



**STAR
Ghana**

Strengthening Transparency,
Accountability and Responsiveness

Review of lessons learned from past election-support projects in Ghana and analysis of ongoing 2016 election-support projects in Ghana

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December 11, 2015

1. Introduction

STAR-Ghana is seeking to develop and implement an Election 2016 Call with the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of civil society and media actions for peaceful, credible and inclusive elections and towards a long term goal of helping to deepen and consolidate democratic governance in Ghana

The purpose of the assignment is to provide critical input for STAR Ghana's roundtable conversations that will inform the Election Call through:

- 1) Synthesising lessons learned from previous elections support programmes, particularly those involving CS and media actions;
- 2) Identification of ongoing and planned programmes and actions targeting elections 2016, particularly those involving CS and media engagements.

2. Ongoing election related projects in Ghana

2.1 European Union

Project 1	Support to initiatives to contribute to a violent free transparent and credible general elections in 2016. Call for proposals issued in December 2014, worth Eur1million.
Objectives	<p>The global objective of the EU Call is: to support initiatives that contribute to a violent free, transparent and credible general elections in 2016.</p> <p>The specific objectives of the Call are:</p> <p>I. Build the knowledge and skills of citizens at large and particularly women and youth networks in conflict mediation, negotiations and dialogue to increase their level of participation in resolving electoral disputes and peace building efforts;</p> <p>II. Better understanding and participation by Ghanaian citizens of democratic processes and especially their roles and responsibilities in the election process.</p>
Outcomes	
Sector/Priority Areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Increase the capacity of citizens at large and particularly women and youth networks in conflict mediation, negotiations and dialogue in creating a peaceful environment ahead of the 2016 elections and in resolving electoral and post electoral disputes. II. Promote Dialogue involving civil society organisation, media, relevant Independent Constitutional Bodies (National Media Commission, Electoral Commission National Commission National Commission for Civic Education) National Peace Council and traditional and religious leaders to initiate and sustain mediation and conflict resolution

	<p>processes and for more constructive and responsible media coverage of political party activities and electoral events.</p> <p>III. The promotion of issue-based (development agenda of political parties) politics in the political discourse involving political parties/candidates and the electorate.</p>
Geographical Location	15 districts in Volta, Eastern and Northern regions.
Implementing partner	SocioServe
stakeholders	Traditional leaders, party youth, police, EC and NCCE.
Project 2	Most likely to support Electoral Commission, NCCE and Media Commission
Focus	Non-core activities
Phase	Proposal stage
Sector/Priority Areas	Media monitoring, civic education etc.
Geographical Location	National

2.2 DFID

Project	Most likely to support Electoral Commission, Judicial Service, strategic Civil Society interventions etc
Focus	Non-core activities
Phase	Business Case
Sector/Priority Areas	EC stakeholder engagements, impartial election adjudication etc.
Geographical Location	National

2.3 UNDP

Project	Most likely to support Electoral Commission and political parties
Focus	Non-core activities
Phase	Proposal stage
Sector/Priority Areas	EC, political party internal system strengthening and common results collation platform
Geographical Location	National

2.4 USAID

Project	Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2013–2017 Intermediate Result 1.3 of the Democracy and Responsive Governance democracy objective: “Strengthened electoral institutions and processes”
Objectives	“All activities under this IR are meant to be sustained through future electoral consultations. A second national elections support effort may occur during this CDCS (in 2016), and will be an opportunity to assess performance of the IR and Sub-IRs. Over the course of the strategy, USAID/Ghana anticipates a strategic move away from activities that support the basic infrastructure and systems of voting processes and observation (as these activities are increasingly well managed by Ghanaian institutions), towards more narrowly targeted interventions to address imbalances in elections participation, particularly by women”.
Outcomes	
Sector/Priority Areas	1.3.1 Strengthened capacity of Election Commission 1.3.2: Improved transparency and conduct of elections through CSO observation 1.3.3: Increased participation of women and marginalized groups in election processes
Geographical Location	National

3. Synthesis of Lessons Learned

Documents reviewed;

- Coffey International evaluation of DFID’s Ghana Electoral Support Programme, August 2013
- End Of Project Evaluation, STAR-Ghana Election Adjudication Call, Gideon Hosu-Porbley, Ama Oppong-Duah and Bossman Asare, August 2014
- DFID Ghana: Project Complete Report of STAR Ghana election 2012 calls
- Electoral Intimidation and Fraud in the 2012 Ghanaian Elections: Polling Station Results
University of California, Los Angeles, April, 2013
- Towards A Peaceful Election 2012: Mapping Out Conflict Triggers And Violence-Prone Constituencies In Ghana, Kwesi Aning, Phd, Ernest Ansah Lartey, Sarah Okaebea Danso
- Evaluation Report of the 2013 CODEO/CDD Parallel Vote Tabulation Effort. Jerome Cheung, May 2013

Coffey International evaluation of DFID’s Ghana Electoral Support Programme (GESP)	
Objective	Post-2008 election reports and lessons informed the design of the DFID’s GESP - highlighting weaknesses in election management process and planning; voter registration; the need to improve law enforcement;

	weakness in the overall legal framework and the conduct of political parties and media. The GESP outcome is aligned with these lessons in its focus of enhanced capacity of state and non-state actors to deliver free, fair and peaceful elections.
Methodology	Data was collected using multiple methods: document review, semi-structured interviews and focus groups, telephone survey, direct observation, and analysis of media reporting on election day. One local survey team was used for the telephone survey. This was translated into two local languages and pre-tested before use.
Key Findings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A coordination function across the components was largely lacking during the implementation and delivery of GESP. The components worked in silos as opposed to collectively. It is recommended that any future design will put in place a coordination function so that mutual areas of work and common areas of impact are planned for. A coordination output should be placed in any logframe, as this will hold the programme and components to account. 2. <i>Role of Political Parties</i> - The one notable omission in GESP is with regard to political parties. Evidence from past elections and the USAID Governance Assessment demonstrate that the two main parties (the NDC and the NPP) are key stakeholders in elections: their trust in the credibility of the election process, including in the state institutions that manage the process, crucially determines the general acceptability of election results. GESP did not specifically include engagement with political parties. 3. In order to improve the sustainability of election support activities, future election support programmes need to take a strategic approach to facilitative partnership between government institutions and other election bodies in the design stage. As well, having an end of project workshop with all implementing partners to capture lessons, learning and innovative practices to take forward for the next election.
STAR 1 Election Adjudication Call	
Objective	“Given the novelty of the Elections Adjudication itself and the role played by CSOs, the evaluation focused also on drawing out good practices and lessons learned as well as challenges encountered and how they were mitigated” in addition to assessing results achieved”.
Methodology	Two main evaluation models were used: the formative and summative evaluation models. In addition, especially at the outcome level, the theory of causation and change, attribution and contribution was employed to determine the validity of the results (outcomes) of the project from the context of independent variable (inputs from STAR-Ghana), interveners, confounders and extraneous variables (competing grants and actions of other projects).
Key Findings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The study unearthed a <i>Triangle Of Peace and A Corridor of Violence</i> in the country with connections in Northern Ghana

	<p>(Tamale and its communities, Bolga, Bawku) Accra (Nima, Mamobi, James Town) and Ashaiman (I shall return, Tulaku) which must be studied further for positive political and general developmental gains. There exists a strong network of communication across these areas among political activists. Persons in these communities are believed to be fearless but vulnerable and used by politicians to defend/protect their interest.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The use of religious leaders as agents to change attitudes of congregation and general population was generally one of the most effective tools in the call. They appeared to be able to reach out to the population through their messages at churches and Mosques¹. 3. Channelling energies of potential perpetrators of violence into ensuring peace is a useful strategy. The involvement of persons who could have caused the violence by making them informants appeared to be a useful strategy. These vulnerable persons are able to decipher potential conflict situations and worked very well with the police as discussed. 4. Key personalities/celebrities that are loved by communities appeared to be very important stakeholders in vulnerable communities, e.g. boxers and musicians facilitated processes for Radio Gold. This group of people were useful in the Zongo, Ayigbe Town, Nima, Ashaama, James Town communities where Radio Gold carried out their activities. 5. The use of videos of war- torn countries and persons who have experienced/witnessed war as resource persons was very efficient. 6. The use of GPs operational in potential conflict areas was also very effective in that they were conversant with the vulnerable population and the nature of the issues. 7. Media and FBOs appeared to be strongest collaborators in disseminating information to larger groups of people and hard to reach areas.
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STAR Ghana Semi-Annual Election Convention Report

Theme: CSO Engagement with Elections 2012: Emerging Lessons and Opportunities

Objective	STAR Ghana issued an Election Call in 2012 aimed at ensuring a peaceful, transparent and fair elections in 2012 and a smooth transition. Six (6) months into the project, STAR-Ghana organized a semi-annual convention to bring together all stakeholders to dialogue on the emerging lessons and opportunities from their endeavours.
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Methodology	The Convention took the form of parallel pre-conference discussions,
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¹¹ STAR-Ghana might want to look into the issue of **supporting FBOs since** they came out as one of the strongest on the ground. Gideon et al Evaluation of the Election Adjudication Call.

	which were followed by joint conference presentations by grant partners (GPs) and plenary sessions for dialogue between audience and panelists.
Key Findings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic funding for media initiatives was extremely useful in promoting an active and constructive role by the media in electoral and governance process. 2. Strategic linkages between the media and GPs ensured the effectiveness of interventions and strengthened joint working between both sides towards development objectives. 3. Due to the nature of elections and the emergence of unforeseen issues, contingency funds should be set aside to support critical and joint CSO interventions/responses outside of project funds allocated.
Electoral Intimidation and Fraud in the 2012 Ghanaian Elections: Polling Station Results University of California, Los Angeles	
Objective	Research was designed to assess the direct impact of election observers on various outcomes at the polling stations they observed on election day as well as any spillover effects of observers on unobserved polling places within the same constituency.
Methodology	<p>Random assignment of over 1,000 domestic elections observers during 2012 general elections to study voter intimidation and fraud in a developing democracy.</p> <p>Four regions were selected, all located in southern Ghana; Volta Region, the stronghold of the ruling NDC, and Ashanti Region, the stronghold of the main opposition NPP. Western and Central regions were "swing" regions.</p> <p>Research strategy involved randomly varying the concentration of observers at the constituency level.</p>
Key Findings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is <u>evidence of substantial observer effects</u>. Observers reduce the prevalence of harassment and intimidation of voters in the polling places where they are stationed by about 66%. 2. They also reduce the probability that more voters will vote in a polling place than were officially registered by about 60%, and in electorally competitive constituencies they substantially reduce instances of ballot stuffing. 3. Observers reduce the probability of overvoting at polling places where they are present by almost 6 percentage points, but <i>increase</i> the probability of overvoting at nearby polling stations by 3.4 percentage points. Unobserved polling places with an observer present in the same electoral area are therefore roughly 75% more likely to experience overvoting than unobserved polling places in electoral areas with no election observer. 4. Observers further reduce the likelihood that a polling station's biometric verification machine is used improperly, which they demonstrate strongly correlates with their other measures of fraud. The researchers uncovered compelling evidence that biometric verification machines help prevent fraud only if an election observer was

	<p>present. Where election observers were not present, biometric verification machines broke down more often and overvoting, was significantly more likely to occur. <u>Their interpretation:</u> 1. where election observers were present, polling station officials took greater care to ensure that the biometric verification machine operated continuously by, for instance, proper use of batteries and suitable machine placement. 2. When machines failed, political actors already on the scene took advantage of equipment failures to facilitate fraud.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Researchers found evidence that observers reduce intimidation or harassment during voting and reduce the presence of unauthorized persons at a polling station. Observers do not, however, have an average effect on intimidation and harassment after the polls close and during the process of counting the ballots. 6. There is no evidence that observers displace violence or intimidation to nearby polling places. On the other hand, unobserved polling places spatially proximate to observed polling places were 75% more likely to experience fraud than were unobserved polling places in areas without observers nearby. 7. The electoral violence the researchers uncover appears to be localized and random, while the fraud they uncover appears to be the product of coordinated political strategy. 8. The researchers found evidence of systematic fraud of two types. First, they uncovered significant instances of ballot box stuffing, evidenced by more ballots than voters. Second, they also identified significant numbers of incidents of overvoting, or more votes counted than registered voters. In addition, they provide compelling evidence that some aspects of fraud were coordinated across polling stations in that they observe fraud shifted from observed to unobserved but spatially proximate polling stations, finding similar rates of fraud in the strongholds of both of Ghana's major parties. This suggests that both parties may be involved.
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Evaluation Report of the 2013 CODEO/CDD Parallel Vote Tabulation Effort
Jerome Cheung, NDI
May 2013

<p>Objective</p>	<p>Assess to what extent CODEO's PVT effort boosted key stakeholders' confidence in the conduct of the general elections and result of the presidential race.</p>
<p>Key Findings</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An increase in the sample size of the 2012 PVT compared to the effort from 2008 increased the precision of the results. In 2012, the PVT sample size was increased compared to that from 2008 from 1,070 to 1,500 polling stations. This had the effect of decreasing the margin of error from 1.6% to 1.3%, an increase in precision of 0.3%. This proved to be significant for the 2012 election, and supported the official results without the ambiguity of those from 2008. 2. Many stakeholders noted with concern that discussion about the PVT was largely absent from the political discourse in the immediate post-election period. Despite widespread media

	<p>coverage, the two major parties, NDC and NPP, gave little attention or credence to the PVT.</p> <p>3. Due to CODEO/CDD's reluctance to reach out more to political parties, a valuable opportunity to dispel post-election challenges to the Electoral Commission results was missed.</p>
<p>Reflections on Monitoring Visits to STAR Ghana Election Call GPs, Dr. Doris Yaa Dartey, January 2012.</p>	
<p>Key Findings</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With regard to social inclusion, if a civil society organization focuses exclusively on a socially excluded group with targeted interventions, social change could occur. 2. <u>Media Relations:</u> With regard to media relations, in future calls, if the Community Radio Network is supported by STAR-Ghana in a subject matter theme, the community radio stations participating should be required to link up with the non-media Grant Partners in a collaborative fashion. 3. <u>Media Working Together:</u> Citi FM picked up the problem I exposed in my column about Akyem Saamang and gave it a lot more media attention on radio. This presents a good example of print/radio convergence and collaborative effort. Media searchlight on such issues should be relentless with the ultimate goal to solve a problem instead of the usual touch-and-go approach to journalism

4. Recommendations

What should be supported?

Much of the literature notes that electoral assistance has been mostly successful in establishing and promoting the technical aspects of elections: drafting electoral legislation and regulations; providing logistical support (ballots, ballot boxes etc.); educating voters; and setting up administrative and management institutions (electoral commissions, electoral management bodies etc.) and election observer groups. Without this assistance, it would be difficult for elections to take place and to be considered legitimate.

However, the literature also stresses that such technical interventions are insufficient for good governance and democratisation. More attention must be paid to longer-term institutional and capacity development, particularly in the following areas:

- building the capacity of electoral administrative and management structures to ensure that, once established, they function independently and transparently;
- strengthening political parties and fostering viable opposition parties;
- translating the use of domestic election observers and civil society monitors in elections into the development of a strong civil society and broader human rights culture;
- targeting women, minorities and disadvantaged groups in civic and campaign related educational programmes, as they are

often neglected in the tight time frames for one-off voter education.

Below are some ideas, following from activities and interventions that worked in 2012 and global best practice;

Conflict prevention and mitigation	<p>The use of religious leaders as agents to change attitudes of congregation and general population was generally one of the most effective tools in the STAR 2012 Election Call. They appeared to be able to reach out to the population through their messages at churches and Mosques.</p> <p>ACTION: National Peace Council should be supported to lead engagement with all identified religious blocs to preach peace.</p>
	<p>Eminent Persons Group, comprising of influential personalities with reach, clout and influence should be formed now and supported to mediate and to prevent conflicts.</p>
	<p>Channeling energies of potential perpetrators of violence into ensuring peace is a useful strategy. The involvement of persons who could have caused violence by making them informants appeared to be a useful strategy. These vulnerable persons are able to decipher potential conflict situations and worked very well with the police.</p>
	<p>Key personalities/celebrities that are loved by communities appeared to be very important stakeholders in vulnerable communities, e.g. boxers and musicians facilitated processes for Radio Gold in Zongo communities in 2012.</p> <p>ACTION: Engage local celebrities – Bukom Banku, Ayitey Powers, Stonebwoy, Kwaw Kesse, Sarkodie etc on a roadshow of conflict-prone constituencies.</p>
	<p>The use of videos of war- torn countries and persons who have experienced/witnessed war as resource persons was very efficient.</p> <p>ACTION: Telecast conflict documentaries on national television 2 months to elections.</p> <p>Invite electoral conflict survivors from Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote D'Ivoire etc to engage youth wings of parties.</p>
	<p>The use of GPs operational in potential conflict areas was also very effective in that they were conversant with the vulnerable population and the nature of the</p>

	<p>issues.</p> <p>A national and regional early warning monitoring system receiving and analyzing security threats which were fed to local and sub-regional security agencies (WANEP – ECOWAS Early Warning Team, WANEP – Ghana – local Security Agencies such as the Metropolitan and Municipal Security Committees).</p> <p>National, regional and district monitoring of the 2012 Political Parties Code of Conduct.</p> <p>An IT platform crowd sourcing citizen crisis information which supported the National Elections Task Force to respond timely to crisis and emergencies.</p>
Issues-based campaigning	<p>Presidential and Parliamentary debates</p> <p>Media discussions of key issues and studies conducted by CSOs, tertiary institutions and think tanks (objective is to crowd out political rhetoric and propaganda).</p> <p>Theme-specific engagements with political parties (education, health, employment, corruption, gender and social inclusion etc) to force them to discuss issues</p>
Inclusive electoral processes	<p>Training of Electoral Officers nationwide on the use of tactile ballots and physical accessibility to ensure the provision of effective services to PWD voters. In 2012 this resulted in 70% (3694) of blind persons (BPs) in the GSPD voting independently in both the presidential and parliamentary debates (GFD).</p> <p>The development of accessibility guidelines to support the EC in making polling centres barrier-free for PWDs.</p>
Voter education and mobilisation	<p>Political parties do most of this job. NCCE and media to embark on national campaign on correct voting procedures and how not to be used as a tool for violence.</p>
Manifesto influencing	<p>One of the single biggest influences on party manifestoes is the IEA Presidential Debates.</p> <p>Local Regional Women Elections Manifesto, the Women's Manifesto, civil society education manifesto and similar initiatives should be disseminated with the Manifesto Committees of political parties.</p> <p>ACTION: Hold theme-specific roundtables to 'force' parties to focus on issues and engage constructively.</p>
	<p>Media and FBOs appeared to be strongest collaborators in disseminating information to larger groups of people and hard to reach areas.</p> <p>Establish Media Working Group (similar to the</p>

Media actions to promote credible, peaceful and inclusive elections	Elections Sector Working Group) at both national local levels to strategically think through and sync issues and also support each other when under attack by political parties.
	<p>"Naming and shaming" of political party offenders through the monitoring and publication of weekly report findings on intemperate language (MFWA). Factors that contribute to ensuring success of this initiative are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public demand for an issue-based elections • condemnation from CSOs, and the general citizenry for intemperate language. • buy-in and endorsement from members, umbrella associations such as the GJA as well as regulatory bodies such as the NMC and NCA.
	Platforms/programmes focusing on non-partisan discourse through the engagement of ordinary citizens, experts and non-partisan actors for informed and balanced discourse (Citi FM/Public Agenda, GJA/GTV, StandPoint, MultiTV, GCRN)
	Community monitoring and investigations of promises, campaigns and political party actions (Citi FM – citizen interviews at Akyem Samaang, MultiTV – Constituency Watch)
CSO and media collaborations with state actors	Strategic CSO/Media collaborations and alliances to enhance media reportage and quality of engagement between media personnel and political actors (CRI – selected media houses in regional capitals and selected GPs).
	Media and Judicial Service collaboration on election adjudication procedures for parties and candidates, public education and engagement with strategic stakeholders. Reduce cost by twinning the judiciary's engagements with that of the Electoral Commission.
	Media – Electoral Commission advocacy to improve the effectiveness of the transmission and the counting/tallying of results.
	Media – Electoral Commission advocacy to codify the EC's operational procedures ² .
	In anticipation of a keenly-contested and closely-fought election 2016, support a PVT effort but with increased media and political party engagement.

² The Kriegler Commission set up after the 2007 electoral violence in Kenya, recommended a review of the Electoral Commission of Kenya's administrative procedures, with a view to introducing as much certainty – and as little discretion – as possible in key operational areas so as to ensure uniformity of performance throughout the electoral process, from polling station level up to the various teams at the national tallying centre. These procedures should be codified, well-known to staff and form the basis of training. For instance, at what point can re-counting be done, re-collation? These should be published in small booklets and widely distributed to all political parties, candidates, agents, observers and other stakeholders.

<p>Parallel Vote Tabulation</p>	<p>"In the months before the 2016 Election, conduct a one-on-one meeting with every party. Ensure that party leaders and statisticians or researchers attend (the decision-makers and the number-takers). Make a full presentation of the role, methodology, limitations and benefits of the PVT. Answer even the simplest question with respect" - Jerome Cheung</p>
<p>Domestic election observation</p>	<p>In 2012, CODEOs trained 4,000 neutral volunteer observers were deployed to nearly a fifth of Ghana's 23,282 polling stations on election day. The UCLA research documented that observers had a statistically significant and sizable effect on multiple measures of malfeasance. Their results show domestic election observers reduce incidents of election day intimidation, harassment and violence at a rate of 11%, thereby preventing a minimum of 440 incidents.</p> <p>ACTION: Field observers in all polling stations in Ashanti, Eastern, and Volta regions and monitors in all polling stations in 40 selected "hot-spots" or conflict-prone constituencies nationwide.</p>
<p>More assertive and activist civil society</p>	<p>Parties will scheme and tactically infringe on the electoral process for their own good. A united civil society voice will be crucial in condemning any infraction of due process and hem them in. They can't label a united voice.</p> <p>ACTION: media interviews, press conferences and releases with one voice and message.</p>

How should support be delivered?

Coherence and Coordination

1. A coordination function across the components was largely lacking during the implementation and delivery of GESP. The components worked in silos as opposed to collectively. It is recommended that any future design will put in place a coordination function so that mutual areas of work and common areas of impact are planned for. A coordination output should be placed in logframes, as this will hold the programme and components to account. Monthly coordination meetings could be managed with brief reporting, action points and agreed follow-up. Strategic partnerships and well coordinated resources are critical to sustain electoral reform³.

Coffey International: GESP Evaluation

Effectiveness

2. An Election Working Group, comprising donor partners, STAR-Ghana, the EC, and civil society stakeholders, met regularly (twice

³ UNDP, Evaluation Office, 2003, 'Electoral Assistance', Essentials, no. 13, UNDP

a month) during the course of the electoral year and provided a forum for donor parties to keep abreast of developments and share progress in donor election support. The working group was effective in so far as it generated a regular platform of knowledge sharing and learning for each donor. However, donors interviewed shared that it whilst it was a good first step, more could be done next election to coordinate efforts and link governance priorities. For example, the EC was funded by donors within the working group separately and with separate approaches/projects.

- Shared analysis and risks
- Unified interventions
- Unified response

Coffey International: GESP Evaluation