

2008 PROMOTING INFORMATION AND VOICE FOR TRANSPARENCY ON ELECTIONS: END OF PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT

The Post-Election of the Promoting Information and Voice for Transparency on Election (PIVOT) programme was developed as an umbrella structure bringing partners with a diversity of experience and approach together under a common goal. The purpose of the PIVOT programme was ***'to support free, fair elections by improving citizens' ability to engage effectively in the electoral process through enhanced capacity of media and civil society'***. DFID provides support for electoral reform with funds to increase skills and knowledge within the National Electoral Commission and supporting agencies through the provision of technical assistance and direct procurement of election materials. PIVOT was set up as a complementary effort in support of elections over a two year period from November 2006-December 2008. International NGOs partnered with national organisations to achieve outputs, they were as follows:



- Strengthening media
- International and domestic election observation
- Promoting women's participation and representation in elections
- Strengthening political parties

Search for Common Ground, in collaboration with BBC World Trust, worked primarily on the first output 'greater understanding of citizens, particularly poor women and men, on electoral processes and issues and of their role in holding government to account'. To assess the programme's achievements in light of the outcomes and objectives, the evaluation and narrative report was informed by a review of project documentation, interviews with project partners and stakeholders and from two PIVOT facilitated Lessons Learning events. These events provided an overview of Sierra Leone's election experiences, involving a broad range of stakeholders as well as a focused exercise to analyse PIVOT's contribution to elections and the lessons learned. Ultimately, the evaluation highlights a number of positive programme results.

SFCG BUILDS EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

The partnership between SFCG and BBC-WST worked well in terms of providing complementary skills to community radio stations and selected journalists. Through supporting the Independent Radio Network (IRN) made up of 21 radio stations distributed around the country, SFCG and BBC-WST were ***effective in building on existing radio stations and skills and capturing local level voices.***

As a result, partner radio stations who commonly produced one-dimensional news reports on a large number of topics were able to start broadcasting more factual, focused news on key topics.

SFCG RAISES AWARENESS ABOUT WOMEN CANDIDATE HARRASSMENT

SFCG worked with IRN stations to produce weekly programmes and daily discussions related to the elections and consequent public concerns, including repetitive messaging and jingles about the electoral process, advocating voter participation and non-violence in the run-up to elections. Electoral education and key issues were also broadcast at national level through SFCG's *Parliament Bol At*, *Common Ground News*, *Salone Uman* (Sierra Leone Women) and the popular soap series *Atunda Ayenda*..

Special attention was given to women's electoral participation through general and focused programmes like 'Salone Uman' (Sierra Leone Women). The shocking level of intimidation of female candidates prior to both Parliamentary and Local Council elections was addressed through discussion programmes and news reports of harassment. In Moyamba district, for example, a female candidate was being threatened by a political party who tried to use the women's secret society to pressure her to stand down. Complaints reached one of the IRN 'stringers' who broadcast it on radio in a name and shame ploy. This was **successful in helping stall further intimidation until party symbols were awarded. The candidate was eventually elected and wrote a letter of thanks to IRN and SFCG.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a complete list of key recommendations for follow-up:

1. Utilise documented coverage of the electoral process and party / candidate pledges as tools for civil society to hold Government accountable
2. Support to promoting information and transparency on elections – Start now!
3. Streamline women's participation in elections in gender focused development and civic education activities
4. Build institutional support to independent radio networks and domestic monitoring groups to develop sustainability

Source: This document is a summary of, and taken directly from "PRM Post-Implementation Study: Final Report." A copy of this document can be acquired at <http://www.sfcg.org/sfcg/evaluations/liberia.html>, or by contacting Nick Oatley, Director Institutional Learning at Search for Common Ground at noatley@sfcg.org

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