

CHALLENGES FACING DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION IN MALAWI'S LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Mustafa Kennedy Hussein

University of Malawi

Abstract

This article examines the major challenges facing development project implementation in Malawi's local government authorities. Despite the introduction of various projects since the multiparty dispensation in 1994, Malawi remains one of the least developed in the world. The article contends that much as effective project implementation is a function of many factors, weak leadership and inadequate capacity are the major complicating factors. Most local authorities are characterised by politicised bureaucracy, scarce skilled labour, inadequate finances and corrupt practices. Thus, pragmatic strategies which include institutionalisation of ethical leadership, anti-corruption mechanisms and the mobilisation of resources are essential for effective local development.

Keywords: Development, Projects, Implementation, Local Government, Malawi

Introduction

This article examines the major challenges facing project implementation in local governments which are also called local authorities or Councils in Malawi since the advent of multi-party democracy in 1994. The overall aim is to stimulate the much-needed debate on the significance of effective local development project implementation. The article also places emphasis on the need for pragmatic strategies to achieve the desired development goals. In most developing countries, political and administrative decentralisation was adopted in the 1990s in order to, among other things, promote community participation in the decision-making processes and implementation of local development projects (Ikhide, 1999; Tordoff, 1994). In Malawi, the steps taken to institutionalise the decentralised local governance system include the adoption of the new Republic of Malawi Constitution of 1995, the passing of the Local Government Act No. 42 of 1998 and the Malawi Decentralisation Policy of 1998.

However, the concerns for effective local development project implementation have taken centre stage in most developing countries especially in Africa and Latin America. Among other things, development project implementation failures are attributed to adverse behaviour of political elites and interests of bureaucrats, scarcity of resources and lack of capacity in terms of both quantity and quality of human resources (Egonmwan, 2009; Dick, 2003). Some theorists have used the public choice theory to explain project implementation failures in the public bureaucracy. The theory contends that bureaucrats are inefficient and motivated by their own self-interests, maximisation of their own utility and welfare at the expense

of public interest including effective project implementation. Thus, although project implementation is the most vital phase in the project management cycle, it is often ignored. Furthermore, attempts to provide more rigorous and systematic research to address project implementation failures tend to be limited. As argued by Pressman and Wildavsky (2000), there is little literature about policy and project implementation in the Social Sciences. The project implementation phase is often taken for granted. Nwankwo and Apeh (2008) argue that once policy or projects are adopted by the government, it is assumed that implementation and the desired goals will automatically be achieved. Thus, unless the contextual issues and the major challenges facing development project implementation at the local level are understood and pragmatically addressed, decentralisation efforts will yield minimal results.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative approach in order to gain in-depth understanding and to enhance critical and contextual analysis of development project implementation and local governments. Empirical qualitative data was collected through a review of the past and current literature which included journal papers, conference papers, books and official reports. A content analysis was undertaken which involved a detailed and systematic analysis of content and identification of patterns and relevant themes to the study. It also involved collating all empirical evidence to contextual issues and answering questions relating to challenges facing development project implementation.

The documentary review was supplemented by semi-structured interviews with twenty purposively selected key informants taking into account their role, experience and knowledge relating to project management and local governance. The respondents included senior public officials from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Economic Development and Planning, the Ministry of Finance, District and Urban Councils, Civil Society and Non-Government Organisations and Development Partners. This methodology was adopted with a view of minimising bias and provide reliable findings from which conclusion could be drawn. It was deemed the most appropriate method for the study since the research area required a comprehensive understanding of expert views and practical dimensions of project implementation in local governments.

Therefore, this article which is divided into six major parts presents the results of the study. Part one is the introduction. Part two presents the methodological aspects that were adopted to generate data for this study. The theoretical and conceptual underpinnings for this analysis are highlighted in part three. Part four presents the major contextual issues, legal and policy frameworks. The major challenges facing development project implementation in Malawi's local governments are analysed in part five while the concluding remarks are presented in part six.

Theoretical and Conceptual Underpinnings

For a meaningful discussion, it is important from the outset to clarify the concepts which underpin this analysis such as local government, development project and project implementation as these are often shrouded in controversy.

Local Government

In the Western liberal political perspective, local government is linked to democratic governance in the sense that governing and administration is based on local community organs, which are composed of people elected by the community's population (Leemans, 1970: 19). Similarly Gildenhuis (1996) argues that local government entails a type of rule where citizens exercise political power, either by directly influencing the policymaking process or through their councillors. Zybrands (1998) defines local government as that part of government which is closest to the people; and it deals with matters that concern the inhabitants of a particular district or place that is administered by a local authority subordinate to the central government. As argued by Cloete (1993), local government authorities are the key institutions in the local government system, with defined powers, responsibilities and an area of jurisdiction and citizens, corporate powers including substantial fiscal powers, the right to determine their own budget, prescribe taxes to be levied, collect fees and charges for services provided, and to incur debt. There are thirty-five local government authorities in Malawi which are categorised into twenty-eight district councils, and seven urban councils (four city councils, two municipal councils and one town council).

Development Project

Scholars define a development project in various ways. For example, Imaga *et al.*, (2005) define a project as a scientifically evolved work plan devised to achieve a specific objective within a specified period of time. According to Mingus (2002), a project refers to a sequence of tasks performed to achieve a unique goal within a specific time frame. For Gray and Larson (2008), a project refers to a complex, non-routine, one-time effort limited by time, budget, resources and performance specifications designed to meet development needs. The Project Management Institute (2008) defines development project as a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique value or service. It is the smallest operational unit prepared and implemented in a national development policy and plan. It is a coordinated series of actions resulting from a policy decision designed to contribute to the realisation of development objectives (Ewurum *et al.*, 2009).

While project has several definitions, a relatively inclusive one is that it is a group of related activities which are planned and implemented as an identifiable whole; a subset of a programme with a much more discrete set of activities, normally a short time schedule, more limited resources and a well-defined set of expected outputs which are designed to solve a specific development need. As argued by Meredith and Mantel (2000), projects are characterised by general attributes such as the purpose,

a specific goal, specific time-span, life cycle, uniqueness, a final outcome or result, a budget/resources, and a plan of action defining procedure, schedules and what needs to be done, when, by whom and what is being done.

In this analysis, a development project is considered as a set of related tasks planned, performed and coordinated to achieve a specific development objective or output at a given location within limited scarce resources and period of time. Examples of projects which have been completed in Malawi's local governments since the 1994 multi-party dispensation include the construction of school blocks, clinics, roads, bridges, training programmes and initiatives to improve agricultural practices, nutrition and awareness of good governance principles, among others.

Project Implementation

Project implementation involves carrying out of the project activities which were planned and mobilisation of resources by public bureaucracy. As argued by Igwe and Ude (2018), project implementation is about the realisation of plans by utilising resources to generate project outputs. According to Hyttinen (2017), project implementation represents a well-considered and thought-out plan of action required to deploy resources considered appropriate and adequate to achieve the desired objectives and quality specifications. Similarly, Khan (2016) argues that the objective of project implementation is to execute the project as close to the planned parameters as possible, to ensure that project activities achieve the anticipated outcome (technical performance) within the planned cost (cost performance) and schedule (time performance). It involves the conversion of mainly physical and financial resources into concrete service delivery outputs in form of facilities, and services or into other concrete outputs aimed at achieving policy objectives (Cloete and de Coning, 2011). In short, project implementation is a component of project management cycle or a logical sequence of activities executed to achieve development project objectives.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The various development projects designed and implemented in local governments are a result of development policy decisions designed to contribute to the realisation of the country's development objectives (Okuli and Onah, 2002). Therefore, the conceptual distinction made between policy formulation and policy implementation embedded in the politics-administration dichotomy which has attracted debate among scholars is worth highlighting. This is a notion which distinguishes policy formulation (political activity) and policy implementation (administrative activity) and takes the two as separate governmental functions. Policy formulation which involves the determination of the will of the state and people is regarded as the sole concern of politicians while policy implementation, which involves putting into effect the will of the state is viewed as the concern of the public bureaucracy (administrators) (Ezeani, 2006). However, scholars such as Pressman and Wildavsky (2000) reject the politics-administration distinction. They argue that factors such as vague and ambiguous legislations, lack of technical knowledge and difficulties in monitoring and controlling bureaucratic behaviour translates into the active involvement by

administrators in both policy formulation and policy implementation. Thus, policy implementation is not separated from policy making as it is considered as one of the stage in the policymaking process.

Furthermore, there is lack of consensus regarding the factors which are critical in the determination of the success or failure of policy and project implementation. According to Cloete and de Coning (2011), the 5C's protocol for policy implementation are the content of policy expressed as goals, objectives and how policy aims to solve the problems; the context-nature of institutional context; commitment of implementers; the capacity- administrative capacity and support of clients, and lastly, the coalition interests. However, Smith (1973) argues that the four components which are critical in policy implementation are the goals and objectives, the target group the organisation's structure, leadership and capacity; and the environmental factors. For Van Meter and Van Horn (1975), success depends on how well bureaucratic structures implement government decisions and the characteristics associated with the implementing agencies such as economic, social and political environmental factors and the disposition of the public bureaucracy.

However, Edwards' (1980) typology which comprises four major determinants of effective development project implementation, namely; bureaucratic structure, communication, resources and disposition is comprehensive and relevant for the examination of the challenges facing development project implementation in local governments. Firstly, the bureaucratic structure is defined by Pearce *et al.*, (2010) as the formalised arrangement of interaction between and responsibility for tasks, people and resources in an organisation often depicted as a pyramidal chart with positions, titles and roles in a cascading fashion. According to Edwards (1980), the bureaucratic structure presents the political and bureaucratic leadership, coordination, collaboration and the degree of cooperation among implementers which affect the efficiency in scarce resources utilisation, mobilisation of support and harmony and minimisation of duplication of activities, confusion and resistance to change.

Secondly, communication is the major factor which affects the implementation of development projects. According to Edwards (1980), communication refers to a process of transferring information, feelings, emotions, thoughts and ideas from one person to another. It involves the exchange of ideas, among two or more people to share a common understanding. Therefore, communication provides channels through which public bureaucracy transmits instructions and orders to the appropriate personnel for implementation. Effective communication takes place when the receiver who is the implementer understands the actual meaning of the message sent and complies and accepts it as legitimate. Thus, adequate, clear, accurate and consistent information of project goals and objectives is important for effective project implementation.

Thirdly, the availability of resources which include tangible and intangible assets and organisational capabilities are important for effective development project implementation (Pearce *et al.*, 2010: 169). The tangible assets referred to are physical production facilities, raw materials, human and financial resources an organisation uses to provide goods and services of value to the public. The intangible assets are

resources that cannot be touched or seen but that are critical in creating a competitive advantage such as organisational morale, technical knowledge, and accumulated experience. The organisational capabilities refer to skills (rather than specific inputs) or ability and ways of combining, assets people, information, authority and sanctions, and processes that an organisation uses to transform inputs into outputs (Pearce *et al.*, 2010:169). According to Edwards (1980), the availability of adequate quality personnel, material and financial resources are critical for successful development project implementation. Similarly, Gerston, (2004), argues that successful project implementation requires an entity which has sufficient resources with which to translate the policy objectives into an operational framework. Thus, the greater the capacity, the greater the potential for effective development project implementation.

Lastly, disposition which according to Edwards (1980) covers the public officials' behavioural aspects including interests, attitudes, discretion, motivation, support and commitment towards the project and the implementing agency is critical for the successful implementation of the project. For Egonmwan (2009), the public bureaucracy's perception regarding how the project and policies affect organisational and personal interests has an influence on the zeal and enthusiasm by which the officials implement the development projects. Thus, positive disposition and supportive behaviour by public officials towards a particular project may translate into greater access to resources and successful project implementation. In summary, the four components, namely; bureaucratic structure, communication, resources and predisposition which are highly interwoven are critical in the sense that they either aid or hinder project implementation.

The Context of Development Project Implementation in Malawi's Local Governments

The local development project design and implementation largely depends on the political and legal environment within which local governments operate. Therefore, the section below highlights the legal and policy framework as well as the institutional matrix within which citizens participate in development project implementation in local governments in Malawi.

Legal and Policy Framework

The introduction of the multiparty democracy in June 1994 resulted in the reorientation of local government towards participatory or bottom up approaches. The new Republic of Malawi Constitution Act No.7 of 1995, the Local Government Act No. 42 of 1998 and the Malawi Decentralisation Policy of 1998 provide for the legal and policy framework within which the local development project implementation and decentralised governance take place. Chapter XIV of the Constitution provides for the creation of local government authorities whose responsibilities include the promotion of participatory approaches in local development. Section 146(3) of the Constitution provides for a decentralised local government system and requires that issues of local policy should be decided at the local level under the supervision of local government authorities.

Furthermore, Section 6(1) (c) of the Local Government Act No. 42 of 1998 states that local government authorities are empowered to promote infrastructural and economic development by formulating, approving and implementing local development projects. The local authorities are required to prioritise the diverse community needs and include them in the local development plan (LDPs) which are also called District Development Plans (DPPs) in the case of District Councils or Urban Development Plans (UDPs) in the case of Urban Councils. Section 14(2&3) of the Local Government Act also requires local governments to establish service committees which include, Finance, Development, Education, Works, Health and Environment committees as well as Area, Ward and Village level committees in order to facilitate, among other things, local participation in development project implementation. Similarly, among the policy objectives to be achieved by local authorities as set out in the Malawi Decentralisation Policy of 1998 include deepening democracy by bringing the services closer to the public, and creating democratic environment and local institutions for governance and development and facilitation of grassroots participation in decision-making and project implementation.

Development Project Planning and Implementation Structures

The local development project planning and implementation process adopts a participatory and bottom up approach through the structures provided by the District Development Planning System (DDPS). These include the Village Development Committees (VDCs), Area Development Committees (ADCs) and the District Council.

Village Development Committee (VDC)

The Village Development Committee (VDC) is the structure closest to the citizen. It comprises representatives from a group of villages or a village depending on size of the village (MLGRD, 2013). The functions of the committee are to:

- (i) Represent the development interests of community members;
- (ii) Facilitate participation of the people in planning and implementation of projects;
- (iii) Initiate, identify and prioritise development needs;
- (iv) Prepare project proposals;
- (v) Communicate community based issues;
- (vi) Supervise and monitor implementation of community self-help activities;
- (vii) Mobilise community resources for self-help activities; and
- (viii) Report to relevant group village heads on discussions and activities of the committee.

In short, through the VDCs, citizens participate in local development planning and produce Village Action Plans (VAPs). The plans define and prioritise the most urgent development projects which, in turn, are presented to the Area Development Committees (ADCs).

Area Development Committee (ADC)

The Area Development Committee (ADC) is a development forum comprising of representatives from all the Village Development Committees (VDCs) within the jurisdiction of the Traditional Authority (TA) (MLGRD, 2013:38). The functions of the ADC are to:

- (i) Conduct monthly meetings in collaboration with VDCs;
- (ii) Involve the VDCs in the project cycle management;
- (iii) Review and integrate projects submitted by VDCs;
- (iv) Submit the proposed development projects and activities to the District Council;
- (v) Raise funds and mobilise community resources for project implementation; and
- (vi) Monitor the implementation of community projects.

In short, the ADC is a forum for community participation in decisions related to development project implementation and service delivery, and it represents the interests of communities.

District Council

The District Council is the policymaking body in the district. It is made up of Councillors working as a team through Service Committees to, among other things, provide for local people's participation in the project formulation and implementation. The Councillors approve the District Development Plans (DDPs) or Urban Development Plans (UDPs) based on the objectives contained in the Development Planning Framework (DPF) formulated from the Social Economic Profiles (SEPs). The Council has a Secretariat and Service Committees which include the Development Committee as well as the District Executive Committee whose mandate is to provide technical and advisory services relating to, among others things, project implementation (MLGRD, 2013).

Challenges Facing Development Projects Implementation in Malawi's Local Governments

The study established that the disposition of political and bureaucratic leadership and weak institutional and individual capacities were the major factors which undermined the ability of the public bureaucracy in local governments to effectively implement development projects. The factors are analysed below.

Political and Bureaucratic Leadership

The nature of governance and commitment by the political and bureaucratic leadership towards development project implementation is critical at the local level. The senior government officials agreed during interviews that governance structures such as the District Council, Service Committees, ADCs and VDCs brought the desired coordination during project implementation. However, the major challenges

facing effective development project implementation in Malawi, which the study revealed include, weak political and bureaucratic leadership, politicisation of the bureaucracy, and discontinuity of the successor's projects and corruption. The major factors are discussed below.

Ineffective Political and Bureaucratic Leadership

The study revealed that the development project implementation process was yet to produce meaningful results in most local governments because of ineffective political and bureaucratic leadership. The majority of the respondents during interviews remarked that project design and development was mostly reactive, and based on opinion rather than on proper analysis of the evidence from policy research due to ineffective bureaucratic leadership. More often than not, projects were designed and implemented to achieve selfish and egoistic interests of the political leaders and to attract public acclaim and attention with less regard to the practical appropriateness for effective implementation by the public bureaucracy. One senior district council official remarked that most projects implemented through the Community Development Fund (CDF) are initiated by Members of Parliament and were executed to gain political mileage without assessing the effectiveness and potential benefit of such projects to the community members. In summary, ineffective leadership at the local level contributes to haphazard project formulation and implementation. Some projects are dismantled midway because from the outset the project design was not predicated on existing data, realities or genuine development need.

Politicisation of the Bureaucracy

The politicisation of the public bureaucracy also complicates development project implementation. According to Malawi National Integrity System Assessment Report (MNISAR) (2013:78), Malawi's public bureaucracy is characterised by partisan politicisation which undermines independence in project implementation. Similarly, Thom (2017) argues that the majority of senior public officials are political appointees who are vulnerable to removal from their posts on political consideration. As a result, the official decisions and actions of the public bureaucracy are subjected to the wishes, preferences, control and endorsement of the political masters. Thus, public servants serve in a manner that gives more control rights, accountability and sympathy to politicians and particularly, to the political party to which the President of the country belongs. The practice is complicated by the requirement that public bureaucracy at all levels including in local governments must be loyal and committed to the policies and programmes of the government of the day which is misconstrued to mean loyalty to the political party in power. In short, political interference in the bureaucracy paralyzes project implementation in most local governments where projects pursued are those that are aligned primarily to personal interest of political leadership or political party manifesto rather than genuine community development needs.

Discontinuing Development Projects of the Previous Regime

The practice of discontinuing development projects initiated by the previous regime once government changes without a sound basis is another challenge facing public bureaucracy in project implementation. Most civil society leaders interviewed observed that egoistic and selfish desires by political leadership to pursue projects with partisan interest in order to attract public attention and gaining political mileage affect project implementation negatively. Examples cited included the abandonment of the United Democratic Front's (UDF) 'Starter Pack' programme (this involved provision of free farm inputs such as maize and groundnuts seeds and fertiliser to the poor) by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) regime (2004-2012) under Bingu wa Mutharika. However, the DDP introduced a similar programme and called it Fertiliser Input Subsidy Programme (FISP) (Tambulasi, 2009). Another UDF initiated project which was discontinued by the DPP was the Low Cost Housing project. However, the People's Party (PP) under Joyce Banda re-introduced a similar low cost housing scheme and called it 'Nyumba m'midzi' (low cost houses in the villages) (Chimjeka, 2017). The DPP (2014-2018) regime under Peter Mutharika discontinued the 'Nyumba m'midzi' project and introduced the Cement and Malata (iron sheets) subsidy programme, which essentially was about the provision of low cost houses. Thus, the discontinuity, shifts and changes of projects are costly and affect project implementation effectiveness in the sense that there are transaction and switching costs as entirely different project design, priorities and objectives, new planning and organisation of resources are required.

Rampant Corruption

Another critical factor affecting project implementation in local governments is the rampant corruption in the political and bureaucratic circles. For example, Tambulasi (2009) argues that some projects, for example, the Fertiliser Subsidy existed as a conduit pipe to divert and drain state resources by corrupt elements for private gains. According to the Malawi Institute of Management (MIM) (2016), since the advent of the multi-party dispensation in June 1994, all the political regimes have been associated with some form of corruption. For example, the United Democratic Front (UDF) (1994-2004) regime under Bakili Muluzi was characterised by misappropriation of public resources, collapse of state service provision, extensive fiscal indiscipline and President Muluzi was implicated in the siphoning of donor money amounting to MK1.7 billion (US\$22.3 million) into his personal account (Chitsulo, 2017). Similarly, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) regime (2004-2012) under Bingu wa Mutharika was associated with the President's unexplained colossal MK65 billion (US\$89million) of personal worth accumulated within three years (PAC, 2017). The People's Party (PP) regime (2012-2014) under Joyce Banda was also famous for the Capital Hill Cash Gate scandal. This involved a massive plunder of over US\$20 million of public money by high profile public officials through payments to non-existing suppliers, deletion of transactions, procurement done without the knowledge of the Office of the Director for Public Procurement (ODPP) and inflation of prices (Matonga, 2013). According to Chingwede (2013),

the public resources which were lost through ‘cash gate’ were enough to fund the entire the Ministry of Education, the Malawi Revenue Authority and all government sub-vented organisations for an entire fiscal year without donor support. The DPP (2014-2018) regime under Peter Mutharika was also associated with corrupt practices including the embezzlement of over MK293 million (US\$ 403,942) in foreign missions and the improper procurement of Maize from Zambia, which led to the dismissal of the Minister of Agriculture (George Chaponda) (Chimjeka, 2016). In short, effective development project implementation cannot be achieved in the face of high-level corruption involving abuse of public resources for private gains and at the expense of local development projects.

Inadequate and Weak Institutional and Individual Capacities

The study revealed that development project implementation was also undermined by strategic capacity gaps at all levels. The inadequate and weak institutional and individual capacities in local government were attributed to the resource constraints due to, among other factors, inadequate human resources in terms of both quality and quantity, shortage of finances and the lack of commitment among public officials. These challenges are discussed below.

Inadequate Skilled Human Resources

The lack of skilled personnel translates into reduced capacities and capabilities to effectively implement projects. The situation is attributed to several factors such as non-responsive human resource policies towards training and development which had resulted in leadership and management gaps in the public bureaucracy. As highlighted by GoM (2012), the mandatory induction courses in leadership and management had not been offered for over fifteen years. One senior officer remarked that ‘he had never heard of any project implementation related training for public officers since he joined the public service in 2000.’ Furthermore, local governments were unable to attract and retain quality personnel in local governments due to poor conditions of service in most local authorities (LGAP, 2020). Thus, poor housing, salaries and inadequate facilities like computers, vehicles, and telephones that are usually not working contributed to low morale and lack of motivation towards effective development project implementation.

Limited Availability of Finances and Assets

Another major factor that constrains the effective project implementation in local government is the limited supply of financial resources and fixed assets (LGAP, 2020). Most District Council officials argued that local governments did not receive adequate financial resource allocations to implement projects in an accelerated way. They operated in severely resource constrained environment, which hindered their ability to effectively implement projects and improve service delivery. Most local governments were characterised by inadequate office equipment and assets, ineffective means of revenue collection, narrow revenue base and dependence on

the Central Government for capital development funding (LGAP, 2020). The limited availability of finances makes it difficult for local government to provide adequate and continuous support to project implementation. One senior official remarked during interviews that the Malawi Decentralisation Policy of 1998 had not achieved most of its policy objectives partly because of the chronic financial shortages in local government authorities. The functions and responsibilities devolved to local institutions are not commensurate with the available resources. In short, the lack of finances makes it difficult for sectors to implement projects effectively.

Adverse Disposition by Bureaucrats

According to Edwards (1980), project implementation is negatively or positively affected directly by the disposition, attitudes and behaviour of public officials. That is, if the public officials are negatively disposed towards the project, there is lack of commitment to the implementation process. According to GoM (2012), there is poor work ethic and a glaring lack of commitment to quality project implementation at all levels including in local governments. The situation is attributed to the tendency by the officials to see the projects in terms of how they affect their personal interest and aspirations. One senior civil society leader remarked during interviews that most government officers adopt a ‘what’s in it for me’ attitude towards project implementation due to their obsession with self-enrichment. Therefore, although there are some dedicated bureaucrats in local governments who genuinely strive to ensure effective project implementation, the majority lack the enthusiasm and zeal for effective project implementation. In short, the adverse disposition by public officials makes it difficult for local governments to implement projects efficiently and effectively.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, project implementation in Malawi’s local governments is not always a disaster but there is need for improvement. Although, development projects are regularly rolled out in local governments, most of the time, they do not achieve the desired results. This is partly due to political interference in the public bureaucracy, institutional weak coordination and inadequate resource.

There is need for a reduction of the gap between the project formulation and achievement of the desired development outcomes by, among other things, promoting ethical political and bureaucratic leadership, management development programmes and employee training to change the mind-set, attitudes, and work ethics, and encouraging efficient and effective coordination and resource mobilisation. In summary, pragmatic multi-dimensional strategies, which include capacity building and mobilisation of both human and financial resources are required in local governments in Malawi. The availability of dedicated leadership and public bureaucracy, adequate quality and quantity of human resources and finances is essential for effective development projects implementation in local governments.

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