Legislative Representation and Implementation of Constituency Projects in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District

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Abstract

This study examines legislative representation and the implementation of constituency projects in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District, with emphasis on the extent to which legislative representation translates into tangible development outcomes for constituents. The study is anchored on Representative Democracy Theory, as advanced by John Stuart Mill (1861), which is suitable because it explains the responsibility of elected representatives to articulate citizens' interests and translate them into policies and development interventions. The study examines the nature and effectiveness of legislative representation, the extent of implementation of constituency projects, factors influencing project delivery, and challenges associated with effective implementation. It adopts a descriptive research design and draws on relevant empirical and documentary evidence on legislative representation and constituency projects. The study argues that effective representation requires legislators to identify and articulate constituency needs, facilitate appropriate development interventions, and provide oversight to ensure effective project implementation. It further highlights challenges including inadequate monitoring, weak accountability mechanisms, limited citizen participation, delays in project execution, and gaps between project selection and community needs. It recommended that strengthening legislative oversight, transparency, accountability and citizen participation is essential for ensuring that legislative representation contributes to sustainable and equitable development outcomes in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District.

Introduction

Legislative representation is a fundamental feature of representative democracy through which elected legislators connect citizens with the state by articulating public interests, making laws, exercising oversight and responding to community development needs. Globally, this role increasingly extends beyond legislative deliberation to constituency engagement and the provision of public goods. In India, the Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) enables parliamentarians to recommend development projects within their constituencies, although evidence suggests that project distribution may be influenced by local electoral patterns (Jensenius and Chhibber, 2023). Similarly, Kenya's Constituencies Development Fund (CDF) was established to channel public resources towards constituency-level development. However, research indicates that the distribution of CDF projects is influenced not only by political support but also by population, poverty, ethnicity and geographical accessibility (Harris and Posner, 2019). These experiences demonstrate that constituency-based development can strengthen the relationship between legislative representation and grassroots development, but its effectiveness depends on transparent project identification, appropriate resource allocation, implementation and accountability.

Within Africa, the relationship between legislative representation and constituency development is particularly significant because citizens often expect elected representatives to facilitate tangible public goods within their communities. Comparative evidence indicates that African citizens attach importance to legislators' linkage and constituency-service roles, including communicating community concerns to government and facilitating access to development resources (Mattes and Mozaffar, 2016). This expectation has encouraged constituency development mechanisms across the continent. Kenya's CDF remains a prominent example, while Ghana operates a related arrangement through the District Assemblies Common Fund, through which resources are channelled towards district development and Members of Parliament (MPs) participate in facilitating development initiatives (Suhuyinia et al., 2023). Nevertheless, African experiences reveal challenges involving political interests, equitable resource distribution and accountability. Evidence from Kenya, for instance, suggests that legislators do not necessarily distribute development projects solely according to political support after controlling for socio-economic and geographical factors (Harris and Posner, 2019). The African experience therefore indicates that the developmental value of legislative representation depends on transparent project selection,

responsiveness to local priorities, effective implementation, community participation and accountability.

In Nigeria, constituency projects have become an important mechanism through which the National Assembly connects legislative representation with grassroots development. Since the return to democratic governance in 1999, such projects have increasingly been incorporated into federal budgets to address developmental needs within senatorial districts and federal constituencies. Legislators generally identify or nominate projects based on perceived constituency needs, while relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) undertake their implementation. Udefuna et al. (2013) explain that legislators identify constituency needs and recommend projects during the budgetary process, whereas the executive and relevant agencies are largely responsible for project financing, procurement and implementation. Despite their developmental potential, Nigerian constituency projects have been associated with concerns relating to weak accountability, inadequate monitoring, corruption, institutional coordination and the absence of a comprehensive legal framework (Atairet and Ibanga, 2021). Community participation is also important to their sustainability. In Akwa Ibom State, Atairet et al. (2021) found inadequate involvement of beneficiary communities in project initiation, implementation and evaluation. These challenges demonstrate that the inclusion of a project in the budget or its nomination by a legislator does not necessarily guarantee effective implementation or meaningful developmental outcomes.

At the sub-national level, Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District provides a relevant context for examining the relationship between legislative representation and constituency project implementation. The district comprises Abak, Etim Ekpo, Ika, Ikot Ekpene, Essien Udim, Ukanafun, Oruk Anam, Obot Akara, Ikono and Ini Local Government Areas and has benefited from interventions covering water supply, education, roads, skills acquisition, youth and women empowerment, and other community infrastructure (YMonitor, 2019, 2020). However, the existence of constituency interventions does not necessarily demonstrate that legislative representation has effectively translated citizens' needs into sustainable development outcomes. Evidence from Akwa Ibom indicates that limited community participation in project initiation, implementation and evaluation remains a concern (Atairet et al., 2021). Consequently, this study, "Legislative Representation and Implementation of Constituency Projects in Akwa Ibom North

West Senatorial District," examines how constituents perceive legislative representation, how constituency projects are identified and selected, the extent to which approved projects are implemented, and the factors influencing their delivery and developmental outcomes.

Literature Review

Legislative representation encompasses the processes through which elected legislators articulate citizens' interests, influence public policy, undertake oversight and respond to constituency needs. In representative democracies, therefore, the role of legislators extends beyond law-making to include constituency engagement, policy advocacy and facilitation of development interventions. In Nigeria, constituency projects have emerged as an important mechanism through which legislative representation is connected to grassroots development. Okpe and Oyekola (2022) argue that effective representation depends on strong legislator–constituent relationships, transparency, accountability and a public-interest orientation. Similarly, the Federal Ministry of Special Duties and Inter-Governmental Affairs (FMSDIGA) emphasises collaboration among legislators, implementing agencies and communities as essential to improving accountability and service delivery. Constituency projects, which commonly target sectors such as education, healthcare, roads, water, electricity and skills development, therefore constitute an important dimension of the relationship between legislative representation and local development. Empirical evidence indicates that such projects can improve educational infrastructure, employment opportunities and public services, although their outcomes are often affected by politicisation, weak oversight and accountability challenges (Awor and Ojobo, 2024; Nwakodo et al., 2025).

The identification and selection of constituency projects are central to determining their responsiveness to community needs. Ideally, project priorities should emerge from systematic needs assessments, reliable data, consultation with constituents and alignment with broader development objectives. However, studies indicate weaknesses in the processes of project initiation, design, costing and implementation in Nigeria. Ajayi et al. (2025) identify institutional and procedural shortcomings that can undermine effective project delivery, while FMSDIGA has highlighted poor needs assessment, delayed fund releases, contractor inefficiency and inadequate monitoring as persistent challenges. Constituency projects are incorporated into the federal budgeting process as zonal intervention projects, with legislators generally nominating projects while relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) undertake implementation. The

scale of these interventions is substantial; for example, the 2024 Federal Budget contained 1,120 constituency projects valued at approximately ₦100 billion across 32 MDAs (International Centre for Investigative Reporting, 2024). Consequently, effective project delivery requires not only appropriate budgetary allocation but also timely funding, transparent procurement, effective implementation and continuous legislative and institutional oversight (Budget Office of the Federation, 2026; Nwakodo et al., 2025).

Community participation is another critical factor in ensuring that constituency projects reflect genuine grassroots priorities and achieve sustainable outcomes. Maitala (2023) observes that many constituency projects in the Niger Delta have retained a predominantly top-down approach, limiting meaningful community involvement in planning and implementation. Such limited participation may weaken local ownership and reduce the sustainability of completed projects. FMSDIGA (2026) similarly emphasises community ownership, citizen participation and collaboration among legislators, implementing agencies and beneficiaries as important components of effective project delivery. Despite their potential developmental benefits, constituency projects continue to encounter challenges involving inadequate needs assessment, weak monitoring, delayed financing, poor inter-agency coordination, contractor inefficiency, politicisation and limited transparency (Ajayi et al., 2025; Nwakodo et al., 2025). These constraints suggest that the effectiveness of legislative representation cannot be assessed solely by the number or financial value of projects allocated to a constituency; rather, attention must also be given to how projects are selected, implemented, monitored and experienced by the intended beneficiaries.

Existing empirical studies provide useful insights into constituency projects and legislative representation, but significant contextual gaps remain. Nwakodo et al. (2025) examined the developmental potential and governance challenges associated with constituency projects, while Maitala (2023) focused on community participation in the Niger Delta and Ajayi et al. (2025) examined weaknesses in the broader project initiation and implementation process. Recent government initiatives have likewise concentrated on strengthening verification, monitoring, transparency and coordination at the national level (FMSDIGA, 2026). However, relatively limited empirical attention has been devoted to the relationship between legislative representation and constituency project delivery within Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District. Existing literature does not adequately explain how constituents in the district perceive legislative representation,

how constituency projects are identified and prioritised, the extent to which approved projects are implemented, or the factors influencing their effectiveness and developmental outcomes. This study therefore seeks to address this contextual and empirical gap by examining legislative representation and constituency projects in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District.

Theoretical Framework: Representative Democracy Theory (Mill, 1861)

Representative Democracy Theory, principally associated with John Stuart Mill (1861) in Considerations on Representative Government, explains the role of elected representatives in a democratic system. Mill argues that representative government enables citizens to exercise political control through periodically elected deputies, while representative institutions provide mechanisms through which public interests can be articulated and government actions subjected to scrutiny. The theory therefore places emphasis on representation, responsiveness, public interest and accountability as important elements of democratic governance.

The theory is considered suitable for this study because legislative representation is the central concept underlying the relationship between elected legislators and constituents. In representative government, legislators are expected to act in ways that take account of the interests and concerns of the people they represent. Mill's discussion of the duties of legislators recognises the continuing relationship between representatives and their constituents, including the question of how representatives should respond to constituents' expressed interests while exercising legislative judgement. Contemporary scholarship similarly treats representation as involving questions of constituency, accountability, political judgement and the relationship between representation and citizen participation (Urbinati and Warren, 2008).

The theory is directly related to this study because constituency projects can be examined as one practical expression of legislative representation. Legislators do not only participate in law-making; they also represent the developmental interests and concerns of their constituencies through advocacy, budgetary processes, oversight and engagement with government agencies. Within this framework, the implementation of constituency projects provides an avenue for assessing whether the interests and development needs of constituents are effectively translated into government interventions. Thus, the theory connects the study's two principal concerns

legislative representation and constituency project implementation by providing a basis for examining whether representation produces tangible benefits for the represented population.

The theory further provides a useful analytical basis for examining project identification, selection, implementation, accountability and community responsiveness in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District. Where constituency projects reflect identified community needs and are effectively implemented, they may be understood as practical outcomes of responsive representation; conversely, weak consultation, inadequate oversight or poor implementation may indicate limitations in the representational process. Mill also recognised the dangers that arise when representative institutions operate in ways that conflict with the general interests of the community, reinforcing the importance of public scrutiny and institutional checks. Consequently, Representative Democracy Theory (Mill, 1861) provides an appropriate framework for assessing how legislative representation relates to constituency project delivery and grassroots development in the study area.

Legislative Representation in Nigeria

Legislative representation in Nigeria operates within a federal framework where elected members of the National Assembly (Senate and House of Representatives) serve as intermediaries between constituents and the federal government. The representative function encompasses law-making, oversight, and constituency service, with legislators expected to articulate local needs within national policy (Nnajiofor and Nnajiofor, 2025).

According to Awofeso and Irabor (2020), the Nigerian Constitution establishes the oversight function of the National Assembly in Sections 88, 89, 128, and 129, empowering legislators to monitor executive agencies and ensure compliance with appropriated policies. This constitutional mandate positions legislators not merely as lawmakers but as accountability agents who bridge the gap between federal resource allocation and local development. However, Nigeria’s development planning has historically been characterized by top-down approaches that exclude grassroots communities, creating a representational deficit that constituency projects aim to address.

Constituency Projects and Grassroots Development

Constituency projects are defined as developmental projects cited in the constituencies of legislators by various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of government as appropriated in the federal or state budget. The concept emerged in 2000 under the Obasanjo administration as Special Intervention Projects (SIP), with an annual budget allocation of N100 billion distributed among federal lawmakers through the Zonal Intervention Programme (ZIP) (Asogwa, Asogwa and Ugwuanyi, 2022).

The primary objectives of constituency projects include:

i. Redistributing national resources to communities to improve rural economies;

ii. Alleviating poverty and creating employment opportunities;

iii. Bringing the dividends of democracy to constituents' doorsteps;

iv. Addressing community-specific needs such as roads, schools, healthcare facilities, water supply, and skills acquisition; amongst others

Constituency projects are conceived, designed, or executed within a legislative constituency with the collaboration, input, or influence of the legislator(s) representing that constituency, though actual implementation falls under the purview of executive MDAs rather than the National Assembly itself. The Office of the Special Adviser on Millennium Development Goals (SDGs) coordinates implementation in agreement with lawmakers (Ogundapo, 2024). However, significant implementation challenges persist, including absence of objective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, weak National Assembly oversight, project sustainability concerns, questions of ownership, and limited cooperative federalism. Reports indicate widespread issues with non-execution, abandonment, shoddy execution, and in some cases, community-funded projects being disguised as constituency projects to facilitate misappropriation of public revenue

Legislative Representation and Constituency Projects in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District

Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District (also known as Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District) comprises 10 local government areas: Abak, Essien Udim, Etim Ekpo, Ika, Ikono, Ikot Ekpene, Ini, Obot Akara, Oruk Anam, and Ukanafun, covering 108 wards. The district is currently

represented by Senator Godswill Akpabio, who serves as President of the Senate (Onyedinefu, 2024).

Recent budgetary allocations reveal substantial constituency project investments in the district

According to the Akwa Ibom State Government's budget documents, Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District was allocated ₦33.195 billion in 2023, ₦13.468 billion in 2024, and ₦15.110 billion in 2025; the district-specific 2026 allocation is not included in the cited 2025 budget document (Akwa Ibom State Government, 2025).

Documented constituency projects in the district between 2024 and 2026 include:

S/N	Category of Project	2024	2025	2026
1	Road Projects	9	30	5
2	Classroom block/school buildings	-	15	3
3	ICT Centres	-	12	1
4	Borehole/water projects	1	2	3
5	Primary Health Centres/health facilities	-	6	1
6	Markets/ultra-modern markets	-	8	1
7	Police stations/ Police Quarters	5	5	1
8	Electricity/Transformer/Cables	5	5	1
9	Town halls/community buildings	-	5	1
10	Solar streetlights/solar facilities	-	2	1
11	Agricultural/rural-development projects	8	10	3
12	Skills acquisition/entrepreneurship centres	3	3	-
13	Youth/women empowerment interventions	8	10	-
14	Higher-education projects/facilitation	-	2	-
15	Other infrastructure/interventions	5	10	2
	Total	**40**	**130**	**20**

Source: *Olaitan (2026), with corroboration from official and independent reports on constituency-project commissioning.*

The table shows a broad expansion of constituency interventions associated with Senator Godswill Akpabio across the three (3) Senatorial Districts of Akwa Ibom State between 2024 and 2026,

encompassing roads, classroom blocks, ICT centres, healthcare facilities, markets, police facilities, water projects, electricity infrastructure, agricultural interventions and empowerment programmes, with the greatest concentration of documented projects occurring in 2025–2026. However, ongoing constituency projects are not included in the table, as it captures only projects with documented allocations or identifiable interventions within the specified period.

Implementation of Constituency Projects in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District

Constituency projects, officially described within the federal budget framework as Zonal Intervention Projects (ZIPs), provide a mechanism through which community needs are incorporated into the federal development process. (Ajayi.S, Ayorinde.A and Nkeonye.O, 2025). Constituency projects within the district have covered sectors including education, water supply, roads, agricultural support, youth and women empowerment, electricity and other community infrastructure. (YMonitor, 2020; Adeniyi, 2024; Shuaib, 2024) Available records indicate that such interventions have been included in the federal budget over several years. For instance, the 2019 constituency project records identified water-reticulation projects at Ukana Ikot Ntuen, Ukana Akpautong and Ukana Ikot Offiongetor, each valued at ₦20 million, as well as a ₦160 million grant programme for farmers and young entrepreneurs across the ten Local Government Areas (YMonitor.2019). The scale of intervention increased considerably in the 2024 appropriation, with an analysis of the budget reporting approximately ₦4.142 billion allocated to constituency projects in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District. (Ogundapo, 2024).

More recent developments provide additional evidence of constituency project implementation in the district. In May 2025, projects were reportedly commissioned in Abak, Ikot Ekpene and Essien Udim Local Government Areas, including roads, ICT centres, classroom blocks, markets, police stations and healthcare facilities. The projects were presented as constituency projects and empowerment initiatives facilitated by the Senate President, who represents Akwa Ibom North-West (The Eagle Online, 2025). While the reported commissioning of these projects provides evidence of implementation, independent verification is necessary to establish their actual condition, functionality, quality, cost and beneficiaries.

The implementation of constituency projects in Akwa Ibom North-West should consequently be evaluated based on actual delivery, compliance with approved specifications, quality,

functionality, value for money and benefits, rather than solely on the volume of funds appropriated or the number of projects announced or commissioned. A project-by-project assessment would provide a clearer picture of the extent to which constituency projects in the district have translated from budgetary provisions into completed and functional interventions.

Challenges and Issues in Constituency Project Implementation

Constituency projects have the potential to bring federal resources closer to local communities, but their implementation in Nigeria is often hindered by institutional and structural challenges. These challenges also affect Akwa Ibom Northwest, which operates within the national system for the allocation and implementation of constituency projects.

Poor Project Planning, Specification and Siting: A significant challenge in constituency project implementation include poor project planning and specification, inappropriate project siting, monitoring and evaluation, inadequate needs assessment and duplication of projects, which make it difficult for communities and oversight bodies to verify whether projects are appropriately located, justified and implemented as approved. The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has identified poorly defined project descriptions as a recurring concern that can facilitate changes in project scope and hinder effective monitoring. (Akpan. 2025). This concern is evident in Akwa Ibom North-West, where a 2024 analysis of the constituency-project budget identified 15 projects valued at approximately ₦3.7 billion whose specific locations were unclear. The analysis further found that some project descriptions did not provide sufficient information to establish precisely where the projects were to be implemented. (Thefrontrank. 2024). This illustrates how vague project specifications and locations can constrain community monitoring and make it difficult to verify whether projects are appropriately sited and implemented according to approved provisions.

Abandoned and Unexecuted Projects: Abandonment and non-execution of projects can delay the delivery of essential public services. A recent example in Akwa Ibom is the Ukanafun General Hospital, which commenced in 2009 as a cottage hospital project but remained abandoned for years before being revived, completed and commissioned in 2025. (Odey, 2025). The experience demonstrates how prolonged delays in project implementation can deprive communities of essential infrastructure and services.

Delayed funding and slow project implementation: The implementation of constituency projects is affected by delayed fund releases, slow execution, weak inter-agency data coordination and inadequate logistics. Consequently, inclusion of a project in the annual budget does not necessarily guarantee its execution or completion within the same financial year. A recent example in Akwa Ibom North-West is the construction of classroom blocks in the Ukanafun/Oruk Anam Federal Constituency, for which approximately ₦95.4 million was appropriated in the 2024 budget. However, Eyemark recorded the project as "Not Started" as of July 2024, with no contractor assigned, illustrating the gap that can exist between budgetary allocation and actual project implementation**.** (Eyemark, 2026).

Contractor Performance and Quality Defects: The quality and functionality of constituency projects may be undermined by inadequate contractor capacity, weak supervision, incomplete project components and poor project management. The ICPC has documented cases where contractors failed to meet required quantities or standards. These challenges are also evident in Akwa Ibom North-West. In Oruk Anam Local Government Area, the 23.25-kilometre Ikot Ekaide–Ikot Okoro–Ikot Ibritam Road was taken over by the current administration at approximately 50 per cent completion and subsequently had to be segmented and re-awarded to two different contractors following construction challenges. (Akwa Ibom State Government. 2026). Similarly, a 2024 investigation of a ₦48.56 million skill-acquisition centre at Ikot Okoro, under the Ukanafun/Oruk Anam Federal Constituency, found that the facility, commissioned in 2023, remained unused and lacked furniture and equipment, while weeds had reportedly overgrown the premises. (Archibong. 2024), These cases illustrate how contractor performance, lack of sustainability and maintenance, project management and incomplete project components affects the quality, functionality and delivery of constituency-related infrastructure and facilities in Akwa Ibom North-West.

Legislative Oversight, Accountability and Community Participation

Legislative oversight plays a significant role in promoting transparency and accountability in the implementation of constituency projects in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District. Sections 88 and 89 of the Constitution empower the National Assembly to exercise oversight over the activities of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) responsible for executing constituency projects through budgetary scrutiny, committee oversight, public hearings, enquiries and requests

for relevant information. (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999) Legislators representing the district may also engage with implementing agencies and communities to obtain updates on projects and draw attention to challenges affecting their implementation. Nevertheless, legislative sponsorship or facilitation of a project does not amount to direct responsibility for its execution, which generally remains with the appropriate implementing MDA.

Accountability in constituency projects is further strengthened when relevant information is made available to the public. Details relating to the location, scope, approved cost, implementing agency, contractor and implementation status of projects enable legislators, communities and other stakeholders to monitor whether approved interventions correspond with those delivered. (ICPC, 2023). This is particularly important in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District, where constituency projects are distributed across ten Local Government Areas. Access to such information can facilitate the identification of abandoned projects, poor-quality work, duplication of interventions and projects that do not adequately correspond with community needs. Civil society organisations and anti-corruption agencies, particularly the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), can complement legislative oversight by tracking projects, conducting verification exercises and reporting implementation deficiencies. (ICPC, 2023).

Community participation is another important component of accountability in constituency-project implementation. Beneficiary communities have first-hand knowledge of their infrastructure and development needs and can therefore contribute to the identification of priorities and assessment of project relevance. Their participation may extend from consultations during project selection to monitoring during implementation and providing feedback after completion. Community members can also report abandoned projects, poor workmanship, delays or non-functional facilities to legislators, implementing agencies and relevant oversight institutions. (Atairet, Mboho & Aborh, 2021). Such participation helps ensure that project assessment goes beyond the formal classification of a project as completed and considers its actual quality, accessibility, functionality and usefulness to the intended beneficiaries.

Effective oversight and accountability in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District therefore require sustained interaction among legislators, implementing MDAs, contractors, community

representatives and civil society organisations. Regular monitoring, timely disclosure of project information and effective channels for community feedback can help identify implementation challenges and facilitate appropriate institutional responses. Greater community involvement can also reduce information gaps between government institutions and beneficiaries while strengthening transparency and accountability in the delivery of constituency projects. The Federal Ministry of Special Duties and Intergovernmental Affairs' 2026 stakeholders' engagement, which brought together the National Assembly, MDAs and other stakeholders, further demonstrates the importance of collaboration in promoting accountability, transparency and compliance in constituency project implementation. (FMSDIA, 2026).

Implication for Grassroots Development

The implementation of constituency projects in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District carries significant implications for grassroots development, both positive and problematic.

Positive Implications

Constituency projects provide a mechanism for bottom-up development interventions that address specific community challenges, potentially remedying the historical exclusion of grassroots communities from Nigeria's centralized development planning. The substantial financial allocations (exceeding N90 billion in some years) represent significant resource redistribution to the district's 10 LGAs, potentially improving infrastructure, employment, and service delivery (Adeyemi, 2025). Regular constituency briefings and empowerment programmes, such as those conducted by Senator Akpabio, create platforms for direct engagement between legislators and constituents, enhancing political accountability and responsiveness (Ekong, 2025).

Challenges and Negative Implications

However, critical challenges undermine the developmental impact:

i. Opacity and Limited Community Participation: Information regarding project selection, fund release, procurement, and implementation is often kept secret, preventing effective citizen oversight and meaningful community participation. Studies in Akwa Ibom State indicate that over 65% of community populations do not participate in activities connected with the conception and implementation of projects in their communities (Atairet, Mboho and Aborh, 2021).

ii. Weak Monitoring and Evaluation: The absence of strong monitoring, control, and evaluation mechanisms results in widespread concerns about mismanagement, with investigations revealing equipment meant for local government areas found in private homes (Olowu, 2020).
iii. Sustainability Concerns: Projects often lack sustainability planning, with corruption diverting funds needed for effective upkeep and operation, and many organic community development projects initiated without adequate planning (Agbo, 2025)
iv. Top-Down Implementation: Despite the bottom-up rhetoric, constituency project processes often exclude meaningful community participation, working instead with elites who claim to represent communities but lack adequate knowledge of local needs. (Maitala, 2023).
v. Vague Project Locations: Budget reviews reveal that locations of some constituency projects are vague, complicating accountability and community tracking.

Recommendations and Policy Implications

- The National Assembly should streghthen routine oversight of constituency projects through regular committee visits to MDAs and project locations, committee hearings, and audit investigations of ongoing and completed projects as provided in Standing Orders. Legislators representing Akwa Ibom North West should leverage their constitutional oversight functions (Sections 88-89, 128-129 of the Constitution) to monitor project implementation timelines, evaluate outcomes, and ensure value for money.

- All constituency project information, including project selection criteria, fund release schedules, contractor details, procurement processes, and implementation timelines should be publicly disclosed through accessible platforms. Community leaders, women's groups, youth organizations, and civil society organizations should be meaningfully involved in project identification, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure projects reflect actual community priorities and enable grassroots ownership.

- A dedicated, independent monitoring unit should be established within the National Assembly or SDG Office to track constituency project implementation across all constituencies, including Akwa Ibom North West's 10 LGAs. This unit should conduct regular field inspections, verify project completion against budgetary allocations, and publish quarterly performance reports to deter abandonment, shoddy execution, and misappropriation.

- All constituency projects should incorporate sustainability mechanisms from inception, including operation and maintenance budgets, community management committees, and skills transfer components to ensure long-term functionality. Projects should be aligned with state and local government development plans to avoid duplication and ensure institutional support for maintenance beyond the legislative tenure.

Conclusion

Constituency projects represent a theoretically sound mechanism for translating legislative representation into grassroots development in Nigeria. In Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District, substantial budgetary allocations demonstrate political commitment to constituency development. However, the gap between allocation and effective implementation reveals systemic weaknesses in monitoring, community participation, transparency, and sustainability planning that undermine developmental outcomes. For constituency projects to fulfill their promise of bringing government closer to the people and addressing community-specific needs, fundamental reforms are required in project identification, implementation oversight, community engagement, and accountability mechanisms.

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