

Determinants of Village Community Members' Awareness on Constituency Development Catalyst Fund (CDCF) in Vwawa Constituency, Mbozi District, Tanzania

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Abstract

This study assessed the determinants of village community members' awareness of CDCF in Vwawa Constituency, Tanzania. The absence of systematic research on how different information sources influence awareness leaves policymakers without evidence-based strategies to strengthen individual community members' engagement in CDCF projects implementation and decision-making. Specifically, the study examines the association between awareness of individuals and socio-demographic factors and the relationship between the source of information and individual awareness on CDCF. In reducing travel costs and administrative burdens, a sample of 250 households was drawn using multistage cluster sampling, and data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Data analysis involved inferential statistics (chi-square) and thematic analysis of qualitative data. The findings established that the association between awareness of CDCF and social demographic factors, including age, sex, marital status, and education level, was not found to have a significant relationship. However, the socio- factors (leadership position) were significantly related. The study also found that the association between awareness of CDCF and the sources of information (village assembly, ward development committee (WDC), member of parliament (MP), and seminars) were significantly related, while newspapers, radio, and television were not significantly related. The study concluded that CDCF information is not reaching people based on their demographic profiles. As such, information remains within the leaders (WDC, WEO and village council members) who sit in planning meetings. The study recommended that the beneficiaries of the CDCF should be enlightened about the funding in order to comply with the requirements of the CDCF Act, 2009, as intended by the law.

Key terms: Awareness, CDCF, community members, socio-demographic factors, sources of information.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the establishment of the Constituency Development Catalyst Fund (CDCF) in 2009 to facilitate grassroots development and enhance community-led decision-making, there remains a significant gap in awareness among village community members in Vwawa Constituency. This lack of awareness limits the ability of local citizens to participate in the initiation, implementation, and oversight of projects intended to benefit them. The absence of systematic research on how different information sources influence awareness leaves policymakers without evidence-based strategies to strengthen individual community members' engagement in CDCF projects implementation and decision-making.

Constituency Development Funds (CDFs), including Tanzania's Constituency Development Catalyst Fund (CDCF), exemplify a global trend in fiscal decentralisation aimed at channelling central government resources directly to local constituencies for community-driven infrastructure and social projects, thereby addressing disparities in service delivery and fostering participatory governance. Originating in India with the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) in 1993, CDFs have proliferated across Asia and Africa, with at least 23 countries adopting similar mechanisms by 2023 (IBP, 2023). In Asia, Pakistan and the Philippines use CDFs to counter patronage politics post-regime changes, with allocations rising sixfold in the Philippines by 2010, yet persistent issues of corruption undermine trust (Tsubura, 2021).

In Africa, where decentralisation policies seek to bridge urban-rural divides, CDFs have been pivotal yet contentious; Nigeria's zonal intervention projects under CDFs since 1999 have improved rural access but suffer from opacity, with public perceptions of funds as "conduits for treasury drainage" (Bojang, 2023). Similarly, Zambia's CDF, scaled up 16-fold in 2021 to US\$1.3 million per constituency, emphasises grassroots participation through district committees, aligning with climate-resilient growth (Invest Africa, 2023). Equally, Rwanda integrate CDFs with national development plans, focusing on poverty alleviation, though low community awareness hampers outcomes (IBP, 2023). Likewise, Uganda's 2005 CDF, initially disbursed directly to MPs, evolved into a more

structured model but faced elite capture, prompting reforms for transparency (Policy Forum, 2023). Equally, Kenya's National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) has disbursed over KSh 522 billion since 2003, enabling over 20,000 classrooms and 5,000 health facilities, though marred by governance challenges (Daily Nation, 2024).

The Constituency Development Catalyst Fund (CDCF) remains one of Tanzania's most ambitious attempts at fiscal decentralisation, created through the Constituency Development Catalyst Fund Act No. 16 of 2009 to empower communities by allocating public resources directly to electoral constituencies for locally prioritised projects (United Republic of Tanzania, 2009). Each year, at least 7.5 per cent of national domestic revenue (excluding grants and loans) is set aside for the fund, with 25 per cent distributed equally across all 264 constituencies and 75 per cent allocated according to population size, poverty count, and land area (Ministry of Finance and Planning, 2021). In rural constituencies such as Vwawa constituency in Mbozi District, the CDCF has financed critical infrastructure, including classrooms, dispensaries, water points, and village markets, thereby complementing overstretched local government budgets (Mgani & Chingonikaya, 2022). These investments are particularly vital in Vwawa, where over 78 per cent of the population depends on subsistence agriculture and poverty levels exceed the national average (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

Despite these contributions, evidence from the past five years reveals persistent challenges in transparency, accountability, and community ownership of CDCF projects (Chingonikaya & Kitali, 2024). Many citizens perceive the fund as a parliamentary rather than a community resource, largely because information about allocation criteria, project selection processes, and monitoring mechanisms rarely reaches village level in accessible formats (Mgani & Chingonikaya, 2022). This knowledge deficit undermines the fund's catalytic potential and contradicts Tanzania's decentralisation-by-devolution policy and the Third National Five-Year Development Plan (2021/22–2025/26), which emphasises citizen participation as a cornerstone of inclusive growth (MFP, 2021).

Low awareness of the CDCF among village community members in Vwawa Constituency continues to limit effective participation, foster elite capture, and reduce accountability in the use of public resources. A 2023 study in neighbouring Vwawa Constituency found that only 38 per cent of villagers could correctly explain the purpose and procedures of the CDCF, while fewer than 20 per cent had ever attended a project prioritisation meeting (Kitali & Mwakitalu, 2023). Similar patterns in Vwawa have resulted in projects that do not reflect genuine community needs, delayed implementation, and misallocation of funds (Mgani & Chingonikaya, 2022). Women and youth, who constitute the majority of the rural population, are particularly marginalised in decision-making processes due to inadequate information dissemination channels (Chingonikaya & Kitali, 2024).

This study focuses on the determinants of village community members' awareness of CDCF in Vwawa Constituency, which includes the association between awareness of individuals and social demographic factors and the relationship between the source of information and individual awareness of CDCF. On one hand, socio-demographic profile, namely age, sex, marital status and education, are not significant determinants of awareness. This contradicts standard development theories, which suggest that more educated or socially established individuals (older adults) should be more informed. This implies that the information is not *publicly accessible* enough for these traits to matter; it is essentially "hidden" from the general citizenry (Sinyangwe, 2025). On the other hand, communication channels (Radio, Newspapers, and Social networks) are effective for national news, yet they are currently inadequate for constituency-level transparency in Vwawa constituency. This signifies the need for "hyper-local" communication strategies that have yet to be institutionalised. Community members only become aware of the CDCF when a leader chooses to speak about it. Tsubura (2021) posits that this dependency creates a "Political Bias Gap," where the MP serves as the primary information broker, often framing development as a personal "gift" rather than a public entitlement.

Many studies conducted on CDCF have focused on gender inclusivity in CDCF, the benefits of CDCF, participation in CDCF implementation, and the

functionality of CDCF. (Mgani, 2021; Tsubura, 2021; Daudi, 2022; Thomas & Makwai, 2022; Chingonikaya & Masunga, 2023; Kitali & Mwakitalu, 2023; Chingonikaya & Kitali, 2024; Makombe & Kesale, 2025). According to the literature, there is insufficient information about this study in the Tanzanian Context. Such studies have overlooked the specific issue of community members' awareness of the CDCF in Tanzania. To address this gap, the researcher explores the factors affecting awareness among village residents in Vwawa Constituency, Mbozi District.

By identifying influential sources (for example, radio as a mass medium), the study can recommend strategies to enhance compatibility with local cultures, accelerating diffusion and participation. This aligns with community-driven development paradigms, where awareness drives empowerment and accountability (Chingonikaya & Masunga, 2023). The absence of systematic research on how different information sources (radio, village assemblies, extension officers, social media, etc.) influence awareness leaves policymakers without evidence-based strategies to strengthen civic engagement. Without addressing this awareness gap, the CDCF risks perpetuating top-down development practices that contradict Tanzania's commitments under Sustainable Development Goal 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) and the national vision of building a participatory middle-income society by 2025 (United Republic of Tanzania, 2021).

This study, specifically, assessed the level of awareness of village community members in Vwawa Constituency regarding the Constituency Development Catalyst Fund (CDCF) and examined the socio-demographic and sources of information that influence this awareness. Accordingly, the presented study was guided by the following hypothesis: There is an association between awareness of individuals and socio-demographic factors, and there is a relationship between different information sources and the level of awareness and participation in CDCF activities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review Diffusion of Innovations (DOI)

The study adopted one theory, namely, diffusion of innovations (DOI). The study is anchored on Everett

Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003), updated and applied in recent Tanzanian contexts (Kitali & Mwakitalu, 2023; Mushi & Mwandumba, 2024). The theory explains how new ideas (in this case, knowledge about the CDCF) spread through communication channels over time among members of a social system. Awareness of the CDCF can be treated as an innovation whose adoption depends on sources of information, namely, newspapers, radio, village meetings, WDC, MP, social networks, and seminars.

The primary variable in this study is "awareness," which is the first stage of the innovation-decision process. According to Rogers (2003), diffusion refers to the process by which an innovation, in this case, the CDCF as a relatively new financial mechanism, is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system. Unlike Participatory Governance Theory, which assumes awareness is a static byproduct of invitation to meetings, DOI treats awareness as a dynamic variable influenced by the relative advantage, compatibility, and complexity of the information being shared. This allows the researcher to categorise Vwawa constituency's individual community members into adopters (innovators, early adopters, and so on), providing a more granular understanding of why awareness levels vary across the constituency.

In Vwawa, the theory is highly relevant because low awareness reflects slow diffusion caused by high perceived complexity of CDCF procedures, limited observability of completed projects, and reliance on informal rather than mass-media channels (Mgani & Chingonikaya, 2022). Likewise, DOI advocates socio-demographic influence on individual community members' awareness about CDCF. Furthermore, the study will generate practical recommendations for

accelerating diffusion and increasing community ownership of the fund.

Conceptual Framework

This framework identifies Socio-demographic factors and sources of Information as independent variables that directly influence CDCF Awareness, the dependent variable. This is to say, socio-demographic factors: age, sex, marital status, education level, and leadership position, determine an individual's capacity to access and process information. While sources of information are newspapers, radio, village meetings, Ward Development Committees (WDC), Members of Parliament (MP), social networks, and seminars. Finally, CDCF Awareness: measured through community knowledge of development outcomes, participation levels, and accountability mechanisms

This framework identifies Socio-demographic Factors and Sources of Information as independent variables that directly influence CDCF Awareness, the dependent variable. As such, Socio-Demographic Influence: Individuals with higher education levels or leadership positions (for example, within the WDC) typically exhibit higher awareness due to frequent exposure to administrative guidelines. Gender and age also play roles; for example, younger community members may rely more on social networks, while older members prioritise village meetings. Likewise, Information Source Impact: Direct engagement platforms, such as village meetings and seminars, often produce higher awareness of accountability and participation rights compared to passive media like radio or newspapers. Ultimately, Awareness Outcome: when community members are well-informed through these channels, they are better equipped to demand accountability for CDCF expenditures and participate in identifying development outcomes suitable for the Vwawa community.

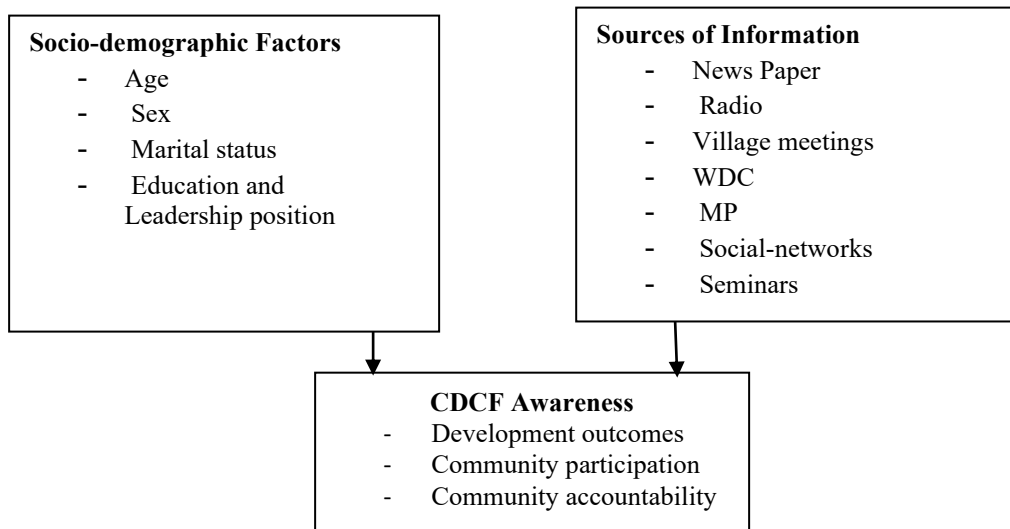


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Showing Determinants of Village Community Members' Awareness on CDCF (Source: Author's own construction, 2025)

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a mixed-methods design, namely qualitative and quantitative. A mixed-methods design facilitates triangulation, where findings from one method are cross-verified by findings from another, significantly strengthening the study's internal validity. (Creswell, 2018). A cross-sectional design was conducted in Vwawa Constituency, Songwe Region. In reducing travel costs and administrative burdens, a sample size of 250 households was drawn using multistage cluster sampling: four wards were purposively selected to represent urban, peri-urban, and rural settings, followed by simple random sampling of villages and households within each ward. Given the population of (N) of 70,014 across the five wards of Vwawa Constituency (Ihanda, Mlangali, Nanyala, Ruanda, and Isandula) (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). To calculate the sample size, Yamane's (1967) formula was applied. With a population of 70,014 and a margin of error of 0.063 (6.3%), the resulting sample consisted of roughly 250 respondents. Proportional Distribution of Sample per Ward is illustrated in Table 1.

A structured questionnaire with multiple-choice questions on awareness and information sources was used to collect quantitative data. Qualitative data were gathered through 15 key-informant interviews with district planning officers (DPOs), ward executive officers (WDCs), CDCF committee members, and

village development committee members (VDCs). Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics (chi-square) using SPSS version 28 for quantitative data. As such, chi-Square Test was adopted to measure the association between awareness of the individuals and socio-demographic factors namely, age, sex, marital status and education level had, and leadership position. Likewise, a chi-square analysis was done to examine relationship between information sources and awareness of the CDCF, the sources of information included newspapers, radio, friends/relatives, television, village meeting, WDC, member of parliament (MP), social networks and seminars.

However, thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data. Categories of arguments with the same codes in each objective were linked in a logical and meaningful organisation. Then, single-core categories were identified. This process was facilitated by qualitative data analysis software (NVivo) to manage and organise the large volume of textual data efficiently. Triangulation and member-checking enhanced validity and reliability. A research permit was provided by Hedaru Life Servers Association, particularly the NGOs director's office, to introduce the researcher to the district authorities where the study was conducted. Key informants were labelled by numbers rather than names to ensure anonymity. The researcher had to

seek consent from the participants before recording | conversations with them.

Table 1: Proportional Distribution of Sample per Ward

Ward	Population (Nh)	Calculation	Sample (nh)
Ihanda	23,533	$(23,533 / 70,014) \times 250$	84
Mlangali	18,314	$(18,314 / 70,014) \times 250$	65
Nanyala	10,492	$(10,492 / 70,014) \times 250$	38
Ruanda	10,313	$(10,313 / 70,014) \times 250$	37
Isandula	7,362	$(7,362 / 70,014) \times 250$	26
Total	70,014		250

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section deals with findings and discussion of the data collected from the study area, which are in line with the objectives. The section is divided into two sub-sections, namely, the Association between awareness of individuals on CDCF and social demographic factors and the relationship between the source of information and individual awareness on CDCF.

Association Between Awareness of Individuals on CDCF and Social Demographic Factors

In this sub-section, the study dealt with the relationship between awareness of the individual

community member and their socio-demographic factors. Based on Chi-squared analysis, it specifically analysed the relationship between awareness of CDCF with the age of individuals, the relationship between awareness and Sex of the individual on CDCF, the relationship between Awareness and marital status of the individual on CDCF, the relationship between Awareness and level of education of the individual on CDCF and the Relationship between awareness and leadership position of the individual on CDCF (Table 2).

Table 2: Relationship Between Awareness and Social Demographic Factors on CDCF n = 250

Category	Relationship between awareness and social demographic factors on CDCF				
	Aware	Not aware	Total	Df	χ^2 (P-Value)
Age of the respondents	Count (%)	Count (%)	Count (%)		
18-28	14 (13.6)	40 (27.2)	54 (21.6)	4	8.739 (0.068)
29-38	28 (27.2)	37 (25.2)	65 (26.0)		
39 – 48	34 (33.0)	32 (21.8)	66 (26.4)		
49 – 58	22 (21.4)	28 (19.0)	50 (20.0)		
59 and above	5 (4.9)	10 (6.8)	15 (6.0)		
Total	100 (103)	147 (100)	250 (100)		
Sex of the responds					
Male	72 (69.9)	95 (64.6)	167 (66.8)	1	0.760 (0.383)
Female	31 (30.1)	52 (35.4)	83 (33.2)		
Total	103 (100)	147 (100)	250 (100)		
Marital status of the respondents					
Not Married	11 (10.7)	21 (14.3)	32 (12.8)	3	1.482 (0.686)
Married	88 (85.4)	117 (79.6)	205 (82.0)		
Widow/widower	2 (1.9)	5 (3.4)	7 (2.8)		
Separate	2 (1.9)	4 (2.7)	6 (2.4)		
Total	103 (100)	147 (100)	250 (100)		
Level of education of respondents					
No education	1 (1.1)	4 (2.7)	5 (2.0)	5	7.893(0.162)
Primary education	75 (72.8)	116 (78.9)	191 (76.4)		
Secondary education	13 (12.6)	19 (12.9)	32 (12.8)		
Certificate	6 (5.8)	6 (4.1)	12 (4.8)		
Diploma	5 (4.9)	1 (0.7)	6 (2.4)		
Advanced diploma/degree	3 (1.6)	0.7 (1)	4 (1.6)		
Total	103 (100)	147 (100)	250 (100)		
Leadership position of respondents					
Village executive officer	9 (8.7)	0 (0,0)	9 (3.6)	4	31.971(0.000)
Hamlet chairperson	9 (8.7)	4 (2.7)	13 (5.2)		
Village development committee	30 (29.1)	28 (19.0%)	58 (23.2%)		
None	41 (39.8)	104 (70.7)	145 (58.0)		
Others (teacher, and other officers)	14 (10.3)	11 (7.5)	25 (10.0)		
Total	103 (100)	147 (100)	250 (100)		

Source: Field Data, 2025

Relationship Between Awareness on CDCF With the Age of Individuals

The age factor of the respondent was an important aspect to include in this study. The study found that 33 per cent of respondents who were aware of CDCF were aged between 39 and 48 years old, whereas 4.9 per cent of respondents who were aware were aged between 59 and above years old (Table 2). However, the relationship is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 8.739$,

P -value = 0.068). There are reasons why the age groups differ in number with regard to awareness of CDCF, for instance, the age group between 29 and 48 is the age group that participates fully in development activities in the communities. While most of the individuals aged 59 years old and above do not involve themselves much in community activities, there was a small number of individuals who knew about CDCF in the study area. This means awareness of CDCF is

independent; as such, to be aware or not aware of CDCF does not depend on the age group of the individuals. Therefore, there might be some other factors related to the awareness of CDCF apart from the age groups of individuals.

Conversely, studies in regions like Rukwa and Mbeya found that younger individuals (aged 18–35) often possess higher awareness due to their increased access to digital information and social media platforms, where CDCF projects are occasionally publicised (Mahmood & Smith, 2023). However, older adults (aged 45+) often demonstrate higher "functional awareness" through long-standing involvement in village assemblies and traditional social networks, even if they lack formal documentation of fund guidelines (Chakrabarty, 2020).

Relationship Between Awareness and Sex of the Individual on CDCF

The findings showing the relationship between awareness and the sex of an individual on CDCF established that more males (69.9%) were aware of CDCF as compared to females (31.1%) who were aware of CDCF in the same villages/areas. Likewise, the significance level for the chi-squared statistic was greater than 0.05 ($=0.76$, $P\text{-value}=0.383$) (Table 2). This implies that community awareness of CDCF does not depend on the sex of individual villagers. However, on the other hand, it can be argued that men always appear to be more active in community activities. Likewise, recent studies in Tanzania highlight that women often exhibit lower levels of formal awareness regarding CDCF guidelines compared to men.

A study by Thomas and Makwai (2022) and Kicheleri (2020) established that men are more likely to attend village assemblies where CDCF projects are announced. According to Kitole and Utouh (2023), women's awareness in rural areas like Vwawa constituency often relies on interpersonal networks and "word-of-mouth" from religious or women's micro-finance groups (VICOBA), which can lead to fragmented or incomplete knowledge of the formal CDCF legal framework.

Relationship Between Awareness and Marital Status of the Individual on CDCF

Table 1 revealed that 85.4 per cent of the respondents who were married were aware of CDCF, whereas very few widows/widowers (1.9%) and separated (1.9%) were aware of CDCF. On the other hand, the findings showed that the association between awareness and marital status of the individuals was not significantly related ($= 1.482$, $P\text{-value}=0.686$) (Table 2). This indicates that the community awareness of CDCF does not depend on the marital status of an individual; that is, marital status does not influence individuals' awareness of CDCF. Nevertheless, the smaller number of respondents were single, widowed, and separated individuals. The implication of the findings is that the majority of families were likely to settle in one place and deal with development activities in their communities. In this case, they had the greater opportunity of being well informed about the funding of development projects in their villages that include CDCF-funded projects. Similarly, while marriage increases the flow of information, recent gender-focused literature warns that it does not always guarantee equal awareness. However, in many traditional marital setups, the male head of household acts as the "information gatekeeper" (Thomas & Makwai, 2022).

Relationship Between Awareness and the Level of Education of the Individual on CDCF

The analysed data on the study of the relationship between awareness of individual villagers on CDCF and the education level of individual villagers indicated that more individuals with primary school education (72.8%) were aware of CDCF, and very few with advanced diploma and above (1.6 per cent) were also aware of CDCF. Conversely, the findings confirmed that there was no significant association between community awareness and education level ($= 7.893$, $P\text{-value} = 0.162$) (Table 2). Therefore, the results rejected the null hypothesis. CDCF does not depend on the level of education of the individual villagers in the study area. As such, the majority of the respondents had at least obtained primary education; this group of respondents was dominant in all the villages of the study area. As such, those with primary education or less often perceive the CDCF as a "political gift" from their Member of Parliament rather than a statutory

right, leading to a "passive awareness" that lacks the critical depth required for accountability (Ismail, 2022).

Equally, the literate individuals who were found in villages of the study area were primary/secondary school teachers, professional officers like livestock officers, extension officers, and agricultural officers. Some of these literate individuals participated in the planning and implementation of CDCF-funded projects, which signifies that awareness about CDCF was not a problem for them. Studies noted that educated community members are more "information-literate," meaning they are not only aware that the fund exists but also understand the formal procedures for project identification and monitoring (Mohamedi, 2025).

Relationship Between Awareness and Leadership Position of the Individual on CDCF

The study associated awareness and leadership positions of the individuals with CDCF. The findings of the analysis revealed that individuals with leadership positions, such as Village development committee members (29.1%), were among the group of individuals who were aware of CDCF. On the other hand, leaders like village executive officers (8.7%) and hamlet chairpersons (8.7%) were aware of CDCF. Nevertheless, the significance level for the chi-square statistic was less than 0.05 ($\chi^2 = 31.971$, $P\text{-value} = 0.000$). Hence, the results refused to reject the null hypothesis (Table 2). This indicates that the awareness about CDCF is influenced by the leadership position of an

individual, for example, VDC members, VEOs and the Hamlet's chairperson, have a greater chance of knowing about CDCF than individuals without a leadership position. In this case, leaders were aware of CDCF for several reasons, for instance, VEOs, hamlet chairpersons and VDC were the groups of individuals who were involved directly in the implementation of development projects in villages, and direct participation and facilitation of the awareness about CDCF. Equally, studies in Tanzania emphasise that membership in local governing bodies, such as the Constituency Development Catalyst (CDC) Committee or WDC, guarantees a high level of awareness regarding fund allocation and project selection. According to Daudi (2022) and Innovative Publication Repository (2025), CDC committee members (often led by the MP) have a profound understanding of the CDCF Act of 2009. This "awareness monopoly" allows leaders to maintain a top-down approach in project identification, often bypassing the community-led initiation process mandated by the law.

The Relationship Between Source of Information and Individual Awareness on CDCF

In this aspect, the study focused on determining the relationship between the source of information and awareness of CDCF. Specifically, the sub-section dealt with the association between individuals' awareness of CDCF and newspapers, radio, television, village assembly, WDC, MP, social networks and seminars as a source of information (Table 3).

Table 3: The Relationship Between Awareness on CDCF and the Source of Information n = 250

Sources of Information	Relationship between sources of information about CDCF and Awareness on CDCF				
	Source of Awareness	Not a source of awareness	Total	df	χ^2 (P - value)
	Counts (%)	Counts (%)	Counts (%)		
News Paper					
Yes	13 (56.5)	10 (43.5)	23 (100)	1	2.455 (0.117)
No	90(39.6)	137 (60.4)	227 (100)		
Total	103 (41.2)	147 (58.8)	250 (100)		
Radio					
Yes	23 (36.5)	40 (63.5)	63 (100)	1	0.765 (0.382)
No	80 (42.8)	107 (57.2)	187 (100)		
Total	103 (41.2)	147 (58.8)	250 (100)		
Friends/relatives					
Yes	10 (34.5)	19 (65.5)	29 (100)	1	0.611 (0.434)
No	93 (42.1)	128 (57.9)	221 (100)		
Total	103 (41.2)	147 (58.8)	250 (100)		
Television					
Yes	11 (55)	9 (45)	20 (100)	1	1.709 (0.191)
No	92 (40)	138 (60)	230 (100)		
Total	103 (41.2)	147 (58.8)	250 (100)		
Village meetings					
Yes	71 (58.2)	51 (41.8)	122 (100)	1	28.415 (0.000)
No	32 (25)	96 (75)	128 (100)		
Total	103 (41.2)	147 (58.8)	250 (100)		
WDC					
Yes	27 (61.4)	17 (38.6)	44 (100)	1	8.962 (0.003)
No	76 (36.9)	130 (63.1)	206 (100)		
Total	103 (42.1)	147 (58.8)	250 (100)		
MP					
Yes	27 (64.3)	15 (35.7)	42 (100)	1	11.105 (0.001)
No	76 (36.5)	132 (63.5)	208 (100)		
Total	103 (41.2)	147 (58.8)	250 (100)		
Social net works					
Yes	3 (25)	9 (75)	12 (100)	1	1.366 (0.243)
No	100 (42)	138 (58)	238 (100)		
Total	103(41.2)	147 (58.8)	250 (100)		
Seminars					
Yes	24 (60)	16 (40)	40 (100)	1	6.947 (0.008)
No	79 (37.6)	131(62.4)	210(100)		
Total	103(41.2)	147 (58.8)	250(100)		

Source: Field Data, 2025

Individuals' Awareness on CDCF and Newspapers as a Source of Information

The findings from Table 3 indicate an association between individuals' awareness of CDCF and

newspapers as a source of information. It revealed that 56.5 per cent of the respondents said newspapers were the source of information, whereas 43.5 per cent of the respondents said newspapers were not the

source of information. However, the chi-square analysis of data on the relationship between sources of information and awareness on CDCF, particularly newspapers as the source of information, revealed that the association was not significantly related ($\chi^2 = 2.455$, $P\text{-value} = 0.117$) (Table 3). This means awareness of CDCF does not depend on newspapers as the source of information. Newspapers are not common in rural areas; the newspaper dealers are found in urban areas, not in rural areas. Nevertheless, community funds that involve politicians are rarely reported in newspapers; journalists are sensitive to these matters as they can get into conflicts with some politicians.

The findings contradict the diffusion of innovations theory, as the theory explains how ideas spread through communication channels among members of a social system. In this study, the expected communication channels about CDCF to improve its development outcomes are newspapers, radio, village meetings, WDC, MP, social networks, and seminars. However, the newspaper has less influence in spreading information about CDCF in the study area. Likewise, the developmental journalism reported that local funds like the CDCF often suffer from low prominence, with political scandals frequently overshadowing local project success stories (Mahmood & Smith, 2023). This necessitates a call for government agencies to "repackage" CDCF data into accessible newspaper supplements to ensure the information reaches the grassroots effectively.

Individuals' Awareness of CDCF and Radio as the Source of Information

The findings from Table 3 show the relationship between awareness of CDCF and Radio as the source of information. On the one hand, the findings showed that 36.5 per cent of individuals said that radio was the source of information, and 42.8 per cent said that radio was not the source of information in the study area (Table 3). Conversely, the model shows that the $p\text{-value}$ exceeded the 0.05 threshold, indicating that the relationship is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.765$, $p = 0.382$). Therefore, the findings reject the null hypothesis. Community awareness of CDCF does not depend on the radio as a source of information in the area of study. The majority seems to have no interest in listening to the radio, probably because they do not own one or because they are engaged with social

media as their main source of information. However, radios hardly broadcast about CDCF unless there is a special programme discussing it sometimes and, in some cases, the broadcast can be influenced by the MP who may prefer to publicise CDCF for personal gain.

The findings do not align with diffusion of innovations theory, as it explains how the ideas spread through communication channels among members of a social system. In this sub-section, the radio is one of the communication channels that can be used to disseminate information about CDCF and raise awareness about it. In the study areas, the radio is not a reliable source of information about CDCF. Likewise, studies found that despite its reach, radio-based awareness faces significant challenges related to the quality and frequency of information. Studies by Mbeke (2023) and Nyamu (2025) point out that information broadcast over the radio is often ephemeral; if a villager misses a specific broadcast, there is no physical record to refer back to, unlike a newspaper. Furthermore, "radio awareness" is sometimes filtered through the lens of political patronage, where MPs may use their airtime to promote CDCF projects as personal gifts rather than public entitlements, potentially distorting the community's understanding of their rights under the CDCF Act.

Individuals' Awareness of CDCF and Television as the Source of Information

The findings in Table 3 show the relationship between awareness of CDCF and television (TV) as a source of information. The response was that 55 per cent of respondents said television was the source of information about CDCF, and 40 per cent viewed that television was not a source of information about CDCF in the study area. Nevertheless, the respondents in the study area disclosed that the association is not significantly related ($\chi^2 = 1.709$, $P\text{-value} = 0.191$). This shows that awareness of CDCF in the study area was not determined by television as the source of information. TV could be the source of information for CDCF if there were a programme discussing development funds. However, Television penetration in rural areas remains limited, largely because of inadequate access to electricity and the low purchasing power of many households. The findings

are contrary to diffusion of innovations theory, as it explains how the ideas spread through communication channels among members of a social system. TV is one of the sources of information; nevertheless, in the study area, TV was not the source of information to raise awareness about CDCF. In contrast, the study conducted in Tanzania suggests that TV news programmes such as those on *ITV*, *Azam TV*, and *TBC* provide "observability," a key attribute in the diffusion of innovations theory. When villagers see televised reports of a newly constructed school or clinic funded by the CDCF, their trust in the fund's existence and effectiveness increases significantly compared to hearing about it on the radio (Lwoga, 2025; Thomas & Makwai, 2022). However, research from Sife (2023) and Magolanga (2022) notes that TV awareness is highly concentrated among peri-urban residents and those with reliable access to electricity.

Individuals' Awareness of CDCF and Village Assembly as the Source of Information

The findings from the analysis of the association between awareness and village assembly as the source of information were that 58.2 per cent said village assembly was the source of information about CDCF, while 25 per cent said village Assembly was not the source of information about CDCF in the study area. Yet, the significance level was less than 0.05 (= 28.415, P-value = 0.000) (Table 3). Therefore, the findings refused to reject the null hypothesis. The implication is that the village assembly was a determinant of information to the individual villagers in the study area. The Village Assembly is the common source of information for the individual villagers. Village public meetings provide different information, such as bylaws and reports concerning the welfare of the villagers. Therefore, the information about CDCF could be obtained through hamlet/village assembly meetings. According to the Local Government District Authorities (LGDA) Act of 1982, art. 164 (1) "The village assembly considers the proposal of bylaws made by the village council and passes them." Citizens use village assembly meetings to receive basic information on the government's undertakings.

The findings are in line with diffusion of innovations theory, as it explains how the ideas spread through communication channels among members of a social system. In the study area, information about CDCF is

spread through village assembly meetings as the communication channels for disseminating information about CDCF and has become the source of raising awareness. As such, village assemblies, as participatory forums in rural governance, exhibit a robust association with CDCF awareness by facilitating deliberative discussions that embed global issues in local contexts. Conversely, studies by Thomas (2023) and Policy Forum (2024) suggest that while many residents attend village assemblies, the information shared is often controlled by village leaders or the Member of Parliament (MP). This often results in "selective awareness," where villagers are informed about the start of a project but remain unaware of the total budget or the procurement process. This "gatekeeping" by local elites can hinder true public accountability, as the awareness generated is often superficial and geared toward political mobilisation rather than fiscal oversight.

Individuals' Awareness of CDCF and WDC as the Source of Information

The association between awareness of CDCF and WDC as the source of information in the study area revealed that 61.4 per cent of the respondents said WDC was the source of information about CDCF, whereas 36.9 per cent of the respondents said WDC was not the source of information about CDCF in the study area. This association is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 8.962$, P-value=0.003) (Table 3). However, leaders become aware of CDCF because they are directly involved in discussing and analysing development projects of the villages. This was also revealed by the WEO of Mlangali ward, who said;

...WDC do analyse the development projects that are of more priorities in different villages of a particular ward and choose those that can be supported by CDCF and thereafter publicise the information to community members in villages (Key informant, August, 2025).

This indicated that awareness depended on WDC as the source of information about CDCF in the study area. Members of WDC inform citizens in their villages/Hamlets about development activities discussed in the WDC meeting. As per the Local

Government (District Authority) Act of 1982, section 32 (1), WDC is composed of VEOs, public officers seconded to the ward, chairmen of all village councils within the ward and all village managers, if any. The findings align with diffusion of innovations theory, as it explains how the ideas spread through communication channels among members of a social system. WDC is the source of the communication channel for individual community members about CDCF.

Similarly, studies by Mgani (2021) in Vwawa and Daudi (2022) highlight that awareness is often concentrated within the WDC itself, among WEOs and VEOs, rather than being diffused to the wider community. Furthermore, research from Kesale (2022) and LAV (2025) suggests that when WDCs are active in promoting development schemes, community trust in the CDCF increases significantly. In constituencies where WDCs hold regular sensitisation meetings, individuals report not only higher awareness of the fund's existence but also a greater willingness to participate in monitoring the projects. Conversely, where WDCs are dysfunctional or perceived as politically biased, awareness is often characterised by scepticism and a lack of engagement, illustrating that the WDC is not just a source of information but a steward of public trust in the decentralisation process.

Individuals' Awareness of CDCF and MP as the Source of Information

The findings of the analysis on the relationship between awareness and Member of Parliament (MP) as a source of information reveal that 64.3 per cent said MP was the source of information about CDCF in the study area, whereas 36.5 per cent viewed that MP was not the source of information about CDCF. The relationship is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 11.105$, $P\text{-value}=0.001$) (Table 3). As such, one of the responsibilities of the MP is to meet with his people and receive different views for the development of the constituency. This was made clear by the DPO of Mbozi district, who had this to say;

...sometimes when the CDCF committee sends materials to the villages, the MP decides to go with the materials in a particular village and conduct a village public meeting to show them that he has fulfilled the

promise. This is the time villagers are informed about funds from their MP (Key informant, August, 2025).

This means that awareness of CDCF in the study area depends on MP as the source of information. The MPs have the ability to call a general assembly meeting to seek challenges and community development projects that should be implemented by the government, and the MP becomes one among the supervisors who make sure the projects are implemented. As such, research by Kawimbe and Tembo (2024) suggests that because residents rely on the MP for project updates, they are less likely to question the procurement process or project costs. In Vwawa and other constituencies, this reliance creates a "loyalty-based awareness," where citizens feel a sense of gratitude toward the MP for "bringing development," which effectively silences potential demands for transparency or audits of how the CDCF was actually spent (Mgani, 2021; Makombe & Kesale, 2025).

Individual's Awareness of CDCF and Socio Networks as the Source of Information

The association between awareness and social networks (Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube and WhatsApp) as the sources of information about CDCF is illustrated in table 2 as follows, 25 percent of the respondents viewed that social networks was the source of information about CDCF in the study area, while 42 percent revealed that social networks were not a source of information about CDF. But, this association is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 1.366$, $P\text{-value}=0.243$) (Table 3). In this case, the results rejected the null hypothesis. Awareness of CDCF does not depend on social networks in the study area. People use mobile phones and computers to surf the internet and other social networks. On one hand, this may mean that some respondents did not have devices that could facilitate surfing the internet; on the other hand, some might not be interested in surfing on CDCF-related sources. In contrast, a study by Magolanga (2022) indicated that WhatsApp groups often organised around specific wards, villages, or youth interests have become real-time "digital town halls" for CDCF updates. In these groups, project photos, budget screenshots, and meeting invitations are shared instantaneously. This means that if a social network is well-connected to local leadership, its

members possess high awareness; however, marginalised social networks (such as those of widows, the extreme poor, or ethnic minorities) may be completely bypassed by the flow of information.

Individual's Awareness of CDCF and Seminars as a Source of Information

The findings from the analysis of the relationship between awareness and seminars as the source of information showed that 60 per cent of the respondents said the seminar was the source of information about CDCF, and 37.6 per cent said the seminar was not the source of information about CDCF in the study area. In this regard, the results are significantly related ($t = 6.947$, $P\text{-value} = 0.008$) (Table 3). However, findings from the key informant established that seminars were not conducted for the villagers; the probability is that the seminars were conducted among the leaders, like WDC members; therefore, it was the source of information to the leaders and some officers. The seminars were not conducted for the villagers because the budget of CDCF was not enough to conduct seminars to educate villagers about CDCF itself. On this, one of the key informants from Mbewe village remarked that;

...individual villagers are not given seminars about CDCF. The village council is used to inform citizens about CDCF. No one knows that CDCF is theirs, rather they know that it belongs to the MP himself (Key informant, August, 2025).

This implies that a seminar is one of the best sources of information about the CDCF. However, seminars cannot be conducted for all village members; they can only be conducted for the groups that are dealing with the supervision of the implementation of the development project, including CDCF-funded projects. In this sense, a seminar can be the source of information to a few individuals who are eligible to participate in seminars about development projects. It is the task of such groups to disseminate information to the rest of the community members. According to Mgani (2021) and Thomas and Makwai (2022), seminars are the only source that provides the in-depth information required to understand the CDCF Act's multi-factor allocation formula (25% equal share,

45% population, 20% poverty, 10% geography). Without these structured learning environments, the technical awareness of how funds are actually calculated and disbursed remains opaque to the average citizen.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions: The study concluded that CDCF information is not reaching people based on their demographic profiles. In this case, whether a person is highly educated or young does not automatically increase their awareness, indicating a gap in general public communication. This implies that the fund's details are not common knowledge accessible through general life experience or schooling. Individuals holding leadership roles (for example, WDC, Village Development Committee members [VDCs]) have significantly higher awareness. This suggests that information remains within the "corridors of power," specifically among village council members and local leaders who sit in planning meetings. In this case, awareness is "trapped" at the leadership level. Information flows to those in power, but fails to "trickle down" to the individual community members.

The study also concluded that awareness is disseminated through effective channels, namely Village Meetings and WDC, MP and Seminars. As such, village assembly meetings and WDC are the most critical "bottom-up" platforms, while MP and Seminars represent "top-down" communication. This means awareness is high among those who interact directly with the Member of Parliament or attend specialised training. However, ineffective channels that are media (Radio, Newspapers and Social networks) do not significantly contribute to awareness in Vwawa. This indicates a "localised information vacuum" where general public campaigns are failing to reach the rural grassroots in a meaningful way.

Recommendations: The study recommended that policymakers should recognise that traditional mass media (Radio/Print) is insufficient for CDCF transparency. Legislation should be updated to mandate physical public notices of fund allocations at every village office. It also recommended that, since village assembly meetings are significant in disseminating information about CDCF, the MP and the Constituency Development Committee (CDC) should ensure these meetings are held during times

and in locations that allow non-leaders (youth and women) to attend, breaking the "leadership only" barrier. Finally, the study recommended that as long as the MP is a significant source of information, the MPs should transition from "political rallies" (which often focus on credit-taking) to "accountability forums" that detail specific budget lines.

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