

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

THE CASE OF KABALE DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT, UGANDA

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ABSTRACT

The study established the contribution of participatory budgeting in Kabale district local government. Using a cross-sectional research design, in which both quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted, the study investigated 117 units; which were randomly and purposively selected from 174 subjects. The study adopted self-administered questionnaires and interview guides to collect data. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze quantitative data while direct quotes from interviews supported qualitative analysis. Quantitative analysis was supported by software for document analysis (SPSS V 20.0). The study investigated the contribution of participatory budgeting from the viewpoints of information sharing, codes of conduct, facility for citizen complaints, and stakeholders' consultation. The study found stakeholders' consultation as the most important contribution of participatory budgeting. However, it was undermined by the absence of clear rules and procedures that govern budget consultative meetings. Since all the constructs used in measuring the contribution of participatory budgeting in Kabale were above average, it was concluded that participatory budgeting is practiced in Kabale district local government and is generally important. In recommendation, Kabale district local government should spell out the rules and procedures governing participatory budgeting in a statute or guideline. Secondly, the local government should consider holding several consultative meetings with various stakeholders to ensure the priorities of the common person are catered for in the budget estimates for any financial year. Lastly, the local government should consider allocating some funds to facilitate the operations of the office in charge of citizens' complaints.

KEYWORDS: Participatory Budgeting, information sharing, codes of conduct, citizen complaints and stakeholders' consultation.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the increasing public distrust in government and its institutions, involving the public in decision making may strengthen democracy as well as result in an effective allocation of scarce public resources (Birskyte, 2013). Participatory budgeting is emerging as an innovative management theme with an enormous potential to promote principles of good governance and has many potential benefits to local government and civil society (Tomori, 2008). Participatory budgeting improves transparency in municipal expenditure and stimulates citizen's involvement in decision making over public resources; it boosts revenues; it redirects investments towards basic infrastructure for the poor; it strengthens social networks and helps mediate differences between elected leaders and civil society groups (Cabannes, 2005). Despite the significant role played by participatory budgeting organizations, issues related to culture reduce its significance. Investigating the relationship between the level of budget participation and performance, (Hosen, Hui, Sulimani, & Rahman, 2011) observed that the variation in performance attributed to participatory budgeting was gradually reducing.

The problem of budget implementation in less developed countries is associated with deficit budgeting, delayed passage of the budget by the legislature and ineffective oversight by the legislative arm of government (United Nations, 2005). It is worthy to note that there might be an implementation gap, which could rise from the budget implementers or the environment in which the budget policy has been made. Budget implementation gaps arise from the budget itself when such budget emanates from the government rather than from the target groups (Olurankinse & Oloruntoba, 2017). This means that planning is top-down. This implies that the target beneficiaries do not participate in the formulation of the policies that affect their lives. The information disproportionateness between the principles and agents in counties are being addressed by increased recognition of the role of county assemblies and public participation (Nyakarura, Ireri, & Lyria, 2016). Additionally, citizens are given the opportunity to

fully participate in the affairs of the local council. Indeed, political participation through representatives is discussed in the council and to get feedback are all visible in this approach (Ugoh & Ukpere, 2009).

Participatory budgeting began as an initiative management practice with excellent potential to promote financial accountability (UN-Human Settlement Program – UN-HABITAT, 2008). In Uganda, participatory budgeting has been incorporated in the local government process by the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development MFPED (MFPED, 2004). Participatory budgeting was started in Kabale district local government, and it's not a new concept. The current position of involving the public in making decisions on budget allocations in the district indicates numerous barriers for meaningful citizen participation, including lack of financial resources, occasional ineffectiveness of local government administration, citizens' indifference and bureaucratic inertia. Notwithstanding, the inadequate knowledge on Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) and integration of Output Budget Tool (OBT) into IFMS budget, inadequate local revenue collections due to political influence and poor administration, Fluctuating Indicative Planning Figures from central government have inched on the district's financial accountability (Kabale District Local Government, 2015). While the district budget framework does not indicate incidences of poor financial accountability, (Auditor General, 2017) indicated cases of inadequate controls surrounding the management of domestic arrears and understaffing at the district. These critical issues, which appear to be not-attended to were the premise of the current study.

1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the many years of decentralization policy in Uganda, the concept of participatory budgeting still remains unclear. A number of efforts have been put in place to address the challenges of participatory budgeting, and the efforts made are commendable especially in the area of participatory planning (Kabale District Local Government, 2015). In spite of the progress made at reforming the local government

system, a lot more need to be done to ensure quality service delivery as well as citizen participation and involvement (Auditor General, 2017).

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To analyze the contribution of participatory budgeting to Kabale district local government

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretically, the study was premised on the Principal-agent theory, where accountability is mostly rendered in terms of principals and agents. Some authority is given to agents who act and report to the principal (Shah, 2007). In public administration, the common people are the principals while politicians and civil servants are the agents (Agwor & Akani, 2017). The principle-agent theory is significant in explaining the decision making process. The principal makes decisions, which affect the incentives of the agents to take any of its numerous possible action. The decisions made by the principal structure the agent's motivations to take various actions that constitute a contract, in the language of principal-agent theory, and principal-agent theory is frequently taken as a specific area of contract theory more generally.

Participatory budgeting was first documented in International Scientific Journals in the late 1980s referring to projects implemented in the City of Porto Alegre, in Brazil in South America. Participatory budgeting aimed at increasing the activity of the citizens through the public discussion of urban problems and priorities of budget spending. Today, Brazil has around 300 different participatory budgeting practices, making her the leader of participatory budgeting in the world (Tsurkan, Sotskova, Aksinina, Lyubarskaya, & Tkacheva, 2016). OECD (2014) views budgeting as encompassing all levels of government, national and subnational, where different mandates and levels of autonomy are used. Proper and functional budgeting is supported by, and in turn supports, the various pillars of modern public governance: integrity, openness, participation, accountability and a strategic approach

to planning and achieving national objectives (Covaleski, Evans, Luft, & Shields, 2003).

A budget is a financial plan and a list of all planned expenses and revenues. It is a strategy for saving, borrowing, and spending (Kamau, Rotich, & Anyango, 2017). They found that a budget is an important procession variable in terms of enabling organizations to achieve their goals. Studies have indicated that non-profit organizations, which are more heavily dependent on private charitable contributions are less likely to employ participatory governance practices, whereas government funding is more likely to employ participatory governance practices (Zuraidah, Razana, Jamaliah, & Takiah, 2015). Most studies, including (Olaoye, Oaoye, & Afolabi, 2017) suggest that it is very important to involve stakeholders in the budget process in both public and non-profit organization to ensure performance evaluation and effective management. In order to gain acceptance of budget goals and enhance organizational effectiveness, citizens should be given information on budget implementation both at the national and local government level (Musyimi, 2018). The focus on the participatory budgeting has supposed greater prominence in recent years with increasing democratization, citizen participation and the desire to respond to development challenges. The national budget, which is basically divided into recurrent and capital budget may suffer wastage and project abandonment associated with the lack of public involvement in budget processes (Edeme & Nkalu, 2017).

Budgeting is essentially a keystone in the architecture of trust between government and the citizens. According to (Birskyte, 2013), participatory budgeting aims at offering citizens a chance to prioritize the use and public money. This suggests that participatory budgeting is intended to allow citizens of specific jurisdiction to participate in decisions on the allocation and management of local government's available public financial resources. In this regard, Zhang & Yang (2009) associated participatory budgeting willingness by those in power to allow citizen representation. The results suggest that this is a useful approach to study the adoption of participatory

budgeting. However, (Covaleski, Evans, Luft, & Shields, 2003) found that the entire process is marred by indifference in opinions, personal beliefs and the way information on budgeting practices is perceived. In essence, social and political inclusion in policymaking is defied as the very poor persons are denied the chance to participate in the issues that affect their own lives (Edeme & Nkalu, 2017; & Kamau, Rotich, & Anyango, 2017). As observed by (Tsurkan, Sotskova, Aksinina, Lyubarskaya, & Tkacheva, 2016), the procedures governing who should participate in the budgeting and implementation processes are always may be hampered with political interests, and therefore winning little support from the government. Evidence generally suggests that investing in participatory budgeting will improve the social, political and economic welfare of the citizens.

3. CONTRIBUTIONS OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

3.1. INFORMATION SHARING

One of the ways to promote participatory budgeting is to provide formal access to information on contracts, tenders, budgets, and local government accounts. This is the actual meaning of local governance. Public contracts and budgets must be published to remain transparent (Goncalves, 2013). Establishing a commission to oversee the projects financed by public resources is important in ensuring the transparency of local government contracts and accounts (Tsurkan, Sotskova, Aksinina, Lyubarskaya, & Tkacheva, 2016). For example (Simmons, 2012) views the participation in the opening and analysis of bids for public contracts as a step towards dynamic participatory budgeting. The best way to evaluate government performance is by providing timely, reliable and relevant information on how public finances are being used. Government's financial position on the true cost and benefit of her activities is made known (Hawke, 2017). As governments combine transparency with citizen participation, government performance and accountability improve, which strengthens governance. As stakeholders contribute ideas to the public sector, through collaboration and partnership (Mkhize, 2006), their stake in decision-making and policy implementation is

realized. Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) (2016) notes that sharing information on public financial management at all levels of the country eliminates duplicative and inconsistent public spending.

3.2. CODES OF CONDUCT

In participatory budgeting, code of conduct consists of a well signed and published document that spells out the standard of conducts citizens expect from public officers. According to (Mkhize, 2006) such expectations may take the form of power and responsibility of elected council members in the budget council and their presence in the Council at the time of voting on pertinent issues of public importance (Hawke, 2017). According to (Cabannes, 2005), what the citizens expect from the public officers is in essence the rules of procedures that determine the conduct of public officers. It is when such rules are clear that dialogue and consensus are reached among citizens and local government (Shah, 2007). Similarly, (Hladchenko, 2016) notes that the code and the process that brings about it are the pillars of the pedagogical and democratic values embedded in good governance. Therefore, institutionalized participatory budgeting should in essence provide detailed rules and procedures that enable citizens' participation and consultation during local government budget formulation. A copy of the statute or guidelines on participatory budgeting needs to be made public and passed by council resolution.

3.3. CITIZEN COMPLAINTS

Cabannes (2005) understands "facility for citizen complaints" as an established facility within the local authority to respond to complaints and a local facility to receive complaints and information on corruption. The contribution that participatory budgeting processes make to the issue of complaints, in particular with regards to corruption, are indirect but concrete (Lerner & Baiocchi, 2007). They noted that one of the final phases of the annual cycle of the participatory budget is normally that of evaluation and adjustments to the process. This is the phase where citizens'

complaints are channeled about irregularities and instances of poor functioning. However, (Sintomer, Herzberg, & Röcke, 2008) found that it is a channel through which the representatives of the participatory budget have to debate the various points before proposing the changes needed. The fora complaints, frequent of which are the control, oversight, and transparency commissions; continue until the budget is executed. They are a powerful instrument to eliminate the chance for corruption when the budget is implemented, in particular during the execution of public works and services (Harkins & Craig, 2010). Additionally, the mobilization of the citizenry and the modernization of the administrative apparatus (to adapt to the participatory budget) tend to favor new channels for citizen complaints (Novy & Leubolt, 2005). A crucial complaint of these critics is that national issues such as debt repayment are not discussed within the participatory budgeting process (Brautigam & Knack, 2004). Most of these critics point to the support given to participatory budgeting by imperialist organizations. They argue that such support is marred by international interests at the expense of local or national interests (Brautigam & Knack, 2004).

3.4. STAKEHOLDERS' CONSULTATION

Studies over the globe have indicated a perceived lack of public sector community consultation and of initiatives to promote community participation in decision-making (Brautigam & Knack, 2004; Edeme & Nkalu, 2017; Warue & Wanjira, 2013; & Kim, Han, Jo, & Kim, 2010). Common in these studies is the absence of political will to promote citizenry participation as it sometimes jeopardizes political agenda. Tsurkan, Sotskova, Aksinina, Lyubarskaya, & Tkacheva (2016) defined stakeholders' consultation as the process of incorporating citizens in determining budget spending and monitoring the implementation of such objects. It also perceived as bringing together stakeholders to determine priorities in addressing local problems (Bogaty, et al., 2014), while (Sangiev, 2015) views it as involving local communities in the distribution of one to ten percent of the municipal budget. In all the above viewpoints, authors seem to

agree that resources ought to be distributed to improve citizens' wellbeing.

The selection of community members to budget processes should be by a secret so that the elected members remain committed and accountable to citizen (Matveeva, 2015). Similarly, fairness in resource distribution, technical and financial feasibility should be the basis for the choice of projects to be considered on the budget. Transparency needs to be exercised in order to avoid straying away from voter preferences under the pretext of technical analysis (OECD, 2014). The consultative process normally involves having access to data so that stakeholders discuss budgetary policy options from a democratic and competency perspective. Similarly, stakeholders can meaningfully contribute usefully to the budget process when they become engaged in a realistic debate about difficult trade-offs, opportunity costs and value for money, and government plays the role of facilitating these engagements. A wide range of public expenditure programs and tax expenditures should be handled within the budget process, making clear the relative costs and benefits (Obuschenko, 2015). Whereas economic-based research views consultations in budgeting in terms of "optimal tradeoffs", psychology-based research views it in terms of the complexity of decision-making. Contradictory likings driven by individual differences and information explain the complexity involved in consultative budgeting (Covaleski, Evans, Luft, & Shields, 2003).

4. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The cross-sectional design is a design that can only measure differences between or from among a variety of people, subjects, or phenomena rather than a process of change. Cross-sectional studies provided a clear 'snapshot' of the outcome and the characteristics associated with it, at a specific point in time. The cross-sectional research designs facilitated an understanding of the contribution of participatory budgeting within the governance context of Kabale district local government. Questionnaires scaled on a 1 – 5 Likert scale were used to collect quantitative data on participatory budgeting (information sharing, code of conduct, handling citizens' complaints and

stakeholder consultation) while interviews collected data qualitative data. Frequencies and counts formed the basis of quantitative analysis. The study was conducted among the central division staff, the staff at town councils, and staff at sub-counties. Both elected leaders and civil servants will be contacted.

The study sought to establish the contributions of participatory budgeting in Kabale district local government. Four contributions were identified and investigated, that is, information sharing, code of conduct, facility for citizen complaints and stakeholders' consultation. Details are given in the table below.

5. RESULTS

Table 4.1: Participatory budgeting contributions

Variable List	Disagreement (%)	Not Sure (%)	Agreement (%)
Information sharing			
1. I often participate in the opening of bids for public contracts	13.8	10.1	76.2
2. I find it easy to access information about the accounts in my organization	19.3	11	69.8
3. I often participate in the evaluation of bids for public contract	23.9	6.4	69.7
4. I find it easy to access information about contracts in my organization	23.8	7.3	68.8
5. I find it easy accessing information about the budget in my organization	29.3	7.3	63.3
6. Information regarding the financial position of my organization is always given in time	27.5	9.2	63.3
Average	22.9	8.6	68.5
Code of conduct			
1. The rules governing budgeting in my organization were agreed upon by all stakeholders	11	11	78
2. The rules governing budgeting in my organization were discussed by all stakeholders	19.3	11.9	68.8
3. The rules governing budgeting are always distributed to the public	23	9.2	67.9
4. There is are clear codes of conduct expected from our councilors	15.6	16.5	67.9
5. There are clear rules of procedure on who participates in the budgeting process	34.9	13.8	51.4
6. There are clear procedures on what constitutes budget items	38.6	11.9	49.6
Average	23.7	12.4	63.9
Facility for citizen complaints			
1. We have an office that responds to citizen complaints on corruption	5.5	8.3	86.3
2. We have an office where we report the poor functioning of our leaders	12.9	16.5	70.7
3. Most complaints on our budget are related to control	24.8	8.3	67
4. Most complaints on our budget are related to transparency	25.7	11.9	62.4
5. We have an office where we present our proposals regarding the budget	31.2	9.2	59.6
6. We have an office where stakeholders debate their proposals to the budget	31.2	11.9	56.9
7. Our leadership facilitates the office in charge of citizen complaints	38.5	16.5	44.9
Average	24.3	11.8	64.0
Stakeholders' Consultation			
1. The selection of citizen representatives in the budgeting process is by secrete vote	11.9	0	88.1

2. Our council brings together various parties to determine priorities in addressing local problems	5.5	11	83.5
3. Our council allows citizens to contribute only ten percent of the council budget	21.1	0	78.9
4. Our council has the willingness to support citizen participation	19.3	7.3	73.4
5. Our council promotes community participation in decision making	19.3	10.1	70.6
6. Our council allows citizens to monitor the implementation of selected projects	34.9	11	54.1
7. Our council allows citizens to identify objects of budget spending	37.6	11	51.4
Average	21.4	7.2	71.4

Source: Field data, 2019

Majority of the participants (76.2%) indicated that they often participate in the opening of bids for public contracts, 69.8% confirmed that they find it easy to access information about the accounts of the local government, 69.7% confirmed that they often participate in bid opening for public contracts while 68.8% confirmed ease of access to information about contracts in the local government. though in moderate proportions, 63.3% confirmed ease of access to information about the budget and that information regarding the financial position of the local government is always given on time. The possibility of participating in the opening and evaluation of bids for public contract is reflective of implementing of PPDA ACT and regulations in the management of public contracts in Kabale district local government. Generally, a 68.5% statistical description suggests that the level of information sharing in Kabale district local government is generally high.

Establishing the contribution of participatory budgeting in enforcing observance of code of conduct of public officials, 78.0% confirmed that the rules governing budgeting in Kabale district are agreed upon all stakeholders 68.8% confirmed that these rules are discussed by all stakeholders. The statistics further revealed 67.9% as confirming that the rules governing budgeting in Kabale district local government are distributed to the public and there are clear codes of conduct expected from the councilors. The downer side of the study indicates only 51.4% as confirming the existence of clear rules of procedure on who participates in the budgeting process while 49.6% confirmed the existence of rules on what constitutes budget items. In institutions where transparency is

communicated and practiced, it becomes obvious to find existing rules and procedures on who participates in budgeting and what constitutes budget items. On the whole, observance of code of conduct among public officials in Kabale district local government appears to stand at only 63.2%.

The study also established the contribution of participatory budgeting in ensuring the existence of a facility where citizens report their complaints. About 86.3% confirmed that there is an office that responds to citizens' complaints on corruption while 70.7% confirmed that there is an office to report the poor functioning of leaders. About 67.0% confirmed that budgeting in Kabale district local government is related to control while 62.4% confirmed that budgeting is related to transparency. While 59.2% confirmed having an office where proposal regarding the budget are presented and 56.9% confirmed having an office where stakeholders debate their proposals on the budget, only 44.9% confirmed that leadership in Kabale district local government facilitates such office. The mere fact that citizens have an office to refer to in reference to issues related to corruption and poor leadership are concerned is reflective of a transparent and accountable local government, despite the logistical issues attached to the proper functioning of the office. On the whole, codes of conduct, as expected from both councilors and public officials in Kabale district local government stands at 64.0%.

The study also sought to establish stakeholders' consultation as an aspect of participatory budgeting. The findings revealed 88.1% as confirming that the selection of citizens to participate in the budgeting

process is vote while 83.5% confirmed that the district council brings together various parties to determine priorities in addressing local problems. Though 78.9% confirmed that the council allows citizens to contribute only 10% of the council budget, 73.4% felt councils' support for citizen participation and decision making (70.6%). Despite such high statistics in support of citizen consultation, only 54.1% would agree that the council allows citizens to monitor implementation of selected projects or even to identify objects of budget spending (51.4%). On the whole, the practice of consulting citizens on matters related to budgeting appears to stand at 71.4%. This suggests that of the four contributions of participatory budgeting that were investigated, stakeholders' consultations stands eminent. This is an indication that the district exercises the decentralized development planning functions, powers and responsibilities as mandated by Local government Act 1997, section 39. This findings further indicate that the district emphasizes the participatory demand-driven approach with forward and backward consultations during the various stages of synthesis and consultation.

6. DISCUSSION

The study sought to establish the contribution of participatory budgeting to Kabale district local government. Consulting citizens on matters related to budgeting in Kabale district local government demonstrates the contribution of participatory budgeting in the district. Participants confirmed that the Kabale district council brings together various parties to determine the priorities affecting the local person. The findings agree with (MOFPED, 2017), which indicated that Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development organizes workshops to consult all stakeholders at all levels to guide in the process of priority setting and resource allocation. Development partners, local governments, central government ministries and departments at National and local government levels provide insights on how public resources can be utilized to improve the welfare of the common man. In an interview, one respondent remarked: "...our Council supports a holistic system approach to public sector financial management, which recognizes the critical importance of the

foundations of the system—stakeholder consultation, the demand for services and projects, and governance. Along with these key processes, our Council ensures delivery of valuable services to the public and community, under sustainable social benefit..." (Town Council Mayor).

The study established that citizens are selected by vote to participate in the budgeting process. The findings agree with (Matveeva, 2015), who investigated the possibilities of application of participatory management techniques in the formation and execution of local budgets in Russia. He found that selecting citizen in participatory forums basing on secret vote increases accountability and civic engagement. However, (OECD, 2014) noted that citizens' preference in the budget is sometimes distorted under the guise of 'technical analysis', which limits stakeholders from contributing usefully to the budget process.

Participants presented slim positions on citizens being allowed to monitor the implementation of selected projects or even to identify the objects of budget spending during the budgeting process. The findings agree with (Marchel & Fourie, 2015) who investigated the role of civic participation in South Africa. They found that while many municipal councils embrace the idea of democracy, decentralization, budget openness, transparency and public participation, effective public engagement remains negligible because of inhibiting factors such as access to meeting venues, interest group identification, communication and even recognition of developmental suggestion. The possibility of citizens not having such opportunities to monitor the implementation of selected projects was amplified by one respondent: "...the Council is expected to perform this very important task of controlling and regulating the revenue and expenditure estimates in any fiscal year. It is the responsibility of the members of the Council to ensure that the budget estimates are properly scrutinized to ensure accuracy, effectiveness and efficiency of government revenue and expenditure..." (District Councilor).

Participatory budgeting seemingly manifested a least contribution in regard to enforcing codes of conduct. This was supported by a noticeable proportion of participants who noted the absence of clear rules of procedure on what constitutes budget items and on who participates in the budgeting process. The findings contradict with (Mkhize, 2006) who presented a new budgeting approach in South Africa. He suggested that the internal rules of procedure of participatory budgeting specify the powers and responsibilities that council members and Mayors have in relation to the participatory budget council. In a related study by (Shah, 2007), while investigating the role of performance accountability in combating corruption, noted that elaboration of procedural rules, ordinances, and regulations associated with participatory budgets results in a process of dialogue and consensus, which are at times difficult to reach among citizenry and between citizens and local government. Presenting a case on government financial accountability and transparency in the digital world in Ukraine, (Hladchenko, 2016) noted that budget codes of conduct with pedagogical and democratic value can serve as good bearers of urban governance.

Majority of the participants indicated that they often participate in the opening and evaluation of bids for public contracts. The findings support (Tsurkan, Sotskova, Aksinina, Lyubarskaya, & Tkacheva, 2016) who investigated the influence of participatory budgeting on the infrastructure development of the territories in the Russian Federation. They observed that publishing contracts financed with public resources makes local governments accountable and more transparent. With reference to budget evaluation and organizational trust in post-secondary educational institutions in Canada, (Simmons, 2012) observe that selecting representatives to participate in the opening and analysis of bids for public contracts is an innovative practice within the dynamics of participatory budgeting. Participants acknowledged the existence of where citizens can refer to with issues related to budget proposals and corrupt leaders despite the logistical issues attached to the proper functioning of this office. The findings support (Lerner & Baiocchi, 2007) who investigated how participatory

budgeting works in the United States. They noted that the existence of an established facility for citizens' complaints and information and corruption promotes evaluation and adjustments to the budgeting process, which reduces irregularities and poor functioning of the budget.

7. CONCLUSION

The paper established the relevancy of participatory budgeting in the governance framework of Kabale district local government. The study found a strong and positive significant relationship between participatory budgeting. Participatory budgeting in Kabale district local government was found to be relevant in promoting citizens consultation in the budgeting process. Stakeholders are brought together to determine the priorities affecting the local person. Their representation in the consultative meetings is by vote, a democratic and pedagogical practice that reduces the council's subjugation of citizens' preferences. However, it was revealed that citizens are not always allowed to monitor the implementation of selected projects or identify the objects of budgeting, aspects that were defended in literature as slowing down the decision making process. Participatory budgeting could have manifested least contribution to enforcing code of conduct due to the absence of clear rules of procedures on what constitutes budget items and on who participates in the budget process. Notwithstanding, all the constructs used in measuring the contribution of participatory budgeting in Kabale appeared to be above average, which points to its being practiced in Kabale district local government.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The rules and procedures governing what constitutes the budget items and who participates in the budgeting process seemed unclear. There is a need for Kabale district local government to spell out the rules and procedures governing participatory budgeting in a statute or guideline. A set of participatory budgeting guidelines should be designed, discussed and agreed upon by all stakeholders and distributed to the public. The budget was viewed as not demonstrating community preferences nor priorities of the local

people. Kabale district local government should consider holding several consultative meetings with various stakeholders to ensure that the priorities of the common person are catered for in the budget estimates for any financial year. The study indicated the presence of a facility where citizens can lodge their complaints on budget-related matters and on corrupt leadership. However, this office lacks logistical facilitation. Kabale district local government should consider allocating some funds to facilitate the operations of the office in charge of citizens' complaints. This will eliminate the chances of corruption when the budget is implemented, particularly during the execution of public works and services. Participatory budget is a recent development within the decentralized form of government, of which its outputs have not been assessed in a number of local governments. There is a need for another study on participatory budgeting and financial accountability in Uganda to inform policy on its effectiveness in promoting accountability of public resources.

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