document analysis broadly refers to various procedures involved in analysing and interpreting data generated from examination of documents and records relevant to a particular study (Schwandt, 2001). Despite their limitation, Ary et al. (2010) assert that documents provide good descriptive information, are stable sources of data and can help to ground the study in its context. As regards to the study, document analysis on minutes of PTA and SMC meetings in the two schools was done in order to cross-check information obtained through semi-structured interviews. This subsequently helped to have objective data. Before reviewing the documents, head teachers of the two schools were informed of the purpose of reviewing the documents in the study and they were assured of being treated with utmost confidentiality.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis means organising, accounting for and making sense of data in terms of participants' definition of a situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2008). It therefore follows that data analysis must be undertaken in order to measure understanding of data and enabling a researcher to present what has been learnt on others.

Data can be analysed qualitatively or quantitatively. However, the study used qualitative data analysis as it was a qualitative inquiry which uses words as opposed to numbers to arrive at conclusions. In this case, the study employed inductive data analysis as conclusions were drawn from the perspectives of the interviewees. Specifically, particularised views of the respondents were coded to generate themes from which generalised conclusions were drawn. In this respect, statistical analysis as employed in quantitative research could not be applicable to this study.

As Creswell (2009) advocates, the researcher followed the following steps in analysing the collected data qualitatively. In the first place, data was prepared for analysis by transcribing the interviews, typing field notes and arranging data. In this case, the researcher typed the transcripts and field notes, and kept them in computer files. After this process, the researcher read through all the data to obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning. Thereafter, there was a detailed reading of the data which resulted into coding the data. This was done by reading script by script to get similar topics which were then abbreviated as codes. Data under similar codes was put together thereby leading to generation of themes or categories which appeared as major findings and were used to create headings in the findings section of the study. The codes were numbers one to nine and these were eventually categorised into three themes namely; ways in which local people get engaged in school projects, factors affecting community participation in school projects and ways of improving community participation in school projects. Finally, the researcher interpreted the data by making sense of it and coming up with lessons learnt from it.

In the process of analysing data, the researcher was guided by asset based theory. In this regard, an attempt was made to see if ways in which local people are involved in school infrastructural projects in the study area run in parallel with the principles of asset based approach.

3.8 Trustworthiness and validity of the study

Unlike quantitative research which applies statistical methods of establishing validity and reliability of research findings, qualitative researchers use methodological strategies to make research findings valid and reliable (Noble & Smith, 2015). Qualitative reliability simply means the consistency of the researcher's approach across different researchers and different projects; it sometimes refers to the stability or consistency of responses (Gibbs, 2007). Qualitative validity refers to determining the accuracy of the findings from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of the account (Creswell and Miller, 2000). The authors also view validity as relating to trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility of the research findings.

The following strategies were employed to promote reliability of the study. Firstly, the researcher checked transcripts to make sure that they did not contain obvious mistakes made during transcription as (Creswell, 2009) puts forward. Secondly, the researcher made sure that there was no drift in the definition of codes and that there was no shift in the meaning of codes during the coding process. This was accomplished by constantly comparing data with the

developed codes. Lastly, the researcher used an *intercoder* to cross-check the codes so that the codes were not confused (Creswell, 2009).

In the same perspective, the following strategies were employed in this study to promote its validity. In the first place, before data collection, the researcher carried out pilot study in a certain school in CEC to test the chosen data collection instruments and to check the feasibility of the research topic.

Secondly, the researcher triangulated data sources (Creswell, 2009) where data from semi-structured interviews and reviewed documents was compared with the view to clear the findings of bias and exaggerations.

Thirdly, the researcher used member checking where part of the polished work was taken back to the participants to verify the findings as Green, (2007) recommends. This was done to make sure that the transcripts accurately captured the views of the respondents. As such when discrepancy occurred, the researcher conducted follow up interviews in order to clarify misunderstood points. In other words, changes were made to transcripts when respondents corrected some points.

Bearing in mind that data interpretation is shaped by one's background (Creswell, 2009), the researcher declared that he is an insider as he is from the area under investigation. As such he could be tempted to support the trends of locals in educational initiatives while blaming the funding agencies subjectively. However, the researcher overcame this by basing data interpretation on the perceptions of different respondents and validating the subjective views with the existing literature.

Furthermore, the researcher spent a prolonged period in the field in order to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study and convey detailed descriptions about the site and people (Creswell, 2009). Data on infrastructural status of the schools was gathered in this way. This made reporting of the findings accurate and valid.

Finally, as Creswell (2009) asserts, a peer debriefer was used to critically look at the account in an objective manner. This made the account more accurate for the reason that the debriefer corrected some of the mistakes made and also made the research more objective as he looked at the findings from a different angle.

3.9 Ethical consideration

Qualitative research is saturated with ethical issues because the human interaction and knowledge produced through qualitative inquiry affects our understanding of human condition (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008). In educational research and other social researches, ethics is concerned with ensuring that the interests and well-being of research participants are not harmed as a result of research being conducted (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). As a result, the researcher promoted ethical issues during data collection and analysis, write up and dissemination of the findings as follows;

Before collecting data, the researcher sought permission from gate keepers to conduct the study in areas under their jurisdiction. Gatekeepers refer to individuals who have official or unofficial role at a site, provide entrance to a site, help researchers to locate people and assist in identification of places to study (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995 as cited in Creswell, 2012). In this case, the researcher got letters of introduction from Mzuzu University and Northern Education Divisional Manager in order to have access to the two selected schools under investigation.

Similarly, to interview ordinary people, permission was sought from village heads in whose areas the study took place. This was done by writing to them and talking to them in person. In both cases, the village heads were told about the purpose of the study and were assured of the confidentiality of the study and that the study would not cause harm to any of the participants.

In the same vein, in order to promote voluntary participation, the inquirer got informed consent from the sampled respondents before engaging them in the study. In this respect, the identified informants were told about the purpose of the study, that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw at any point or opt not to answer some questions as Halai (2006) argues. In this regard, information sheets were given or read to respondents. This was followed by seeking their permission orally and/or in writing. In some cases, participants signed informed consent forms to register their approval.

Lastly, the study protected the privacy of the research participants by making their contributions confidential while at the same time ensuring their anonymity. In this regard, the identities and contributions of the research participants were not revealed to other members. Anonymity was achieved by identifying the sampled schools as school A and school B; research participants were identified by their positions and at times just as participants. Confidentiality was also

ensured by safely keeping the raw and analysed data to avoid it from being accessed by other researchers who might misappropriate it (Creswell, 2009).

3.10 Summary

This chapter has stipulated that this study adopted interpretive paradigm, qualitative approach and case study design. Similarly, the study used convenience, purposive and stratified sampling techniques to identify research sites, cases and participants. Data collection tools were interviews and document analysis. Data was inductively analysed as conclusions were made based on the individualised views of the respondents. The section has also outlined ethical issues that were followed in the study as well as how the researcher promoted validity and reliability in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which local people are involved in infrastructural projects in CDSSs in CEC. The main guiding question for this study was: To what extent are local people engaged in infrastructural projects in CDSSs in CEC? The three objectives of the study were;

1. Investigate ways in which local residents in CEC are engaged in infrastructural projects in the CDSSs.

2. Examine factors that affect local people in CEC to get involved in infrastructural projects in CDSSs.
3. Find out what can be done to improve participation of community members in infrastructural projects in CDSSs in CEC.

The analysis and presentation of the findings in this chapter are based on the three objectives of the study. The researcher opted to present the findings using research objectives because it enables drawing together relevant data on an exact issue from different data streams (documentary review, observation, questionnaire and interviews) thereby maintaining coherence of the material (Cohen et al., 2007). This is unlike when data is presented by instruments and individuals since similar information is presented separately based on instruments and individuals respectively hence destroying the coherence of the material (Cohen et al., 2007). It is for this reason that the researcher chose to present the findings using research objectives and not the other methods so as to provide collective answers to the research objectives by collecting together related data from different respondents in interviews and from documentary review. It should also be pointed out that the target of this study was not to follow the responses of participants individually, but rather to get a collective voice on the issue under discussion.

It must also be pointed out that the presentation and discussion of the findings have been done concurrently. In this regard, the findings on each sub-research question will be discussed before moving to another.

The sources of data were observation notes from minutes of PTA/SMC meetings reviewed from the two schools under investigation and transcripts made from interviews with local people, traditional leaders, SMC and PTA chairpersons, head teachers, councillors and representatives of two funding agencies.

4.2 Findings and discussions

4.2.1 Ways in Which Community Members Participate in School Infrastructural Projects

This was put as a research question to seek the views of local people, traditional leaders, councillors, head teachers, SMC and PTA chairpersons, and coordinators of funding agencies regarding ways in which communities in CEC take part in infrastructural projects in CDSSs.

Minutes of PTA and SMC meetings were also considered in order to cross-check data from oral interviews. This helped to validate the findings.

The study found that local people in the area under study participate in school infrastructural projects in the following ways;

4.2.1.1 Contributing Local Materials

The study found that generally local people contribute 25% of the total budget of a school project. This is in form of providing local materials like bricks, sand, stones and in some cases drawing water for school construction projects. Sometimes, local people just contribute cash instead of moulding bricks and ferrying sand to schools. Group Village Head at school A reported;

“Usually, when there is a project at the school, PTA convenes a meeting where all Village Heads in the catchment area of the school are in attendance. Each Village Head is assigned a particular lot depending on the nature on the project at hand. Then we mobilise our local people to meet the assigned lot. Most often, our role as local people is to provide local materials like bricks, sand, stones and water”

Ordinary people gave similar response as captured in the extract of one of the FGDs below;

“Whenever, there is a project at the school, we are called to contribute bricks, sand, stones and water. Usually, we are organised in Village Heads lines when contributing such materials”

The fact that community residents contribute local materials to school infrastructural projects shows that people in the area employ the principle of asset based approach that community development should use local assets. In this case, local assets were local materials and local people. It should be noted, however, that participation through provision of materials is passive and unsustainable if people are left out in core decision making processes about the same (Shaeffer, 1994). Nonetheless, it was noted that people in the study area participate in strategising some school projects through school committees. Mnarana (2010) views this active involvement of locals in community development as interactive participation. Therefore, it is important that school managers should involve all key stakeholders in strategising school projects. According to participative theory of leadership, this leads to ownership of the

decisions made which in turn makes group members committed to the decisions (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). In the long run, this can make local people so positive to school development.

The findings further revealed that despite the fact that communities are required to provide local materials for school projects, local residents at school A scarcely comply with the obligation. Among other factors, this is due to the feeling that School Development Fund (SDF) should be used for that - a view not favoured by the head teacher of the school as captured in this excerpt:

"Local people are supposed to contribute bricks and sand for school projects. However, their contribution is minimal and unsatisfactory. This is the case because they shun the responsibility as they say school funds should be used to that effect. Thus, we usually use SDF to buy bricks and carry sand for school projects".

The Chairpersons of PTA and SMC, and traditional leaders in the school echoed the Head Teacher's sentiments. In harmony with this, minutes of PTA and SMC meetings showed that some village heads reported that their subjects refused to mould bricks since they felt that the school fees they pay for their children should cater for the expenses. Coordinators of Change Her World and Determined to Develop also argued that the community at school B is more positive to school development than the community at school A.

The fact that different data sources disclosed that community residents at school A are disinclined to take part in school development throws weight to the fact that this is really a problem at the school. Nevertheless, the attitude of the people is wrong since the school is the property of the community (Dekker, 2010) and so the community should take care of it. The attitude of the locals slows down school development which in turn creates a poor learning environment for their children as the school lacks relevant infrastructures. This in turn lowers the quality of education offered by the school. For this reason, Dekker (2010) states that community participation is useful in school development in Africa and communities need to contribute some percentage of construction costs, often in form of labour, before the set or international funds are released. This is crucial as it makes community members remain actors of change in their schools (Djite, 1993).

Contrary to school A, at school B parents are so responsive when called to take part in school projects as pointed out by one village head;

"The villagers are cooperative when called upon to participate in school projects. For example, when we were constructing four teachers' houses, four classrooms, a library and a staff room, local people in all villages in the catchment area of the school contributed bricks. The same is happening in the current girls' hostel construction project".

The head teacher of the school, coordinators of Change Her World and Determined to Develop, along with PTA and SMC chairpersons gave similar responses.

The findings at school B draw a parallel line to the research findings of Dekker (2010) whose study in Southern Malawi found that communities under his study area had the responsibility to mould bricks, collect sand, water and stones, and assist in the construction of school blocks and teachers' houses. The attitude of parents at school B is fundamental in addressing infrastructural challenges at the school. Subsequently, this helps to create a good learning environment for their children.

Correspondingly, the study found that some funding agencies barely involved local people in some school infrastructural projects. For instance, in UNICEF WASH/sanitation construction project, there was zero community participation as everything was done by the funding agency through its contractor. Local people never contributed bricks and sand nor did teachers and SMC/PTA bodies supervise the work as they were told that everything would be done by the contractor. One respondent testified;

"In UNICEF WASH/sanitation construction project, we never contributed any material, we didn't supervise the work and these people cordoned off their working area so much that we couldn't see what they were doing. This might be the reason why the toilets collapsed soon after the completion of the project".

As regards to asset based theory, this was wrong as community development needs to be community driven and use local assets to make the projects sustainable. Moreover, participation for material incentives, as it was the case in the above project, is unreliable since when incentives stop, the project is subject to suffer neglect and stagnation (Mnaramnara, 2010). As such, it is paramount that local people should be actively engaged in school projects to ensure sustainability of the constructed structures.

4.2.1.2 Contributing Cash for Paying Casual Labourers

The inquiry also brought to light that at times when there are SDF funded projects, local people contribute cash to pay for builders and carpenters, besides contributing local materials. Respondents in one FGD at school B explained;

“Apart from contributing local materials, we sometimes contribute cash to pay for builders and carpenters working on school projects. For example, when we were constructing the third teacher’s house, which was built using SDF, we contributed funds to pay for the aforementioned casual labourers.”

The above findings correspond to the outcomes of Dekker’s (2010) study in Southern Malawi which showed that, among other things, the communities under his study area contributed money for school projects. This trend of the locals is significant in rectifying infrastructural challenges the school is facing as locals hardly wait for external support. In the same light, the behaviour of the ordinary people at school B is in line with Asset Based Approach that local economies should be used to promote community development. However, while appreciating the importance of contributing cash to pay for casual labourers, there are people with different skills and talents among local people like builders, carpenters and plumbers who can voluntarily do the work. In such a way, the contributed cash can be used for other activities like buying cement, planks and iron sheets, just to mention a few. As such, it can be recommended that when strategising school infrastructural development, office bearers need to identify local capacities which should be put into good use in carrying out the projects. This is in accordance with the principles of asset based theory which encourages uncovering local strengths, skills, talents and experience which should be meaningfully mobilised to promote community development (Pinkett, 2002). For that reason, it is essential that school managers through school committees should identify local assets and systematically mobilise them to promote school infrastructural development.

4.2.1.3 Strategising Some Infrastructural Projects

The findings showed that when there is need for infrastructural projects in the schools or when the schools have received donations for infrastructural projects, PTA and SMC convene a meeting with Village Heads in the catchment area of the schools and inform them about the same. Thus, together they put in place strategies of carrying out the projects.

In cases where a school has been offered donor-funded projects or when there are SDF-funded projects, decisions are made regarding ways of sourcing local materials like sand and bricks. Generally, Village Heads in the catchment area of the schools share the lot equally. Then, each village head mobilises his or her subjects to accomplish the assigned share. This indicates that the principle of asset based approach that local assets should be mobilised in carrying out development work is put into practice in the area.

In situations where a sponsor is not identified, communities through PTA and SMC in collaboration with head teachers lobby for help to construct school structures. Using the approach, both schools under study lobbied for help from Determined to Develop which then funded two classroom blocks at school A and a library at school B. Both schools also asked for help from Change Her World which eventually donated iron sheets and cement for a library project at school A and during the research, the benefactors were financing a girls' hostel at school B. The organisation also renovated a girls' hostel and built a toilet for girls at school A.

The fact that the schools were offered donations after local people through their representatives made a request demonstrates that such projects are community-driven. This is in line with the principle of asset based theory which states that communities should retain control over their development but seek external help to support their cause (Pinkett, 2002). This form of participation is referred to as self-mobilisation (Mnaranara, 2010). It is an example of what is termed “active participation” because local people through their representatives spearhead the projects.

The findings also revealed that in some cases, problems at the schools are taken to Area Development Committee (ADC) through Village Development Committee (VDC). Then, recommendations of ADC are sent to District Council. When there are funds for school infrastructures at District Council, schools are offered such projects according to their needs. This was manifested in both schools under investigation where two teachers' houses in both schools were built through MASAF. This is in line with the principles of asset based approach which advocates the use of local associations to promote sustainable change in communities (Kretzmann and McKnight, 2005).

The study also showed that sometimes funding agencies carry out need surveys in schools and give help to the schools that qualify according to their needs among other criteria. This was the approach used by UNICEF in constructing toilets in schools in the district, the two schools

inclusive. Change Her World used the same approach in the first instance as the Coordinator of the agency reported;

"At first we could go around schools in the area to assess their needs. Then, we offered help. This was the strategy we used to fund the renovation of girls' hostel at school A. However, we started funding schools upon scrutinising their proposals after people in the area refused to contribute stones to a certain bridge project".

The fact that the agencies conducted need surveys shows that they overlooked the point that much as the schools have problems, they are surrounded by people who have capabilities of responding to the challenges. According to Mfum-Mensah (2004), failure to involve the locals in identifying solutions to their own problems is pseudo-participation since citizens are placed at the receiving end of the decisions made for them by outsiders. What was needed, therefore, was to identify the positive attributes the communities have such as local skills, experiences, materials, associations and institutions. Pinkett (2002) calls this asset mapping. The identified assets then have to be channelled towards the rectification of the infrastructural problems in their schools. This can help to inculcate into the communities the ownership spirit over the constructed structures while also minimising the dependency burden among local people.

The study further showed that usually local people get to know about school projects through their village heads. As a tradition, village heads communicate school development issues to their subjects during funerals or by calling public meetings at a village level. During the public meetings, by-laws are made to enforce participation and a committee is instituted to enforce the same in collaboration with Action Groups. When some Village Heads fail or delay to give bricks as agreed, there is a follow up by PTA and SMC members. Defiant village heads are reported to Traditional Authorities of the area who disciplines them accordingly. The Traditional Authority of the area reported;

"The Village Heads and ordinary people who fail to comply are reported to me and are penalised by ordering them to pay a fine in form of chickens, goats or any other items according to the gravity of the noncompliance. Under extreme cases, stubborn village heads are dethroned. This is done to ensure even local participation to school development".

In case of school B, Village Heads that are not cooperative are followed up by development committee which comprise of all village heads in the catchment area of the school. In this way,

PTA and SMC bodies at school B follow up contribution from village heads through the development committee.

As noted above, local residents come to know about school developmental issues mainly through their village heads. While appreciating the benefits of the approach, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2001) advocates the use of public meetings when it comes to effective communication. Two main reasons are advanced: the message reaches out to a great number of targeted community members, and they help to directly influence decisions that affect them. This is in line with participative and distributed leadership models which advocate involvement of key stakeholders in decision making on issues affecting them. Thus, Head Teachers in collaboration with school committees should once in a while convene public meetings in order to encourage community participation since local people end up owning the decisions made in the meetings. For feasibility of public meetings, Flint River Watershed Coalition (2014) recommends using at least a representative sample of the population in order to make a decision for the greater good of all residents and stakeholders. That is, much as PTA and SMC usually use village heads to communicate school projects to villagers, once in a while public meetings should be used. This is critically essential not only when people need to be told about school problems and the need for them to take part but also when there is need to communicate on how the funds and materials for school projects are or have been used.

4.2.1.4 Involvement in SDF Budgeting

The investigation further found that sometimes local people through PTA and SMC are involved in SDF budgeting. It was, however, observed that in both schools the participation of locals in SDF budgeting was not satisfactory as most often this is done by Internal Procurement Committee (IPC). PTA Chairperson at school A explained;

“We are at times convened to decide how SDF should be used. But most often our decisions are not taken seriously as more often than not the funds are spent contrary to our budget. Now and again, we are just told about how the funds were used without our involvement”

PTA chairperson at school B shared the same sentiments as captured in the excerpt below;

“Our involvement in SDF budgeting varies from one Head Teacher to the other. The previous Head Teacher involved us more than the incumbent one. With the current

leadership, we are just told about how the funds have been spent and sometimes we are not even informed at all”

The researcher’s experience as a PTA Teachers’ Representative at school A unveiled that the decisions of PTA and SMC regarding disbursement of SDF are occasionally taken seriously by school administrators such that the funds are sometimes spent not according to the plan. Kintz (2011) terms this kind of participation tokenism. He states that this happens when communities appear to have been given a voice but in reality have little or no choice about the subject matter, and community members only serve to rubber-stamp decisions.

The above findings are in harmony with the findings of Dekker (2010) that in some context, participation is limited to raising money, with limited influence on how it is used. However, this trend is wrong as local people through their representatives should be involved in making decisions about how public money is spent in their community especially on the SDF which is under their domain. This is called participatory budgeting (Glassgow Centre for Population Health, 2012). If they are not involved, the locals may be justified to think that school officials are misappropriating school funds. This feeling may therefore discourage them from participating in school development. This is not to say that representatives of local people should handle the funds as public funds are handled by public officers only. The point here, however, is that representatives of local people in collaboration with teachers should be involved in the SDF budgeting and check how it is used in order to promote transparency and accountability of the same.

In summary, the study on this first research question revealed that local participation in school projects leads to successful projects since local residents assume ownership over such projects and combine their efforts to carry them out. Projects which do not bring communities on board have a high potential of failure. A very good example is the UNICEF WASH/ sanitation construction projects, where lots of bags of cement could not be traced and people pointed fingers at labourers and contractors. Some toilets that had been built collapsed shortly after completion probably due to a disproportion of cement and sand.

Apart from this, it was discovered in both schools that community participation is better in primary schools than in the secondary schools. One of the possible reasons for this is that parents think that school fees they pay for their children at secondary school should be used to buy materials and services for school projects. Local people also have an inclination to believe

that primary schools are more theirs than secondary schools as the latter belong to many village heads in the catchment area of the school than the former. As such communities are committed more to developments in primary schools than in secondary schools.

The investigation also revealed that community participation in school infrastructural projects was better during the one party era when communities were mobilised to work during what was termed “Youth Week”. The respondents argued that the youth week era was more inclusive as parents, workers and school children participated in development work and that people rarely defaulted for fear of possible reprisals. This is in contrast to these days where the burden is left on local people alone and where, due to democracy, defaulting is becoming a norm. Predictably, all the informants spoke in favour of the re-introduction of youth week system in order to improve the state of infrastructures in their local schools.

4.2.2 Factors That Affect Participation of Local People in School Infrastructural Projects

This was put as a research question in order to examine the experiences of local people, traditional leaders, SMC and PTA chairpersons, councillors and head teachers with regard to factors that encourage and discourage local people in taking part in school infrastructural projects. The motivating and demotivating factors are presented separately.

4.2.2.1 Factors That Motivate Villagers to Take Part in School Infrastructural Projects

The study showed that there are several factors that make local people participate in school developmental initiatives. Table 4.1 summarises the findings.

Table 4.1, Frequency of Respondents on Factors That Encourage Community Participation in Infrastructural Projects in CDSSs

Table 4.1 Frequency of respondents on the factors that encourage community participation in infrastructural projects in CDSSs

Factors Encouraging Community Participation	Frequency of Respondents (N=45)
Transparency and accountability of office bearers	45
Good relationship between village heads and their villagers	45

Desire to promote education of their children	43
Good students' pass rate	39
Good relationship between school and its neighbourhood	36
Participatory decision making	34
Fear of punishment	5

As indicated in Table 4.1, all respondents pointed out that transparency and accountability of office bearers as well as good relationship between village heads and their subjects promote community involvement in school projects. The respondents argued that most often people resist participating in school projects when they feel office bearers misuse school funds and materials. FGD with ordinary people at school A revealed;

“At times, teachers and school committee members use school funds and materials for their personal gains. This in turn makes us reluctant to contribute to school development since we feel that we are labouring in vain”.

Similarly, FGD with ordinary people at school B unveiled;

“In some cases, teachers misuse school fees, money from sponsors, locally contributed and externally-funded materials. This makes us unwilling to take part in school infrastructural projects”.

This shows that lack of transparency and accountability among office bearers has grave impacts on school development since it discourages local people to take part in school development. As such, it is imperative that office bearers like PTA and SMC members as well as teachers should be more accountable in that they should tell people how the school funds and materials are used. This helps to build people's trust in their leaders and therefore encourages them to take part in school projects. In this light, Kintz (2011) argues that establishing and maintaining trust is the foundation for all productive, mutually beneficial relationships. Kintz further asserts that the importance of establishing trust applies to all parties involved in school environment like between funding agencies and communities, and between community representatives and community members at large. Therefore, it is important that office bearers should promote

transparency and accountability when carrying out school projects so that local people are encouraged to participate in the same.

On good relationship between traditional leaders and their subjects, participants said it boosts morale of the latter to take part in community projects in general, and school projects in particular. This view is held by both the traditional leaders and their subjects. One village head elucidated;

"When we, village heads, have a poor relationship with our subjects, they do not cooperate. The contrary is true when we, village heads, relate well with our people. We also need to be exemplary by taking part or by just being present when people are doing community projects like moulding bricks".

On the same note, it was found that local people are motivated to take part in community projects when Village Heads are promoting equity in contribution to projects and distribution of opportunities. It was observed that when individuals are treated unfairly, they develop a resentment attitude towards the village heads. This in turn makes the disgruntled members fail to comply with what the village heads tell them; including participating in school projects. One Village Head explained;

"In some cases, we, traditional leaders fail to make our relatives contribute to school development. This however makes some local people disinclined to take part in school development.

Ordinary people in one FGD shared similar views as explained below;

"Every so often, traditional leaders favour some people in enjoying some benefits like fertilizer subsidy coupons and other Social Welfare programmes. Besides, some Village Heads fail to punish some people when they default taking part in school development. This makes some of us indifferent when called to contribute to school development as we feel that we are needed only to be used".

It is therefore important that village heads relate well with their people so that the latter are positive to participate in community projects, school ones not the exceptional.

The desire to promote the education of their children came third as reason for parents to participate in school projects. The local people that were interviewed lamented that during their

time, they were walking long distances to school as the schools were miles away from their homes. The parents said that this compromised their academic performance as they got exhausted through walking long distances to and from school. On this, the parents interviewed said they are responsive to school development as the schools give chance for their children to learn close. Parents in one FGD explained;

“In the past we walked long distances to school as schools were very far. We could walk ten kilometres or more to school. This ultimately affected our performance as we could hardly study once we got home from school. We do not want our children to experience the same hardships, and hence our participation in school projects”.

The attitude of these villagers is in line with the views of Kintz (2011) that local people have valuable assets which are often contributed willingly when community members have a sense of ownership and an understanding that the initiative is for the betterment of their children and the community at large. However, when parents feel the schools do not benefit their children as much as they would want, they are not motivated to take part in the development of schools. This is particularly the case at school A where very few children from the neighbourhood learn at the school. The majority of the learners are from distant villages. This discourages parents from villages close to the school A from taking an active role in any development agenda of this school. Regrettably, people from these distant villages that benefit much from the school shun the responsibility as they claim that the school is not in their village. This creates a tag of war which eventually retards infrastructural development at the school.

It was observed that the quality of education is higher in the urban areas than in rural areas because of the availability of good and adequate school infrastructures in the former. On this, some informants pointed out that shortage of teachers' houses in the rural areas limits the number of well qualified teachers in the schools and consequently compromises educational standards. This is in agreement with the argument of Uemura (1999) that lack of teachers' houses leads to lack of qualified teachers in rural areas as teachers, more so female, go to urban schools. Thus, when urged to contribute to school development, parents are receptive in order to improve the infrastructural status of the schools in an attempt to promote high quality education for their children.

In connection to the foregoing point, some informants said that when students in the schools perform well, parents are happy and are energized to participate in school projects. Parents in all FGDs argued like that as it can be seen in one FGD below;

“When our children perform better, we are heartened to get involved in school projects as we feel our labouring is fruitful. This is unlike where the school performance is poor”.

The same happens when parents see some old learners of the schools excel in their lives due to the education they acquired from the schools. This is the case because the parents have a feeling that they are not labouring in vain. This finding corresponds to that of Marphatia, Edge, Legault and Archer (2010) who found that the achievement rates of children impact on parents' motivation to get engaged in school projects.

Good relationship between teachers and parents was highlighted in line with the need for collaboration between teachers and school committees. Parents in one FGD spelt out;

“When there is good relationship between us parents and teachers, we are inspired to take part in school development. Otherwise, we feel disillusioned to contribute to school development”.

Similarly, it was established that good relationship between a local school and its neighbourhood also motivates local people to take part in school projects. This was summarised in the quotation below;

“Good relationship between the school and school committees is of enormous significance because the later bridges the school and the community so much that when the link is lost through poor cooperation of school committees and teachers, community participation in school development is greatly suppressed”.

This implies that good relationship between teachers and parents along with school committees is crucial in increasing local people's participation in school projects. This view is shared by Marphatia et al. (2010) who argue that research in Malawi revealed that when relationship between a school and a community is good, parents are encouraged to take part in school activities. Office bearers in schools should borrow from Human Relations Model which states that good relationship between a manager and the subordinates encourages productivity in an institution (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). This happens as the subordinates develop a positive

mind towards their leaders and their work. In consequence, if traditional leaders, school managers and school committee members can employ the principles of the theory, local people can be inspired to contribute to school development.

All the ordinary people and Village Heads interviewed indicated that their involvement in core decisions pertaining to school development encourages their participation in the projects. The study found that when there are projects in the schools, village heads and VDC are invited by SMC and PTA, and collectively strategise the projects. This is a crucial step towards successful local participation as it means village heads own the decisions made and therefore they are better equipped to sell their ideas and mobilise their subjects to take part in school projects as required. This is in line with participative and distributed leadership theories; involvement of locals in decision making makes them to be committed to school development since they own the decisions (Jayne, 2000). Correspondingly, use of local people in decision making runs in parallel with the principles of Asset Based Theory which advocates the use of personal skills, talents and lived experience in promoting community development. This makes projects to be community-driven.

Related to that, the study established that much as the schools manage to involve people's representatives in strategising school infrastructural projects, not much has been done to directly seek the views of the ordinary people. This creates ill feelings among locals which sometimes make them reluctant to participate in school projects. Therefore, there is need that at times public meetings should be summoned in order to enable local people to directly influence decisions that affect them (CDC, 2010). In agreement with this view, Dekker (2010) argues that taking part in real decision making is genuine participation as it gives room for community members to choose the roles they have to take. This is requisite for effective participation as people feel that the project is theirs unlike when projects are externally generated (Mnaranara, 2010).

4.2.2.2 Factors That Make Villagers Reluctant to Take Part in School Infrastructural Projects

Despite several positive factors given by participants, the findings also revealed that there are some factors that demoralize community members and prevent them from meaningfully contributing towards school developmental initiatives. Table 4.2 summarises the factors.

Table 4.2, Frequency of Respondents on Factors Discouraging Local People from Taking Part in School Infrastructural Projects

Table 4.2 Frequency of respondents on factors discouraging local people from taking part in schools infrastructural projects

Factors Discouraging community involvement	Frequency of Respondents (N=45)
Lack of transparency and accountability of office bearers	45
The feeling that SDF should be used for school projects	45
Weaknesses of traditional leaders	40
Poor cooperation between school and its neighbourhood	37
Voluntary work	33
Untimely response to funding school projects	12

As the Table 4.2 shows, all respondents said that lack of transparency and accountability of office bearers and feeling that SDF should finance school projects deter local people from participating in school projects. The interviewees indicated that when villagers are not told about the way school funds are used; local people feel that office bearers like PTA and SMC members as well as teachers misuse the resources. This can be seen in extract of one of the FGDs below;

“When we are not told about how school funds and materials are used, we become suspicious. This feeling makes us reluctant to take part in school projects”

This indicates that lack of transparency and accountability has a great impact on community participation in school projects. It is for this reason that Mnaranara (2010) encourages office bearers in schools to be transparent in how they handle school resources in order to promote community participation in school projects.

In the same way, as pointed out earlier, the study established that local people believe that they can hardly contribute to school development for the reason that school fees they pay should be used for that. The feeling is so strong that it makes them less committed to school development. It should be noted, however, that the perception is stronger at school A than B so much that people usually refuse to participate in infrastructural projects at the school. The Head Teacher at school A lamented;

"Local people are supposed to contribute bricks and sand for school projects. However, their contribution is minimal and unsatisfactory. This is the case because they shun the responsibility as they say school funds should be used to that effect. Thus, we usually use SDF to buy bricks and carry sand for school projects".

Nevertheless, the attitude of the people is wrong since the school is the property of the community (Dekker, 2010) hence local dwellers' support to their local schools should go beyond payment of school fees. In fact, school fees cannot suffice to fund all the projects in schools given that it is used to finance several operation bills. If local people can provide some of the local materials including labour in school projects, the SDF can be used to buy other materials and services that are not locally available. This can help to speed up infrastructural development, thereby promoting quality education in CDSSs.

Weakness of traditional leaders came third as a factor that demoralises local people to participate in school infrastructural projects. The study found that despite the fact that Village Heads are the ones mobilising their subjects to take part in school projects, some of them fail to influence the villagers to participate in the same. Some respondents reported that some village heads leave noncompliant scot free, a development which encourages defaulting in school projects, among other community projects. In this light, Jain and Saakshi (2005) assert that success and failure of an organisation to a great extent depends on the quality of leadership. In agreement with this view, Mnaranara (2010) argues that having leaders with bad qualities, it is difficult for one to direct the activities of subordinates to achieve organisational goals. In this regard, failure of village heads to influence their subordinates to contribute to school development erodes participation spirit among local people. This was particularly the case in school A where the village head (who passed away soon after the study began) was ineffective in enforcing local participation in school projects. This partly explains the high defaulting rates of locals to contribute towards infrastructural development at the school.

On the same note, the study established that sometimes people resist participating in school initiatives because they underrate their traditional leaders. This is partly because some villagers are richer and more educated than their village heads. One Village Head reported;

“We, traditional leaders, come to throne based on blood and not based on educational achievements and riches. This entails that some of our subjects may be richer and more educated than us. This makes some of them not comply with what we tell them. This is worsened by the fact that some of us, Village Heads, get supported financially by some local people. This in turn makes community participation to school projects uneven”.

The perception was worse at school A where local people did not respect their Village Head, now deceased. The end result was that the people could choose not to participate in infrastructural projects in their local school.

The inquiry also established that when Village Heads favour some community members at the expense of others, the disgruntled members sometimes resist taking part in school projects. For example, when relatives of village heads do not participate in school development, other villagers are more often reluctant to cooperate. One Village Head confirmed;

"Some of the relatives of us Village Heads choose not to take part in school projects. Since some of them are our parents, we sometimes fail to punish them. Nonetheless, this leaves other villagers discontented as such they resent taking part in school development".

Apart from the foregoing, it was observed that when benefits are not evenly distributed, the disadvantaged people feel disinterested to take part in community development, including school development. Examples of benefits include access to fertilizer subsidy coupons and other social welfare materials distributed to villagers.

On lack of cooperation between teachers and school committees, the study found that poor relationship between teachers and parents makes the latter hesitant to take part in school initiatives. The worst thing happens when there is poor collaboration between school committee members and teachers. This was noted to have grave impacts as PTA and SMC act as a bridge between teachers and villagers such that their lack of cooperation breaks the link. Consequently, it becomes difficult to engage local people if school committees are left out of the equation. It is for this reason that Kretzmann (1991) advocates building mutual relationship between a local

school and its surrounding community (in order to promote good community participation in school projects).

The findings further indicated that some people get discouraged from participating in school development seeing that their participation is on a non-profit basis. It is for this reason that some informants argued that nowadays people's participation in community projects is motivated by cash: when they are called to participate on wage agreement, their buy-in increases. This was evidenced in UNICEF WASH/sanitation projects and MASAF road rehabilitation projects where the very same villagers who are reluctant to voluntarily take part in school projects, rose up eagerly to participate in the two projects as they were paid. As Kintz (2011) argues, this is partly because individuals are focused on their daily survival hence they are unable to set aside the time, energy or resources needed for engaging in voluntary work of the school. This in part explains the high buy-in of locals in paid projects as opposed to voluntary ones. It is, therefore, important that meaningful approaches should be employed to convince community members to take part in educational initiatives despite their commitments to personal monetary benefits.

Untimely response to the proposed projects was highlighted as the other factor that discourages local participation in school projects. To this effect, some interviewees reported that local people are asked to contribute bricks as a condition to acquire donations on school infrastructural projects. Unfortunately, such projects take longer to be offered and sometimes they are not offered at all. This makes some bricks to get ruined. This disheartens local people as their labour in moulding bricks is apparently in vain. Thus, when called upon to mould bricks again, they are reluctant.

To sum it up, the above factors promote retardation of infrastructural development in CDSSs in CEC. This in turn compromises the quality of education offered in the schools. In the long run, children of the very same parents who shun participating in school projects experience the effects of the same. It is therefore decisive that authorities have to find means of mitigating the challenges so as to make community participation in school infrastructural projects effective. This can eventually improve the quality of education offered in the schools.

4.2.3 Ways of Improving Community Participation in School Infrastructural Projects

This was put as a research question to investigate the views of SMC and PTA chairpersons, councillors, coordinators of funding agencies, head teachers, traditional leaders as well as

ordinary people regarding ways of improving community participation. The respondents suggested the following strategies;

4.2.3.1 Sensitising Local People on the Importance of Participating in School Development

As noted above, these days community dwellers have high resistance to play a part in school projects. However, this creates a poor learning environment for their children as it leaves the schools lacking in some relevant structures. It is for this reason that some respondents suggested that local residents need to be enlightened on the importance of involving themselves in school projects. Interview with one of the Councillors unveiled;

“Considering the misconceptions and negative attitudes surrounding community participation in school projects, it is crucial that people should be civic educated on the importance of taking part in school projects. With this understanding, local people may assume ownership roles in the schools as they may come to realise that their efforts are integral in improving the quality of education for their children”.

In the like manner, SMC Chairperson explained;

“Most often, people evade participating in school development due to misinformation. It is therefore necessary that such mistaken beliefs are cleared so that local people should be more receptive to the call to take part in school development”.

The evidence at disposal indicates that to stir up people’s morale to take part in school infrastructural projects, it is important that people should be told about the importance of their active participation in school development on the education of their children. In agreement with the view, Actionaid Uganda (2009) asserts that parents need to be sensitised about their roles in education of their children. If parents can assume the responsibility, they are more likely to participate actively in school infrastructural development. This, in the long run, can help to create a good atmosphere for teaching and learning for their children. In this regard, school managers in collaboration with school committees need to sensitise local people on their role in education of their children and the importance of taking part in school development.

This notwithstanding, the study established that one of the major reasons behind parental reluctance to play a part in school projects is the feeling that school fees should be used for those projects. For this reason, some informants suggested that villagers should be sensitised that school fees is used for several activities such that it falls short of being sufficient to carry

out all operations in the schools. This can help to make parents' support to school development go beyond payment of school fees.

This information can be disseminated to the people by holding public meetings where all local people or a representative sample can be present. Traditional leaders can also take advantage of funerals where lots of villagers are present to pass the information. As Uemura (1999) argues, once explained fully about the importance of school and their contribution to their children's education, local people change their attitude and start working more positively. This can help to improve people's contribution to school infrastructural development.

4.2.3.2 Civic Educating Office Bearers on the Need to Use School Funds and Materials Properly

As pointed out earlier on, lack of transparency and accountability on the part of office bearers increases parental hesitancy to take part in school projects. Thus, some respondents argued that office bearers should be sensitised on the dangers of misappropriating school funds and materials. One of the dangers of mishandling school funds and materials is that it can make the community lose trust in office bearers. This eventually makes the peeved people resist participating in school projects as one of the councillors explained;

"When office bearers squander school funds and the contributed or donated materials, next time people resent participating. For example, if local people contribute bricks and funds for school projects, and office bearers misuse them, next time people are resistant to contribute the same. It is for this reason that I call for public meetings where I enlighten office bearers about the same".

In this context, Kintz (2011) advocates for the need to establish trust among all parties engaged in the school environment. In this regard, it is necessary that office bearers need to be civic educated that they have to be accountable and transparent in their dealings in order to yield trust from the stakeholders. This in turn increases local people's buy-in to school projects.

4.2.3.3 Office Bearers Should Promote Transparency and Accountability in Their Dealings

The findings showed that to ensure effective participation, office bearers should sensitize the people on how school funds are used and report the expenditure so that local people appreciate that the funds and the contributed or donated materials are used as intended. Otherwise, people may think that the funds and materials are misused, a feeling which may deter them from taking part in school projects. Ordinary people in one FGD illuminated;

“When teachers and members of school committees fail to tell us how school funds and materials are used, we feel like the office bearers are embezzling them. Therefore, office bearers need to be so open in how they use school resources in order to encourage local people’s participation in school development”.

Considering the side effects of lack of transparency and accountability in handling school resources, office bearers in schools should inform people about how school funds and materials are and/or have been used. This can be done through their representatives while also communicating directly to them in public meetings. Public meetings help to communicate to a large number of people (OECD, 2001). It is therefore important that public meetings should be held regularly so that local people get first-hand information as representatives may misinform them on the same.

4.2.3.4 Office Bearers Should Properly Communicate School Projects to Relevant Stakeholders

It was observed from PTA minutes that when strategising a certain project at school A, there was poor communication to village heads and this led to some of them being not present at the meeting that was convened. Since the village heads in question were not party to the decisions made at the gathering, they resented mobilising their subjects to take part in the project. In the same way, when village heads poorly communicate how villagers should take part in school projects, some villagers do not participate. In agreement with the findings, Uemura (1999) maintains that lack of communication between project implementers and community members leads to resistance to participate in school activities. Therefore, there is need that office bearers should properly disseminate information about school projects to all stakeholders in order to promote positive local contribution to the projects.

4.2.3.5 Promoting Good Division of Labour

The study also established that role conflict in the course of carrying out school projects makes community participation ineffective. One councillor explicated;

“By and large, there is inefficiency and ineffectiveness when participants in school development are not given specific tasks. It is therefore indispensable that there should be good division of labour to make sure that people know their roles”

Thus, it is essential to have clear-cut tasks for different contributors to school projects for effective participation. Uemura (1999) supports the argument by asserting that a clear structure helps community members to understand their expected roles, and this ensures that the coordination among different groups takes place fruitfully. In this regard, the roles of educational authorities, school committees, VDCs, action groups, teachers, funding agencies and local people in school infrastructural initiatives should be clearly demarcated but harmoniously coordinated to ensure effective community participation.

4.2.3.6 Ensuring Good Relationship between Teachers and School Neighbourhood

As pointed out earlier, poor relationship between teachers and villagers makes the latter disinclined to participate in school projects. Such being the case, some respondents suggested that teachers and parents need to relate well to improve infrastructural development in schools, among other things. This view is shared by Marphatia et al. (2010) who hold that research in Malawi revealed that when relationship between school and the community is good; parents are encouraged to take part in school activities.

In addition, the study noted that poor cooperation between teachers and school committees hinders school development. Therefore, the informants recommended that it is significant to promote good relationship between the two parties in order to promote effective community participation in school projects.

4.2.3.7 Office Bearers Should Regularly Evaluate the Progress of Projects

The inquiry showed that if there is no evaluation of the progress of school projects, success of the projects is likely to face setbacks. One councillor explained;

"PTA and SMC members in collaboration with teachers should evaluate school projects in order to know what has been achieved, what has failed, what was done to achieve what was achieved and what can be done to complete the project successfully".

In support of this, CommonPlaces (2014) states that it is critical that any engagement process should be evaluated on on-going basis and post-completion in order to provide feedback on best engagement processes. In other words, evaluation of projects helps office bearers to find better ways of involving local people and putting relevant inputs to make school projects successfully completed and sustainable.

4.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has dealt with presentation and discussion of the findings. The main research question was: To what extent do local people get engaged in infrastructural projects in CDSSs in CEC? Data was presented according to the three minor research questions. The first research question looked at ways in which communities get engaged in school infrastructural school projects. The second research question dealt with factors that motivate and demotivate people to take part in school infrastructural projects. The last research question delved into ways of improving community participation in school infrastructural projects.

CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters looked at introduction to the study, review of related literature, research design and methodology as well as results and discussion of the findings. This chapter sets out to conclude the study and make recommendations on what can be done to make community participation in infrastructural projects in CDSSs more effective and sustainable.

5.2 Summary of the research findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate how communities get engaged in infrastructural projects in CDSSs in CEC in an attempt to address infrastructural problems common to the schools. Specifically, the study sought to explore ways in which local people are engaged in school infrastructural projects, factors affecting their participation and ways of improving local participation in school infrastructural projects. Data was collected from traditional leaders,

councillors, head teachers, PTA and SMC chairpersons, coordinators of funding agencies and ordinary people. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and documentary review. Convenience, purposive and stratified sampling techniques were used to choose research site, cases and participants. The study adopted qualitative approach in the interpretive paradigm and it used a case study design.

After looking at the results and discussion of the study, it was seen that the objectives of the study were realised.

On the first objective, the study found that community members mainly participate in infrastructural projects in CDSSs by contributing bricks and sand. Local people also participate in decision making through their representatives particularly PTA and SMC. Nonetheless, some people are reluctant to take part in school projects. It is therefore necessary that proper mechanisms should be put in place to enforce participation of local people in the same.

On objective two, it was noted that transparency of office bearers, good relationship between village heads and their people as well as between local schools and their neighbourhood, desire to promote education of their children, good students' pass rate and participatory decision making are some of the factors that help to motivate people to take part in school projects. On the other hand, the study revealed that lack of transparency and accountability, weakness of village heads to enforce the participation of their subjects, poor relationship between teachers and local people, feeling that SDF should finance school projects and non-profit participation discourage people from participating in school infrastructural projects.

On the last objective, it was found that office bearers in schools should make their dealings transparent and accountable. They should also properly communicate projects to local people, evaluate school projects regularly, promote division of labour and sensitize local people on their role in the education of their children. This will ensure effective community participation in school infrastructural projects.

The study was guided by asset based approach. In respect to the theory, it can be concluded that in some projects in the schools under study, some aspects of the theory are put into practice. For instance, local associations are used to strategise some projects and local people contribute local materials for school projects. This is in line with the tenets of asset based approach that community development should use local assets and local associations, among other things. However, while appreciating such contributions, the researcher feels that something more has

to be done. As pointed out earlier, in the communities there are people with different skills like builders, carpenters, sawyers, brick makers and people with different experiences who, if identified and meaningfully mobilised, can help to fix infrastructural problems the schools are facing. This is based on the principle that everyone has a gift which if identified can be used to bring positive social change (Foot and Hopkins, 2011). Considering the struggling economies Malawi is passing through, this is the best way to go in an attempt to solve school infrastructural problems. It cannot be denied that local people have potential to do much of the school work with minimal external support rather than expecting outsiders to do that for them. External funding and SDF should be used for buying iron sheets, cement and other construction materials not locally available. The experience of the researcher in the area has shown that local people can confidently and positively contribute when called upon to render their services for the reason that they have equally demonstrated the same on wage agreement.

It was, however, noted from the study that other facets of the theory are not employed in some school infrastructural projects in the area. For example, in UNICEF WASH/sanitation projects, there was zero local participation in project identification and implementation given that the locals were reduced to nothing more than mere recipients of externally made solutions. This ultimately eroded local ownership over the projects, leading to failure to take care of the constructed structures. Considering the ineptitude of the projects in which communities are not involved, it can be recommended that communities should be animatedly involved at all stages of school projects in order to make them more responsible for the structures that have been constructed.

The findings of the study show that community participation in school development in CEC is variant since some communities are more positive to contribute to school development than others. In light of the study, local people in the catchment area of school B participate more actively in school infrastructural projects than local people in school A. Similarly, the study has shown that in some projects, Asset Based Approach is applied, while in other projects it is not. It was noted, however, that the projects in which local people are involved are more sustainable than those in which they are not involved.

The study was conducted on a small scale and involved a small sample due to the nature of the research design it adopted. Therefore, the study cannot be generalised to the entire country. However, it was noted that if substantially involved, communities can play a significant role in addressing infrastructural problems in CDSSs in the country. This in turn can improve the

quality of education offered in the school. This is possible as the schools may end up having adequate teachers' houses, classrooms among other relevant school infrastructures. As such, the findings of the study can help to inform policy makers and professionals in the education sector on the effective ways of engaging communities in school infrastructural projects so that communities can be empowered to address infrastructural challenges with minimal external intervention.

5.3 Reflection on the research process

After looking at the analysis and discussion of the findings, it was discovered that both the main research question and sub-research questions were answered despite the challenges that were encountered. The researcher took pertinent corrective measures to overcome the problems that were faced in the course of the study. This led to the success of the study. Generally, the proposed research participants were cooperative as they all accepted to participate in the study.

It should be pointed out that the findings and recommendations done in this research are not exhaustive. Concerted efforts are needed to bring to the attention of professionals on the best ways of engaging local people in school infrastructural projects. Due to knowledge gaps existing in this study, the researcher suggests that further research should be undertaken on the same. The findings and literature in this study may be used to improve the practice of community participation in infrastructural projects in CDSSs in order to arrest the problem of shortage of school infrastructures common to this category of schools in Malawi.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the gaps noted in this study, the following recommendations have been made;

5.4.1 Recommendations to Local People

- Local residents should appreciate that CDSSs are their assets. As such they should not shift the responsibility of fixing infrastructural challenges in the schools to the government alone. Instead, communities should support the efforts of the government and its partners in development to improve the state of school structures in their local schools.
- Community members need to understand that SDF can neither effectively finance all school activities nor can it replace their responsibility of contributing

to school development. Therefore, parents should sufficiently support schools' infrastructural development initiatives beyond payment of school fees.

- Local people should also appreciate that both primary and secondary schools are crucial in the education of their children. Hence parents need play an active role in the development of both primary and secondary schools.
- Villagers should put aside their traditional differences and cooperate when embarking on school projects. This should be done seeing that lack of harmony among community members has the potential overtrading school development.

5.4.2 Recommendations to PTA and SMC

- PTA and SMC should regularly convene public meetings in order to enlighten community members on how school funds are used. This can help the locals to appreciate that there is transparency and accountability for school funds and materials. At the same time, public meetings can help to convince community residents that the school fees they pay are not enough to meet all costs of the required or desired school activities. Public meetings should also be convened in order to directly explain to the locals about the problems schools are facing so that the people themselves are party to the developmental agenda of the schools. This can help to make locals positive enough to contribute to school development since they will own the decisions made in the gatherings.
- PTA and SMC should frequently meet not only to identify problems the schools are facing but also to check the progress of school development in the schools.
- PTA and SMC should maintain a good link between teachers and communities. This is fundamental in promoting effective local participation; when the cooperation is poor, parents may resist taking part in school developmental initiatives.

5.4.3 Recommendations to School Heads

- School administrators should involve PTA and SMC in SDF budgeting. This should be done as SDF is the fund responsible for school development, and since this is the ultimate responsibility of the two bodies. Besides, involvement of locals through their local associations in SDF budgeting ensures transparency and

accountability which in turn helps to increase local participation in school projects. Nevertheless, PTA and SMC should not handle the cash as public funds are supposed to be handled by public officers only; PTA and SMC members are not public officers.

- Head teachers, who are the secretaries of PTAs, should frequently convene PTA meetings to ensure that school development is always on track.
- Head teachers should make sure that there is good relationship not only between teachers and their neighbouring communities but also between the teachers and school committees. This should be done, among other things, as good teachers' cooperation with parents and the committees leads to good local participation in school projects.

5.4.4 Recommendations to Traditional Leaders

- Development committees should be introduced in all schools in order to make village heads active enough in mobilising their subordinates to take part in school development.
- Traditional Authorities (TAs) should timely handle differences between and/or among village heads so that the village heads actively and equally take part in school development. This should be done as the study noted that tag of war between and/or among village heads impedes school development.
- Strong mechanisms should be put in place to enforce participation of all required villagers in school development. This can help to reduce the problem of defaulting which is common in the area.
- Village heads should promote rules of social justice in the distribution of benefits. Traditional leaders should also exercise fairness in contribution of local people to school development. Partiality in every undertaking must be avoided as this may dissuade the local communities from active participation in school projects.

5.4.5 Recommendations to Funding Agencies

- Funding agencies should involve local people in project identification, strategisation, implementation and evaluation. This helps to inculcate into the

communities the spirit of ownership over the projects. Eventually, this leads to project sustainability.

- Funding agencies should identify local capacities and mobilise them in carrying out school projects. This is based on the understanding that much as local communities have problems, they are valuable assets and they can positively contribute towards problem identification and solution.

5.4.6 Recommendations to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and Educational Division Offices (EDOs)

- MoEST through EDMs should regularly check how schools are implementing their action plans and budgets. This is helpful in ensuring that school funds are used for their intended purposes.
- When recommending for the introduction of double-streamed classes, EDOs should make sure that schools, among other things, have infrastructural capacity to manage the same.
- Educational Division Managers (EDMs) and other senior educational officers should regularly civic educate office bearers in schools on how they are supposed to use school funds and other resources; community residents should be sensitised on their roles in school development. If properly done, this can help to reduce cases of misappropriating school resources while also helping to erode the tendency among local people to burden the government in promoting school infrastructural development.

5.4.7 Recommendations to the Government

- The government should make sure that schools in rural areas have adequate teachers' houses. This should be done as it is difficult to find good rentable houses in some rural localities. If there are no deliberate policies to provide accommodation to teachers in the rural set up, the schools will continue to have inadequate qualified teachers. This, in the long run, will result into poor education offered in the schools.
- When planning to provide funds for school infrastructures, the government ought to pay special attention to CDSSs as most of them have deficit of the

same. The government should also lobby for international help in order to improve infrastructural status of CDSSs. This can help the schools to offer education of high quality.

- The government should introduce Neo-Youth Week system. It was observed that such self-help project undertakings were effective in promoting local participation in school development. A new form of Youth Week system which takes into account democratic principles should, therefore, be introduced.
- The government should formulate policies that will see funding agencies actively involving local people when embarking on school development. This is an important step towards making communities more responsible for the constructed structures.

5.4.8 Recommendations for Areas for Further Research

- The study was conducted on only two CDSSs in CEC in Karonga, one of the six districts in the Northern Education Division (NED), Malawi. Thus, it would be proper to replicate the study to other clusters, districts, divisions or across the country.
- Since the study involved schools that were situated in rural areas, it could be wise to carry out a similar study in urban or semi-urban areas.
- Since the study was confined to CDSSs, conducting a comparable study on private schools as well as on public primary or conventional schools could be preferable.
- The study chiefly used qualitative approach, as such mixed or quantitative research needs to be conducted on the same so that, among other things, the results could be generalised across the district, division and the country at large.
- The study focused on community participation in school infrastructural projects. A similar study can be conducted on community participation in school governance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: An Interview Guide for Interviews with Head Teachers

1. Would you please tell me how you understand by the term “community participation”?
2. How are local people engaged in locally-funded projects at your school?
3. How do funding agencies involve community residents in infrastructural projects at your school?
4. What do you think makes community members interested to take part in infrastructural projects at your school?
5. What do you think makes local people unwilling to take part in infrastructural projects at your school?
6. Between projects in which local inhabitants are involved and those in which they are not, which ones are more successful? Why do you think this is the case?
7. Suggest ways of improving local people’s participation in school infrastructural projects.

Appendix B: An Interview Guide for Interviews with Coordinators of Funding Agencies

1. What do you understand by the term “community participation”?
2. How do you involve the villagers in school infrastructural projects?
3. To what extent do you think you engage local people in the projects?
4. What do you think are the factors that motivate community residents to take part in school infrastructural projects?
5. Why do you think sometimes villagers are not disposed to get involved in school infrastructural projects?
6. What challenges do you face when working with community dwellers at the school(s)?
7. How do you address the challenges?
8. Suggest what can be done to improve local people’s involvement in school projects.

Appendix C: An Interview Guide for Interviews with PTA and SMC Chairpersons

1. Would you please tell me how you understand by the term “community participation”?
2. How do local people participate in locally-funded infrastructural projects?
3. To what extent do funding agencies involve villagers when embarking on infrastructural projects at the school?
4. What do you think prompts local residents to participate in school infrastructural projects?
5. What do you think dismays community members to take part in school infrastructural projects?
6. What measures do you put in place to ensure effective community participation in school infrastructural projects?
7. What challenges do you face when involving local people in infrastructural projects at the school?
8. How do you deal with these challenges?
9. What do you think can be done to improve the way local people participate in projects at the school?

Appendix D: An Interview Guide for Interviews with Councillors

1. What do you understand by the term “community participation”?
2. How are local people involved in infrastructural projects at the school?
3. What do you think stimulates local dwellers to participate in infrastructural projects at the school?
4. Why are local people at times disinclined to take part in infrastructural projects at the school?
5. What measures do you put in place to enable local people to take part in school infrastructural projects?
6. What challenges are faced when engaging local people in school infrastructural projects?
7. How are these challenges addressed?
8. Suggest what can be done to improve community participation in school infrastructural projects.

Appendix E: An Interview Guide for Interviews with Ordinary People

1. Would you please tell me how you understand by the term “community participation”?
2. How are you involved in infrastructural projects at the school?
3. What inspires you to take part in school projects?
4. What discourages you from participating in projects at the school?
5. What challenges do you face when taking part in projects at the school?
6. How are the above stated problems handled?
7. How do you think you should be involved in school infrastructural projects?

Appendix F: An Interview Guide for Interviews with Traditional Leaders

1. Would you please tell me how you understand by the term “community participation”?
2. How are local people in your area engaged in infrastructural projects at the school?
3. What are the challenges faced when engaging the villagers in the projects at the school?
4. How are the above-mentioned problems sorted out?
5. What makes local residents eager to take part in infrastructural projects at the school?
6. What dispirits local people from taking part in school infrastructural projects?
7. How do you get to know about school projects?
8. How do you communicate school projects to your people?
9. What do you think can be done to improve community’s participation in school infrastructural projects?

Appendix G: Documentary Review Guide

1. Are local people involved in identifying, planning, implementing and evaluating school infrastructural projects?
2. Are school committee members involved in SDF budgeting?
3. How do local people take part in school infrastructural development?
4. What discourages local people from taking part in school projects?
5. What motivates local people to take part in school projects?
6. How often do PTA and SMC members meet?
7. Do teachers cooperate well with school committee members?
8. How effective are the projects in which local people are involved?
9. How effective are the projects in which local people are not involved?

Appendix H: A letter of requesting for permission to conduct the study in Chilumba Cluster

C/O Mzuzu University

Private Bag 201

Luwinga, Mzuzu 2.

20th May, 2017.

The Educational Division Manager (N)

Post Office Box 133

Mzuzu 2.

Dear Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEACH STUDY AT KHWAWA AND THUNDUTI CDSS

I would like to ask for permission from your office to collect data from two schools which fall under your educational division.

I am **Bruno P.J. Katepeska**, a student at Mzuzu University in Master of Education (Leadership and Management) programme. As part of requirements to fulfil the course, I am supposed to carry out a research study. My topic is ‘An Investigation on Community Participation in Infrastructural Projects in Community Day Secondary Schools in Chilumba Educational Cluster.’”

In the two sampled schools, I intend to interview head teachers, councillors, PTA and SMC chairpersons, representatives of some funding agencies, ordinary people and traditional leaders.

Individual interviews will be used to all informants except on ordinary people where focus group discussions (FGDs) will be employed.

The information that will be collected will be treated with utmost confidentiality and the informants will be completely anonymous. Participants in the study will be free to withdraw from participating in the study at any time they will feel like doing so.

I look forward to your kind consideration on this academic requirement.

Yours Faithfully,

Bruno P.J. Katepeska

Appendix I: An introduction letter from Mzuzu University

MZUZU UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TEACHING STUDIES

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Mr. Bruno Katepeska is a graduate student at Mzuzu University. He has finished the first phase of his programme. The second phase of his programme requires him to conduct a research in two schools in Karonga. I am therefore writing to your office seeking your permission for him to conduct his research at Khwawa and Thunduti Community Day Secondary Schools.

The topic of his research is:

An Investigation on Community engagement in Educational Projects in Malawi: A Case study of selected schools in Chilumba Education Cluster.

My office appreciates your assistance,

Regards



Sam Dumba Safuli (PhD)
COORDINATOR MED. PROGRAMME

Appendix J: A letter of introduction from EDM, NED

Telephone: +265 1 312 144
+265 1 312 107
Fax: +265 1 312 640
In reply please quote:-



Communications should be addressed to
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER (NORTH)
P.O. BOX 133
MZUZU

Ref No: 2/1A

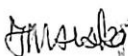
6th June , 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: BRUNO KATEPESKA

The above officer requested this office to provide him permission for academic research on the Topic of " An investigation on Community engagement in Educational Projects in Malawi." to the following schools: Khwawa CDSS and Thunduti Community day Secondary School

Approval is hereby granted for him to do so.


T.N. Msiska
EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER (N)
2017-06-06
EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER (N)
P.O. BOX 133
MZUZU

Appendix K: Information Sheet for Head Teachers

Research Study on Community Participation in School Infrastructural Projects CDSSs in CEC in Malawi

I write to ask for your permission if I could interview you on issues pertaining to school infrastructural development. The interview is purely for academic purposes.

I am Bruno P.J. Katepeska, currently a student at Mzuzu University in Master of Education (Leadership and management) programme. Currently, I am in Chilumba Educational Cluster to conduct a study on “An Investigation on Community Participation in Infrastructural Projects in Community Day Secondary Schools in Chilumba Educational Cluster” as a partial fulfilment of the above-mentioned programme. My focus will be to find out how local people are involved in school infrastructural projects, factors that affect their participation and ways of improving local participation in the projects.

The major aim of this interview is for me to get a deeper insight about community participation in infrastructural projects at your school. In order to capture all the information and to save time, I would like to voice-record the proceedings of the interviews if you accept and soon after the project is done the voices will be deleted. I also intend to review minutes of PTA and SMC meetings and other related records at your school.

Your school stands to benefit from this interview as the study will contribute to understanding that local people are useful vessels in addressing the problem of shortage or lack of proper school infrastructures. In addition, the study will contribute knowledge to the research in education that developing countries may find useful.

If you accept to participate, I would like to assure you that your participation is voluntary, no negative consequences will result from your participation and all information will be treated with utmost confidentiality. That is, the responses you give will be used solely for academic purposes and you reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time you may wish. More to this, you have all liberties not to answer some questions. To promote confidentiality, your identities and data you will give will be anonymous when writing the thesis.

I am therefore humbled to request you to participate in this one hour interview by answering to the best of your knowledge on the questions I will ask.

I will provide you with a summary of research results on completion at the instance of your request.

I look forward to your kind acceptance on my request.

Name : Bruno P.J. Katepeska (researcher)

Cell phone : 0888 442 272/ 0995 390 490

Email : bpkate86@gmail.com

Signature _____

(Mzuzu University)

Appendix L: Informed Consent Form for Head Teachers

Head teacher’s Interview, Voice-Recording and Document Review

I _____ consent to the research conducted by Mr Bruno P.J. Katepeska on “Community Participation in Infrastructural Projects in Community Day Secondary Schools in Chilumba Educational Cluster”. I realise that no negative consequences will arise as a result of my participation in the study, and that the study is conducted for the purposes of improving teaching and learning by improving the status of school infrastructures. My participation is voluntary and I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time

Interviews

I further consent to be interviewed as part of the study. I understand that I have the right to review the notes made on our conversation before these are used for analysis, if I so choose. I can delete or amend any material or retract or revise any of my remarks. Everything I say will be kept confidential by the researcher. In the research report, I will be anonymised. In addition, any person I refer to in the interview and name of the school will be kept in confidentiality.

Voice-Recording

I also consent to be voice-recorded during the interview. I also understand that I have the right to review the recorded information. I can delete or amend any material or retract or revise any of my remarks. Everything I say will be kept confidential by the researcher. In the research report, I will be anonymised. In addition, any person I refer to in the interview and name of the school will be kept confidential.

Document Reviewing

I also consent to reviewing minutes of PTA and SMC meetings about school infrastructural projects and other related records of the school. I understand that the researcher will keep the information confidential and the school will not be mentioned by name if special references are made to it.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix M: Information Sheet for Traditional Leaders for Conducting the Study in Their Area.

Research Study on Community Participation in School Infrastructural Projects CDSSs in CEC in Malawi

I write to ask for your permission if I could interview you on issues pertaining to schoolinfrastructural development. The interview is purely for academic purposes.

I am Bruno P.J. Katepeska, currently a student at Mzuzu University in Master of Education (Leadership and management) programme. Currently, I am in Chilumba Educational Cluster to conduct a study on “Community Participation in Infrastructural Projects in Community Day Secondary Schools in Chilumba Educational Cluster” as a partial fulfilment of the above-mentioned programme. My focus will be to find out how local people are involved in school infrastructural projects, factors that affect their participation and ways of improving local participation in the projects.

I would like to interview ordinary people in your area on ways in which they are involved in school projects, factors affecting their participation and ways of improving their participation. In order to capture all the information and to save time, I would like to voice-record the proceedings of the interviews if the sampled people will accept and soon after the project is done the voices will be deleted.

Your school stands to benefit from this interview as the study will contribute to understanding how local people are useful vessels in addressing the problem of shortage or lack of proper school infrastructures. In addition, the study will contribute knowledge to the research in education that developing countries may find useful.

If the selected people accept to participate, I would like to assure them that their participation is voluntary, no negative consequences will result from their participation and all information will be treated with utmost confidentiality. That is, the responses they will give will be used for the purpose of the study only and they will be free to withdraw from the study at any time they would feel so. At the same time, they will be free not to answer some questions. To promote confidentiality, their identities and data they will give will have no name tagged when writing the thesis.

I will be grateful if you grant me permission to conduct the study in your area.

I will provide you with a summary of research results on completion on your request.

Name : Bruno P.J. Katepeska (researcher)

Cell phone: 0888 442 272/ 0995 390 490

Email : bpkate86@gmail.com

Signature _____

(Mzuzu University)

Appendix N: Informed Consent Form for Traditional Leaders for Conducting the Study in Their Area

Ordinary People Interview and Voice-Recording

I _____ consent to the research conducted by Mr Bruno P.J. Katepeska on “Community Participation in Infrastructural Projects in Community Day Secondary Schools in Chilumba Educational Cluster”. I realise that no negative consequences will arise as a result of my village’s participation in the study, and that the study is conducted for the purposes of improving teaching and learning by improving the status of school infrastructures. My village participates voluntarily and I understand that my village may withdraw in the study at any time.

Interviews

I further consent to my subjects being interviewed as part of the study. I also understand that the sampled people have the right to review the notes made of your conversation before these are used for analysis if they so choose. The randomly selected people can delete or amend any material or retract or revise any of their remarks. Everything they say will be kept confidential by the researcher and they will be kept anonymous in the research report. In addition, any person they refer to in the interview and name of the school will be kept confidential.

Voice-Recording

I also give consent to you to voice-record the informants. I also understand that these informants have the right to review the recorded information. They can delete or amend any material or retract or revise any of their remarks. Everything they say will be kept confidential by the researcher and the participants will be anonymised. In addition, any persons they refer to in the interview and name of the school will be kept confidential.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix O: Information Sheet for Respondents

Research Study on Community Participation in School Infrastructural Projects CDSSs in CEC in Malawi

I write to ask for your permission if I could interview you on issues pertaining to school infrastructural development. The interview is purely for academic purposes.

I am Bruno P.J. Katepeska, currently a student at Mzuzu University in Master of Education (Leadership and management) programme. Currently, I am in Chilumba Educational Cluster to conduct a study on “Community Participation in Infrastructural Projects in Community Day Secondary Schools in Chilumba Educational Cluster” as a partial fulfilment of the above-mentioned programme. My focus will be to find out how local people are involved in school infrastructural projects, factors that affect their participation and ways of improving local participation in the projects.

The major aim of this interview is for me to get a deeper insight about community participation in infrastructural projects at your school. In order to capture all the information and to save time, I would like to voice-record the proceedings of the interviews if you accept and soon after the project is done the voices will be deleted.

Your school stands to benefit from this interview as the study will contribute to understanding how local people are useful vessels in addressing the problem of shortage or lack of proper school infrastructures. In addition, the study will contribute knowledge to the research in education that developing countries may find useful.

If you accept to participate, I would like to assure you that your participation is voluntary, no negative consequences will result from your participation and all information will be treated with utmost confidentiality. That is, the responses you give will be used solely for academic purposes and you reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time you may wish. More to this, you have all liberties not to answer some the questions. To promote confidentiality, your identities and data you will give will be kept anonymous when writing the thesis.

I am therefore humbled to request you to participate in this one hour interview by answering to the best of your knowledge on the questions I will ask.

I will provide you with a summary of research results on completion at the instance of your request.

Name : Bruno P.J. Katepeska (researcher)

Cell phone : 0888 442 272/ 0995 390 490

Email : bpkate86@gmail.com

Signature _____

(Mzuzu University)

Appendix P: Consent Letter for the Rest of the Respondents

Interview and Voice-Recording for the Rest of the Respondents

I _____ consent to the research conducted by Mr Bruno P.J. Katepeska on
“Community Participation in Infrastructural Projects in Community Day Secondary Schools in

Chilumba Educational Cluster”. I realise that no negative consequences will arise as a result of my participation in the study, and that the study is conducted for the purposes of improving teaching and learning by improving the status of school infrastructures. My participation is voluntary and I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Interviews

I further consent to be interviewed as part of the study. I understand that I have the right to review the notes made on our conversation before these are used for analysis, if I so choose. I can delete or amend any material or retract or revise any of my remarks. Everything I say will be kept confidential by the researcher. In the research report, I will be anonymised. In addition, any person I refer to in the interview and name of the school will be kept in confidentiality.

Voice-Recording

- i. I also consent to be voice-recorded during the interview. I also understand that I have the right to review the recorded information. I can delete or amend any material or retract or revise any of my remarks. Everything I say will be kept confidential by the researcher. In the research report, I will be anonymised. In addition, any person I refer to in the interview and name of the school will be kept confidential.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____