



# Evaluation of the Promoting A Culture of Equal Representation (PACER) Project in Sierra Leone

Full Report

Oxfam GB Programme Evaluation

February 2008

Commissioned by: Oxfam GB West Africa

Evaluators: Akijul

## Acknowledgements

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I would like to thank Oxfam and the 50/50 Group of Sierra Leone for the opportunity to participate in this important mid-term evaluation. Special thanks go to Muhamed Bizimana and Amara Mannah who facilitated the review process. I am also grateful to all the community members and stakeholders of PACER who took time from their busy schedules to meet with me.

Ashanut Okille  
**Kampala, February 2008**

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## Executive Summary

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### Introduction

1. PACER is a five year joint project between Oxfam GB in Sierra Leone and the 50/50 Group of Sierra Leone that aims to support the government of Sierra Leone's efforts to reduce poverty and vulnerability in the country through promoting the equal participation of women and men in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of poverty reduction and development initiatives. The 50/50 group of Sierra Leone is a Local women's non-governmental organization specialized in advocacy around women involvement in governance and politics. The 50/50 group has been operating since 2002.
2. The mid-term Review aims to create the opportunity for reflection and common learning amongst those involved in this project, and will thus take a participatory approach. The consultant understand that the rationale for this review is to obtain perspectives on impact and lessons learned, in addition to assessing what has worked, what has not and to analyze the reasons for both success and challenges. Particularly, the consultants will seek to understand the impact of the projects in three dimensions: Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency. This analysis and the resulting recommendations will then feed into the process of developing strategies for the remaining part/period of the project.

### The Findings

#### Overall Assessment

3. Through the mid-term evaluation, the consultant sought to answer the question- **what progress has been made towards the attainment of the above objectives so far?** After studying the various project documents and meeting with various project stakeholders, the Consultant is of the view that limited progress was made towards ensuring an increase in the number of women elected into Parliament. Whilst some training activities were carried out, as well as radio talk shows and awareness campaigns, it appears that some of these initiatives were not thoroughly planned and /or coordinated for maximum impact.
4. However, amongst the communities that the consultant visited, there was evidence of change in attitudes towards women aspirants and a desire amongst both male and female members, including community leaders to have some women elected as councillors in the forthcoming local council elections.
5. There are a number of factors that contributed to the project's failure to attain desired impact in the first phase. These include:

- (i) Project implementation was hampered by a failure to develop a common understanding between the partners about what partnership is and means until a couple of months ago. The project was meant to be implemented by Oxfam and the 50/50 Group as partners, with Oxfam playing a capacity building and oversight role and the 50/50 group as implementer on the ground. However, tensions arose in the relationship that made it difficult to work and get anything done. To date, very little capacity building in terms of systems and procedures has been undertaken.<sup>1</sup> The roles in the partnership were not elaborated until recent attempts.<sup>2</sup>
- (ii) The Oxfam programme in Sierra Leone has been undergoing a number of changes over the last couple of years including a shift from humanitarian support to more development approaches, a refocusing of the country strategy and an introduction of the partnership approach. It is therefore within this context of many significant changes within the overall organisation, that the PACER project was undertaken by Oxfam.
- (iii) A number of concerns were raised about the technical capacity of the PACER staff, and their inability to implement multiple activities. This situation was further compounded by delays in the purchase of equipment and delays in staff recruitments.
- (iv) A Capacity Building Officer was recruited to support PACER staff, however no capacity building plan is in place, and there was no evidence of any capacity building support until about a month ago.
- (v) Absence of a well planned and coordinated training and advocacy strategy
- (vi) The targets set for the first phase were unrealistic and did not seem to take cognisance of Sierra's Leone's unique challenges as a country recently emerging from conflict.
- (vii) External factors like the hesitation of political parties to give women aspirants party symbols, also affected project implementation and contributed to hindering the project from fully securing progress in the first phase.

**6. Evidence of Impact at Local Level.** Despite the above challenges, the project has registered some impact at the local level, mainly attributed to the dedication and commitment of district-based staff. In particular the project offices in Koinadugu and

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<sup>1</sup> Even in this process, there were challenges about Oxfam's role.

<sup>2</sup> A workshop was held with the new project manager and the Oxfam partnership facilitator in November 2007.

Kailahun have been able to stimulate discussions about the possibility of women contesting for local council elections, particularly in Koinadugu which did not have any women elected onto the local councils in the last elections (2002). They have also been able to get some of the community leaders to express support for women's participation and representation in the local councils. This support by community leaders, increased awareness and interest amongst the community are important in building momentum towards supporting potential women candidates.

**7. Learning from Past Mistakes.** The Consultant also found that Oxfam and PACER have recognised their past failings and are making attempts to rectify these. The following initiatives have been carried out over the past three months: (i) Meetings between Oxfam and the 50/50 Group to review the partnership agreement and clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations (ii) New PACER Project Coordinator and Governance Officer recruited by Oxfam<sup>3</sup> (iii) Purchase of equipment and recruitment (iv) Working with others CSOs and media agencies to develop a joint media strategy (v) Organizational and Institutional Assessment of the 50/50 (vi) Development of a Monitoring and Evaluation framework for the project

**8. The Overall Project Challenge:** The Project needs to immediately adapt lessons from the first phase of the project, and work with other CSOs to encourage more women to contest for elections on to the Local Council elections.

## Recommendations

Whilst the project fell short of attaining planned results in the first phase, it is apparent that Oxfam and the 50/50 Group are committed to turning this around in the second phase. With a new Project Manager who seems to have built good relationships, and is keen to refocus the project, the results for the second phase will most likely be attained. <sup>4</sup> The project should thus continue, with recommended changes, in to the next phase.

### Recommendations for Phase 2 of the Project

- (i) Review the project logical framework to provide for more realistic targets and more specific and measurable indicators.
- (ii) Focus on getting women out in the LC elections, consolidate the gains. Plan a coordinated approach for this.
- (iii) Finalise the Advocacy and Media strategies and implement them. This strategy should emphasize collaboration with media agencies as a central component.

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<sup>3</sup> They have both taken the initiative to address the previous challenges and are working with PACER staff and the 50/50 Group to plan and strategize for the upcoming local council elections.

<sup>4</sup> The results being referred to here are the results that will be provided in a revised project document. The logical framework and indicators were reviewed to set more realistic targets during a workshop to develop the M&E framework in early February 2008.

### **Recommendations for Oxfam**

- (i) Ensure that the capacity building plan for the 50/50 group is developed, finalised and implemented.
- (ii) Finalise the M& E Framework and utilise it.
- (iii) Support the 50/50 Group to refocus and envision the future (both institutional and programmatic), through a strategic thinking and planning process.
- (iv) Provide greater accompaniment to the PACER staff through the Capacity building officer
- (v) Have a discussion with the 50/50 Group Executive on the possibility of facilitating their efforts towards implementing the PACER project.

### **Recommendations for the 50/50 Group**

- (i) Provide greater leadership and direction to the PACER project and staff.
- (ii) Ensure that any pending issues and /or concerns about the partnership are finalised and a final partnership agreement signed

### **Recommendations for Donors (UNDP and DFID)**

A lot of investment has already been put into the PACER. Project. Oxfam have realised their mistakes and have recruited a new Project Manager, the relationships between Oxfam and the 50/50 Group seem to be on track and a common purpose and vision is emerging. There is opportunity to build upon, however to ensure that Oxfam and the 50/50 Group implement planned activities effectively, the following outputs should be used as a condition for further support:

- (i) Capacity building plan for the 50/50 Group
- (ii) Finance system set up and operational
- (iii) A training plan for the Local Council elections.

## PART A

### Introduction

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#### A.1 Background Context

1. PACER is a five year joint project between Oxfam GB in Sierra Leone and the 50/50 Group of Sierra Leone that aims to support the government of Sierra Leone's efforts to reduce poverty and vulnerability in the country through promoting the equal participation of women and men in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of poverty reduction and development initiatives. The 50/50 group of Sierra Leone is a Local women's non-governmental organization specialized in advocacy around women involvement in governance and politics. The 50/50 group has been operating since 2002.
2. The PACER project is thus implemented through a partnership framework, in which Oxfam GB's role is one of project oversight and contractual/grant management, while the 50/50 group of Sierra Leone's role focuses on implementation of the project activities. More specifically, the purpose of PACER is to position women to be equal and active participants in elective political leadership and decision-making. To realize the set purpose, the PACER project has four specific objectives:
  - i) Women contest and win more seats at parliamentary and local council levels at the 2007 and 2008 elections.
  - ii) By 2009, approximately 421 elected women representatives effectively represent their constituencies, particularly the interests of women and other marginalized groups, in parliament and local councils in Sierra Leone;
  - iii) By 2008, the government of Sierra Leone establishes a formal mechanism to promote gender-equitable representation in elected office at the national and local levels
  - iv) By 2009, the 50/50 group is an effective champion and advocate for gender equality in political representation in Sierra Leone.

#### A.2 Review Rationale

3. The mid-term Review aims to create the opportunity for reflection and common learning amongst those involved in this project, and will thus take a participatory approach. The consultant understand that the rationale for this review is to obtain perspectives on impact and lessons learned, in addition to assessing what has worked, what has not and to analyze the reasons for both success and challenges. Particularly, the consultants will seek to understand the impact of the projects in three dimensions: Relevance, Effectiveness and



Efficiency. This analysis and the recommendations there from will then feed into the process of developing strategies for the remaining part of the project. Specifically, the consultant's brief was to carry out the mid-term review with particular reference to the details provided in the Terms of Reference (TORs) attached to this report as **Annex I**.

### A.3 Review Methodology

4. **Primary Sources of Data.** Data for this review was obtained from discussions with key staff of the project, project partners, stakeholders and project beneficiaries. The consultants travelled to one of the target districts of Koinadugu and Kailahun to meet with other project implementing staff, stakeholders, and beneficiaries. Details of the scheduled meetings are provided as **Annex II** of this report.
  1. The consultant used different instruments to get the data for this review. These were basically in the form of a checklist. The mode of interviews was basically Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). These participatory methods enabled the review process to be more of an opportunity for reflection and learning.
  2. **Secondary Sources of Data.** In order to corroborate positions taken during the primary data collection process, the consultant relied on secondary sources of information. These included reports and publications from the project, and its partners. The consultant also studied and analyzed relevant national policy frameworks and documents.

### A.4 Structure of the Report

7. The Report is structured in seven Parts: Part A provides the Background, which contains an overview of the scope and purpose of the evaluation. Part B has the Evaluation Findings that provide information pertaining to key findings in accordance with the areas outlined in the TORs and the Consultants' proposal. Part C provides information on issues related to Project Management. Part D then captures Best Practices and Lessons Learnt. The report ends with Part E that provides Recommendations. Annexed to the report are various references.

## PART B

### Evaluation Findings

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#### B.1 Overall Assessment

1. The overall development objective of the PACER project is to position women to be equal and active participants in elective political leadership and decision-making in Sierra Leone. To realize this overall objective, the PACER project has four specific objectives.

- i) Women contest and win more seats at parliamentary and local council levels at the 2007 and 2008 elections.
- ii) By 2009, approximately 421 elected women representatives effectively represent their constituencies, particularly the interests of women and other marginalized groups, in parliament and local councils in Sierra Leone;
- iii) By 2008, the government of Sierra Leone establishes a formal mechanism to promote gender-equitable representation in elected office at the national and local levels.
- iv) By 2009, the 50/50 group is an effective champion and advocate for gender equality in political representation in Sierra Leone.

2. Through this mid-term evaluation, the consultant is therefore seeking to answer the question- **what progress has been made towards the attainment of the above objectives so far?** After studying the various project documents and meeting with various project stakeholders, the Consultant is of the view that limited progress was made towards ensuring an increase in the number of women elected into Parliament. Whilst some training activities were carried out, as well as radio talk shows and awareness campaigns, it appears that some of these initiatives were not thoroughly planned and /or coordinated for maximum impact.

3. However there is evidence of change in attitudes towards women aspirants in the communities that the Consultant visited<sup>5</sup>, and a desire amongst both male and female members, including community leaders to have some women elected as councillors in the forthcoming local council elections. This change in attitude as well as a desire to have strong women candidates can be built upon to ensure better results for women during the local council elections.

4. To a large extent the project has been hampered by failure to develop a common vision at the beginning; unrealistic targets were set, particularly given the context of

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<sup>5</sup> Consultant traveled to Koinadugu district

Sierra Leone<sup>6</sup>, and even where these targets were set, insufficient effort was made to pursue them.<sup>7</sup> In addition to this, external factors like the hesitation of political parties to give women aspirants party symbols, also affected project implementation and contributed to hindering the project from fully securing progress in the first phase. The Consultant<sup>8</sup> singles out the following key factors, as having impeded progress in the first phase:

(i) **Project development and description:** Those interviewed agree that the project, though developed with some consultations and drawing from lessons of the WIL<sup>8</sup>, set unrealistic targets. Sierra Leone is only recovering from conflict, with very high illiteracy levels and the highest mortality rates in the world.<sup>9</sup> To further compound this situation, there was no common understanding between the partners about what partnership is and means until a couple of months ago. It is also apparent that there were different perspectives between what the 50/50 group and Oxfam understood by capacity building, and their respective roles in this process.

(ii) **Understanding Partnership:** The project was meant to be implemented by Oxfam and the 50/50 Group as partners, with Oxfam playing a capacity building and oversight role and the 50/50 group as implementer on the ground. However, tensions arose in the relationship that made it difficult to work and get anything done. To date, very little capacity building in terms of systems and procedures has been undertaken.<sup>10</sup> The roles in the partnership were not elaborated until recent attempts.<sup>11</sup> Both partners also faced a major challenge in trying to build a coherent and vibrant project team, and this impacted negatively on project implementation and performance, a lot more time was spent trying to address concerns about the relationship between the 50/50 Group and Oxfam, than in implementation of the project.

(iii) **Oxfam Internal Operations:** The Oxfam programme in Sierra Leone has been undergoing a number of changes over the last couple of years including a shift from humanitarian support to more development approaches, a refocusing of the country strategy and an introduction of the partnership approach. It is therefore within this context of many significant changes within the overall organisation, that the PACER project was undertaken by Oxfam. Some of the factors in Oxfam's internal operations that contributed to limited progress in the PACER project include: High staff turn over which greatly contributed to failure to follow up and monitor this

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<sup>6</sup> The conflict in Sierra Leone only ended about 5 years ago, so the country is still in a period of transition from a post-conflict situation.

<sup>7</sup> By both Oxfam and the 50/50 Group

<sup>8</sup> WIL (Women in Leadership) project was implemented by Oxfam before the 2002 elections, to support greater participation of women in the electoral process.

<sup>9</sup> UNDP Human Development Index 2007

<sup>10</sup> Even in this process, there were challenges about Oxfam's role.

<sup>11</sup> A workshop was held with the new project manager and the Oxfam partnership facilitator in November 2007.

project effectively.<sup>12</sup> Secondly, the disbursement and financial procedures within Oxfam led to unnecessary delays in purchasing equipment for the offices.<sup>13</sup> In some of the meetings that the consultant had, a number of concerns were raised about the level of attention that was given to the Project by the Oxfam senior management. These concerns hold weight particularly because gender is one of the key focus areas in Oxfam's country strategy.

(iv) **Capacity of PACER staff:** A number of concerns were raised about the technical capacity of the PACER staff, and their inability to implement multiple activities. This situation was further compounded by delays in the purchase of equipment and delays in staff recruitments. A Capacity Building Officer was recruited to support PACER staff, however no capacity building plan in place, and there was no evidence of any capacity building support until about a month ago<sup>14</sup>.

(v) **Absence of a well planned and coordinated training and advocacy strategy:** An advocacy workshop was held, however no plan was developed. Getting the women in place and the legislation required a well planned and coordinated approach, which would have identified allies, etc and rolled out systematically. This was not done and any efforts by the 50/50 Group appeared to be uncoordinated and not representative of the views of all women (including women from rural areas).

(v) **The Political landscape:** There was a change from a proportional representation system of elections, which gave more women an opportunity to be allocated representative positions by their political parties, to constituency based elections in which women find it more challenging to get the backing from their political parties.

**5. Evidence of Impact at Local Level.** Despite the above challenges, the project has registered some impact at the local level, mainly attributed to the dedication and commitment of district-based staff. In particular the project offices in Koinadugu and Kailahun have been able to stimulate discussions about the possibility of women contesting for local council elections, particularly in Koinadugu, which did not have any women, elected onto the local councils in the last elections (2002). They have also been able to get some of the community leaders to express support for women's participation and representation in the local councils. This support by community leaders, increased awareness and interest amongst the community are important in building momentum towards supporting potential women candidates.

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<sup>12</sup> In an organisation like Oxfam, one would expect the capacity to hand over the project to another officer for oversight, however in a meeting with the Country Programme Manager, he pointed out that the organisation finds it challenging to get fully qualified and competent staff, which is a general challenge in Sierra Leone.

<sup>13</sup> Some of the computers for the offices were only purchased at the end of January.

<sup>14</sup> There is a review of the finance systems currently taking place, there was a joint review of the logical framework and project document, as well as the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation framework.

6. **Learning from Past Mistakes.** The Consultant also found that Oxfam and PACER have recognised their past failings and are making attempts to rectify these. The following initiatives have been carried out over the past three months: (i) Meetings between Oxfam and the 50/50 Group to review the partnership agreement and clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations (ii) New PACER Project Coordinator and Governance Officer recruited by Oxfam<sup>15</sup> (iii) Purchase of equipment and recruitment (iv) Working with others CSOs and media agencies to develop a joint media strategy (v) Organizational and Institutional Assessment of the 50/50 (vi) Development of a Monitoring and Evaluation framework for the project

8. **The Overall Project Challenge:** The Project needs to immediately adapt lessons from the first phase of the project, and work with other CSOs to encourage more women to contest for elections on to the Local Council elections.

## B.2 Specific Findings

### B.2.1 The Evaluation Parameters.

This evaluation was guided by two broad parameters derived from the Terms of Reference; project performance and project strategies.

#### B.2.1.1 Programme Performance

Under programme performance, the Consultant looked at effectiveness and efficiency.

- **Effectiveness.** The issue here is whether the project has achieved its desired results. Whilst awareness was created, this awareness was expected to result in changes in the levels and numbers (numerical changes) of women's representation. The Consultant can thus confirm that this has not been done in the first phase. Because of reasons outlined above. However, with some modifications to the project document and a clearer focus and commitment, it may still be possible to make progress in the next phase, during the Local Council elections.
- **Efficiency.** This evaluation did not attempt a cost-benefit analysis to establish whether or not the project had 'value-for-money'. What the Consultant did was a subjective analysis aimed at determining whether resources had been applied as intended, and whether the desired results had been attained. From their analysis, the Consultant is of the view that the money injected in the first phase has not received a reciprocal result. Expenditures on staff and activities were carried out, however the results of their work and activities can not be seen.

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<sup>15</sup> They have both taken the initiative to address the previous challenges and are working with PACER staff and the 50/50 Group to plan and strategize for the upcoming local council elections.

### B.2.1.2 Project Strategies

The project mainly focused on using three approaches (i) Capacity building of the 50/50 Group (ii) Training identified women aspirants and candidates (iii) Advocacy and lobbying using various strategies, including the media.

- **Institutional and Organisational Development of the 50/50 Group:** Oxfam was responsible in this project, for supporting the development of 50/50's capacity to become an effective champion for gender equality in Sierra Leone. From the onset, there seemed to be a disconnect in the understanding of capacity building between 50/50 and Oxfam. Secondly, there was no capacity building plan to guide the process. An institutional and organisational assessment was carried out, however there is no evidence of a plan resulting from this process, nor any evidence of follow up. Another institutional and organisational assessment process has been planned.
- **Training Identified Women Aspirants and Candidates:** A Training Manual was developed for this purpose, however from discussions with the 50/50 members, the manual did not adequately reflect the context of Sierra Leone, and so in the training workshops, the groups had to rely on their own previously developed manual.<sup>16</sup> It is expected that before the Local Council elections, the two manuals will be merged, building on the strengths of each. It was also pointed out that the training for candidates was carried out late, during the campaign period, so the attendance was very low. Thirdly, none of the trainings had any follow-up components, thus making it difficult to track progress, impact and ensure the benefits of the training.
- **Advocacy and lobbying:** A number of activities were carried out in this regard, mainly radio talk shows, posters and car bumper stickers. However, these initiatives did not seem focused or well planned. An advocacy workshop was carried out, however no plan was developed, and there is no evidence of follow up in this process.

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<sup>16</sup> Discussion with the 50/50 Group president. It was also pointed out on other interviews that the manual requires external editing and that its production was completed late, so it was not used effectively by the Project and other CSOs in the build up to the Local Council elections.

## B.3 Specific Project Analysis

### B.3.1 Progress towards achieving Objective One: “Women contest and win more seats at parliamentary and local council levels at the 2007 and 2008 elections.”

#### *Findings*

##### *Leadership Training for Women in the Districts*

In various meetings in which the consultant sought to understand the relevance of the project, it was pointed out that a number of women do not contest for positions of political leadership because they do not have self-confidence, skills and experience.<sup>17</sup>

Through the leadership training activities, particularly in the districts, the PACER project was able to enable women have greater confidence in themselves, to appreciate their rights and the importance of participating in governance processes. Below are some of the comments made by women from the Koinadugu Women’s Group, who attended the training:

*“Now I make the time to attend council meetings and the meetings of our group because I understand that it is important for me to express my opinions.... However, the men tend to dominate the council meetings, so sometimes I raise my concerns through the ward representative who then raises the issues in the district council...”*

*“Before this training, I never used to sit at the front during meetings.”*

*“...I went to 5 villages and carried out voter education.... I also took part in radio programmes on women’s participation...we spoke to women, to the leaders in our community (religious and political)...we worked as volunteers in our constituencies.”*

*“I am a Change Agent...I used to be busy at school and at home ...doing the cooking...now I really try to attend all meetings...I am interested and I am an aspirant...”*

*-“I never used to talk in public; now I am confident and can speak to the paramount chief.....I give respect and I say what is on my mind. I feel free in the society.... the training that had the most impact was in leadership i.e. qualities of a good leader.”*

*“...I learnt time management.... after the training I started managing my time for meetings, housework, etc”*

The challenge though is that there was no evidence of strategy by which the women were selected for training, nor any indication of follow-up support for the trainees. In order to ensure that the impact of the training is sustained, the project will need to have some follow up activities.

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<sup>17</sup> This point was raised by a number of women that the consultant met in Koinadugu

*Development of the Training Manual:*

The training manual captures key issues and builds upon the one that the 50/50 Group had developed for training women aspirants and candidates before the local council elections. During discussions with members of the 50/50 Group, it was pointed out the manual drew upon the experiences of women candidates from other parts of Africa. However, the manual was printed late and was therefore not put to effective use before the Parliamentary elections. It is expected that it will be better utilised in preparation for the local council elections.

*Training Women Candidates*

Out of 64 female candidates, only 38 attended the training for Parliamentary aspirants. This was mainly attributed to the fact that the training was carried out during the campaign period. Out of those who attended, seven were elected (out of a total of 16 successful candidates). This experience provides a lesson that should inform the preparation and planning for training of women aspirants for the local council elections.

*Media Campaign*

A number of radio programmes were held prior to the parliamentary elections in what was described as a media campaign. The radio programmes included jingles and talk shows. Radio is an important medium of communication in Sierra Leone and is accessible to about 80% across the board. It can thus be argued that the programmes could have had an impact in creating awareness about the need for women's participation, and urging people to elect women candidates. However, it is also apparent that the media campaign was carried out without a clear strategy. For instance, it was always the same people who attended the talk shows hence providing a limited perspective, it was also argued that some of the language used by representatives of the PACER project were quite 'aggressive' and could have alienated some people, further, there was no evidence that the messages for the jingles that were aired were tested first, which would have been part of a strategy. Fortunately, the PACER project manager has initiated the process of developing a media strategy has commenced, and the process involves a number of key media agencies.

*Party Symbols*

In trying to understand the lower than anticipated number of women candidates during the parliamentary elections, the consultant was informed that there were a lot more women interested in contesting the elections, however the political parties that they belonged to did not give them symbols. With the shift from proportional representation to constituency based elections, the nomination within the parties became much more competitive. This was further compounded by the fact that it was a very close election between the two leading political parties, neither party therefore wanted to 'gamble' on women candidates.

The election in accordance with political parties also had an effect on who was elected since people voted along party lines. For instance in Koinadugu there was a woman



candidate who seemed to have a lot of support, however she was from the SLPP, which was not the most popular party in her area.<sup>18</sup>

#### *Community Support for Women Local Councillors*

In part, because of the work carried out by the Koinagdugu PACER district officer, the community leaders that the consultant met all expressed a willingness and desire to support women candidates for the local council election. The same sentiment was expressed by members of the community. Members of the community particularly stated that they considered women to be more responsible and thought that women would do a better job of representing their views than some of the current male councillors.<sup>19</sup> They also gave the example of tenders that had been awarded by the community leaders to two men and one women, whilst the woman had completed her work, the men had not completed their assignments yet. The main challenge that the community members expressed in getting a woman candidate is that no women had publicly declared their intentions to aspire for the local council.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Recommendations*

- (i) Develop a follow-up support plan for trainees. In developing this plan, PACER should consider encouraging the formation of women peer support groups, to canvas for women and offer moral support and encouragement.
- (ii) Build upon the existing good will to support women local council candidates, by going back to communities, identifying the women aspirants and training them.
- (iii) Finalise the media strategy. This strategy should pay attention to medium as well as the content of the messages. The messages should be well crafted, easy to understand and seek to positively portray women's role in politics and emphasise the strengths women have in representation.<sup>21</sup> The media strategy should also seek to involve voices of women across the board.
- (v) Develop an advocacy strategy aimed at getting more women elected as councillors. This strategy will include the media strategy mentioned above. It should also seek to involve other women's organisations, target political parties and involve more local women in seeking to get more women elected as councillors.

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<sup>18</sup> In a meeting with some of the male councilors who campaigned for the woman candidate, they pointed out that the female candidate was quite popular and well known, however in the end, people voted in accordance with party lines.

<sup>19</sup> Community in Koinadugu

<sup>20</sup> The chief had identified two who were present at the meeting. Their main obstacles were lack of education, and monetary support for their campaigns.

<sup>21</sup> In one meeting it was suggested that the media campaign focus on the role of councilors as representatives, and emphasize that women because of their unique role in society as homemakers and care givers are well placed to understand the concerns and express them clearly.

**B.3.2 Progress towards achieving Objective Two: “By 2009, approximately 421 elected women representatives effectively represent their constituencies, particularly the interests of women and other marginalized groups, in parliament and local councils in Sierra Leone.”**

There have not been any significant activities carried out under this output, the argument being that the women parliamentarians have only been recently elected. There is a plan to carry out a capacity assessment of the women parliamentarians and local councillors in order to develop a plan.

However, in the meantime the PACER project is part of a core group of CSOs that have formed a Parliamentary Working Group. This Group brings together stakeholders that are interested in supporting the work of Members of Parliament.

The proposal indicates the establishment of accountability forums, however these forums have not been operationalised. It also seems that there is no clear understanding about what the purpose of these forums is. The forums potentially offer a great opportunity for regular interaction between the Parliamentarians and Local Councillors and their constituencies. This would increase accountability and create awareness among the community about policy issues, and inform the leaders about community concerns. This would in turn contribute towards ensuring that the leaders adequately represent their constituents.

*Recommendations*

- (i) Explore options of a strategic niche for PACER in supporting women parliamentarians and councillors, through networking with other agencies.
- (ii) Carry out a capacity assessment of the women parliamentarians and local councillors and develop a plan to support them to effectively represent their constituents. PACER should consider carrying out the assessment of the Parliamentarians first in order to ensure that support to them commences as soon as possible.
- (iii) Develop a clear understanding of the vision and purpose of the accountability forums, and then have them established and operationalised in the districts.

**B.3.3 Progress towards achieving Objective Three: “By 2008, the government of Sierra Leone establishes a formal mechanism to promote gender-equitable representation in elected office at the national and local levels.”**

*Lack of Advocacy Strategy*

The consultant was shown a workshop report to develop an advocacy strategy for the 50/50 Group, however whilst the workshop was carried out, no strategy was developed. There was no clear explanation as to why the strategy was not developed, despite a consultant being contracted to support this process. As a result, the various activities that were carried out to seek to influence formal mechanisms, were uncoordinated and did not have significant impact.

*Women's Presentation to the CRC*

The 50/50 Group, and other women's organisations put together a joint statement making the case for 30% affirmative action for women (known as safe seats) that they presented to the Law Reform Commission that was responsible for the Constitutional Review process. The statement was presented after a public demonstration/march by the women's organisations. Unfortunately, the statement was not able to influence the constitutional review process, the women's groups were asked to consult further with the political parties on this issue. Reflection on this process points to lack of clear strategy; for instance, there was no evidence that PACER implemented any lobbying activities, sought to build allies, nor sought support from the political parties and Commissioners.

*Recommendation*

(i) Develop an Advocacy strategy with clear and realistic targets. The strategy should seek to involve political parties and other women's organisations in its implementation.

**B.3.4 Progress towards achieving Objective Four: "By 2009, the 50/50 group is an effective champion and advocate for gender equality in political representation in Sierra Leone."**

*Partnership, A New Approach for Oxfam Sierra Leone*

Oxfam's work in Sierra Leone was mainly humanitarian, and they recently went through a process of reflection and reorganisation in order to develop the current country strategy. Key areas of focus are Governance, Gender, Health and Livelihoods. The strategy also points to a change of approach from direct delivery to a partnership approach. Oxfam is also in the process of transitioning to a learning organisation. PACER was therefore among the first tests of the partnership approach. There was no common understanding of the project from the onset.<sup>22</sup> There was no clarity with regards to roles and responsibilities, and established common vision and direction for the partnership at the beginning. Oxfam now has a partnership facilitator who facilitated a workshop in which Oxfam and the 50/5 Group started the process of clarifying their roles and responsibilities, and agreed on key component of a partnership agreement. The challenge will thus remain finalising and implementing the agreement.

*Institutional and Organisational Development Support*

A workshop was held in mid 2007, in which a number of areas of concern in the institutional and organisational set up of the 50/50 Group were identified. However the report was not followed with an action plan, and no further reference was made to it. It has been argued that all the attention was on the elections, and so the capacity building plan was shelved in the short term.

An Organisational and Institutional capacity assessment, which builds upon the last one is currently being undertaken. It is expected that this assessment will feed into a

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<sup>22</sup> This is despite the project having been presented jointly...one of the interviewees likened the partnership to a 'Marriage of Convenience'

strategic thinking and planning process for the 50/50 Group that will end up with a comprehensive strategic plan that also addresses issues of organisational capacity building.

*Recommendation*

(i) Finalise the Organisational capacity assessment of the 50/50 Group, and implement the resulting plan.

## **PART C**

### Project Management

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#### C.1 Institutional arrangements

1. The PACER project is implemented through a partnership framework, in which Oxfam GB's role is one of project oversight, contractual/grant management and capacity building, while the 50/50 group of Sierra Leone's role focuses on implementation of the project activities.

2. *Oxfam Staff*: at the Oxfam Office there is a PACER Project manager, a Capacity Building Officer, and an officer providing support to develop the financial system. Oxfam also has two officers attached to the project at the district level who work with PACER staff. The finance support officer has been actively working with the PACER secretariat to streamline the finance systems and records since January 2008. The capacity building officer has not been fully engaged, mainly due to the lack of a plan or capacity building strategy. However strategies for working with the media, institutional development of the 50/50 Group and an M&E framework have been developed which should provide a clear roles and tasks for the capacity building officer. It has also been proposed that the Capacity building officer should sit at the PACER secretariat to provide on hand support.

3. *The 50/50 group of Sierra Leone staff* The 50/50 group secretariat has four staff at the Freetown office: the Project Coordinator, the PACER Desk Officer, the Finance and Administration Officer and an .... The two district offices in Koinadugu and Kailahun, have one project officer each, who are responsible for managing and implementing activities at district level.

## C.2 Specific Findings<sup>23</sup>

### C.2.1 Challenges with Staffing

Recruitment of staff at Oxfam and the 50/50 Group took longer than expected. And once the staff were in place, the Project Coordinator took maternity leave after two months. Oxfam has also had two Project Manager and two Governance managers over the last 15 months. These changes, compounded with different understandings of the project and the partnerships all contributed to getting the project off to a very shaky start. However, all the staffing positions have now been filled, and there is clarity on what the project intends to achieve.

### C.2.2 Efforts to Clarify Roles and Responsibilities of PACER staff

One of the challenges that faced the project in its initial 15 months was the lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities of PACER staff at the district level. A meeting was held last November 2007 to discuss this and revised Job Descriptions developed. Project staff seemed satisfied with the revised job descriptions; however the Project Manger will need to regularly monitor and ensure that this situation is maintained.

### C.2.3 Lack of Clear Organisational Systems and Procedures

Despite being in existence for the last five years, the 50/50 Group did not have a fully functioning secretariat, and hence no organisational systems and procedures that the PACER project could utilise.<sup>24</sup> It should however be pointed out that these systems and procedures should have been set up at the beginning of the project with support from Oxfam, which was not done until fairly recently.<sup>25</sup> As a result, they had to rely heavily on Oxfam procedures and systems, even for recruitment.

### C.2.4 Accountability of PACER staff

One of the impacts of the lack of clear organisations and systems, and lack of understanding of the partnership is that there was lack of clarity, particularly amongst the 50/50 Group Executive about whom the staff were accountable to. Since they were recruited by Oxfam, it was assumed that they were Oxfam staff, and yet Oxfam staff pointed out that the partnership agreement clearly stipulated that they were accountable to the 50/50 Group. Lengthy discussions about the partnership and role and accountability of staff have been held, and this position has now been clarified. The PACER staff at the 50/50 group are accountable to the 50/50 Group executive board, so the 50/50 Group Executive needs to manage and supervise their work, including carrying out performance appraisals.

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<sup>23</sup> The consultants note that the mid term review of the project comprehensively dealt with a number of issues relating to the project management, and a number of their recommendations have been implemented. Refer to the annex for a summary of the project's progress in implementing the MTR recommendations.

<sup>24</sup> The 50/50 Group nominated a PACER steering Committee, however this Committee has never met.

<sup>25</sup> In the last two months, after the recruitment of the current Project manager.

### **C.2.5 Financial Management**

During the evaluation, the consultant was not able to make an in-depth assessment of the financial management systems because they are only just being set up.<sup>26</sup> It should be pointed out though that lack of a financial management system with strict checks and controls, and failure to properly supervise and manage the finance and administration officer seems to have resulted in some financial mismanagement.<sup>27</sup> As the system is being developed, instances of financial mismanagement should be pointed out and addressed immediately.

### **C.2.6 Budget**

During the evaluation, the consultant was informed that some of the budget lines were not properly costed, for instance, rental costs especially for district offices were under budgeted, the staff salaries are not competitive, there is no budget line for internet, and the budget only provides for security for the Freetown office. The Project manager has facilitated a process of revising the budget, which is necessary at this point.

### **C.2.7 Procurement**

A lot of the office equipment was procured and delivered long after the project started, for instance the motorbike for the Kailahun office only arrived in November 2007 while the one for Koinadugu arrived in January 2008. Some computers were only delivered during at the end of January. And even when some equipment was procured, the 50/50 Group were not consulted and in some instances are not happy with the items like the Air Conditioner in the Freetown office, and the motorbikes that are not 'female friendly'. There was also a concern about the procurement of consultancy services. Oxfam is however attempting to resolve this by consulting the 50/50 Group more before making decisions about procurement.

### **C.2.8 Logistical Arrangements**

Some concerns were raised by district staff about logistical arrangements for instance the lack of field allowances for Koinadugu Oxfam staff, dissatisfaction with the system of payment of salaries, and insufficient stationery in the Koinadugu office. These are issues that need to be resolved.

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<sup>26</sup> For instance there is no financial manual

<sup>27</sup> This information was obtained during discussions with PACER management who are working on setting up the financial system. An example is how 30million Leone's was withdrawn from the PACER account during the Christmas holiday season, and there were no activities being implemented.

*Recommendations*

- (i) Review the budget, prioritise and ensure that costs are ‘realistic’
- (ii) Finalise the financial system and procedures, develop required documents and manuals.
- (iii) The role and tasks of the Capacity Building Officer need to be clarified in order to ensure that his roles and those of the PACER staff do not overlap.
- (iv) Finalise procurement of all required equipment

## Part D

### Lessons Learnt

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Lessons learned should help to: Prevent mistakes for future similar interventions; and contribute to general knowledge in the area of the intervention of the project being evaluated. The Consultant consider the following to be key lessons learnt from the implementation of the project:

1. It is important for partners to consult widely and plan together for joint projects.
2. For a partnership to be successful, the relationship between the partners should be characterised, among others, by mutual appreciation and respect.
3. Capacity building includes provision of skills, purchase of equipment and mentoring.
4. Advocacy requires with other CSOs.
5. Planning in advance and developing strategies can make interventions more effective.
6. There is need for longer-term strategy to ensure women's participation in decision-making, this strategy will have to address causes of women's inequality.
7. Issues relating to women's rights are still very sensitive in Sierra Leone, therefore a lot of care should be taken in the crafting of messages that are aired on radio.



## Part E

### General recommendations<sup>28</sup>

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#### E.1 Overall Recommendation

Whilst the project fell short of attaining planned results in the first phase, it is apparent that Oxfam and the 50/50 Group are committed to turning this around in the second phase. With a new Project Manager who seems to have built good relationships, and is keen to refocus the project, the results for the second phase will most likely be attained.<sup>29</sup> The project should thus continue, with recommended changes, in to the next phase.

#### E.2 Recommendations for Phase 2 of the Project

- (i) Review the project logical framework to provide for more realistic targets and more specific and measurable indicators.
- (ii) Focus on getting women out in the LC elections, consolidate the gains. Plan a coordinated approach for this.
- (iii) Finalise the Advocacy and Media strategies and implement them. This strategy should emphasize collaboration with media agencies as a central component.

#### E.3 Recommendations for Oxfam

- (i) Ensure that the capacity building plan is finalised and implemented.
- (ii) Finalise the M& E Framework and utilise it.
- (iii) Support the 50/50 Group to refocus and envision the future (both institutional and programmatic), through a strategic thinking and planning process.
- (iv) Provide greater accompaniment to the PACER staff through the Capacity building officer
- (v) Have a discussion with the 50/50 Group Executive on the possibility of facilitating their efforts towards implementing the PACER project.

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<sup>28</sup> Specific recommendations per objective are provided in the earlier parts of the report

<sup>29</sup>The results being referred to here are the results that will be provided in a revised project document. The logframe and indicators were reviewed to set more realistic targets during a workshop to develop the M&E framework in early February 2008.

#### E.4 Recommendations for the 50/50 Group

- (i) Provide greater leadership and direction to the PACER project and staff.
- (ii) Ensure that any pending issues and /or concerns about the partnership are finalised and a final partnership agreement signed

#### E.5 Recommendations for Donors (UNDP and DFID)

A lot of investment has already been put into the PACER. Project. Oxfam have realised their mistakes and have recruited a new Project Manager, the relationships between Oxfam and the 50/50 Group seem to be on track and a common purpose and vision is emerging. There is opportunity to build upon, however to ensure that Oxfam and the 50/50 Group implement planned activities effectively, the following outputs should be used as a condition for further support:

- (i) Capacity building plan for the 50/50 Group
- (ii) Finance system set up and operational
- (iii) A training plan for the Local Council elections.

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