

Challenges Facing Decentralization and Child Welfare in Ntchisi and Lilongwe Districts in Malawi

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ABSTRACT The challenges facing decentralization in Ntchisi and Lilongwe districts regarding child welfare in Malawi are explored through the lenses of the district officers. Using an exploratory design and qualitative research methods, the study explored the phenomena of decentralisation from the experiences of district officers who are at the centre of implementation of decentralised core functions of child welfare. The study utilizes the functionalist perspective in which decentralisation is seen as a system that should lead to the functioning of the social whole. The findings showed that the challenges being faced by the child welfare implementation in the current framework of decentralization are dysfunctional to the system. It is concluded that the challenges should serve as a test for the decentralized system's ability to adapt to the environment and its needs to achieve a social whole of bringing government closer to the people.