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DEMOCRACY

Responding to shifting landscapes in the evaluation of democracy promotion programmes

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Introducing WFD

WFD in brief

The Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) was established in 1992 to support democratic practices and institutions in developing democracies.

WFD specialises in parliamentary strengthening and political party development; works at national, regional and local levels; and is uniquely placed to draw directly on the expertise and involvement of the Westminster political parties.

WFD is sponsored by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and is accountable to Parliament for its expenditure.

WFD in brief

Organisation composed of a central office; four political party offices representing the three largest UK political parties and one amalgamating the remaining smaller parties in Westminster; and over 20 field offices across the world

Historically, we have relied on the FCO and Embassies for our funding. Since 2008, this has shifted increasingly toward DFID, the EU, and other international donors

Principal funding comes in three year cycles as one combined grant from FCO/DFID with reporting aligned with DFID standard systems



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The Challenge



Measuring democracy, or even changes in democratic processes, is complex and context-specific.

- WFD programmes vary by size, duration, scope, focus, and location.
- Definitions of success likewise vary enormously, if they exist at all; democracy assistance tends to view itself as an indisputable good
- Beneficiaries also have different conceptions of what democracy means and how best to attain it in their country



Aggregating across a diverse portfolio can lead to lowest common denominator methodologies

- Absolute standards masks achievement at the lower end of the scale and over-incentivises selecting partners or problems that are at or near the intended targets at the baseline.
- Too much flexibility restricts ability to demonstrate its cumulative impact
- Framework must capture the value-added of each programme in a way that is compatible across the portfolio



Accountability remains paramount, irrespective of calls for adaptation, innovation, and ‘political smarts’

- Rising DFID budget in the face of austerity elsewhere is a double-edged sword – heightening scrutiny of expenditure
- Result is the juxtaposition of an evidence base that suggests one approach and a bureaucratic system that demands another
- Implementers must adapt, innovate, and be politically smart within the general confines of a system built for accountability, not necessarily impact



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WFD's Response

A New M&E Framework

Three new approaches to unpacking complexity

- A new logframe attached to our DFID/FCO grant that reflects overall corporate strategy/theory of change and gets at the heart of what WFD does best
- A new tool at outcome level that recognises political party and parliamentary development as a process rather than a destination
- A clear link with communications to ensure that ‘stories of change’ percolate out from reporting to give a human face to the work



Visualisation of WFD logframe

Impact: *Developing and transition countries provide inclusive and effective democratic governance for their citizens*

Outcome: *Democratic culture and practice in parliaments and political parties that will support inclusive and effective governance*

Output 1:
*Parliaments and/or political parties, where WFD works, apply relevant lessons, including from the **British democratic experience***

Output 2:
*Creation of dynamic, **regional, peer-to-peer networks** that address thematic priorities*

Output 3:
***Brokered relationships** and political space for policy change amongst civil society, parties and parliament*

Output 4:
*Effective use of **political context analysis** by WFD*

Output 5:
*High quality **research and evidence** informs support to democratic governance internationally*

Outcome Matrix

A measurement tool that enable each programme to identify its progress markers and assess against them over time.

- A hybrid approach that seeks to meld a variety of evaluation approaches to produce data that both captures changes at programme level and aggregates sufficiently well to assess broader achievement.
- Each programme logframe will have a matrix at outcome level and at least one quantitative indicator
- Draws on achievement rating scale approaches and combines it with elements of the outcome mapping methodology

Challenge Statement

Challenge Levels (1-4)

WFD Outcome Matrix – Jordan

Parliament as an institution has inclusive, transparent mechanisms to improve its oversight and legislative roles informed by evidence

Indicator	1 Need	2 Expect	3 Like	4 Love
The degree to which Parliament has fully adopted the Research Centre	Parliament commits to transitioning the Research Centre into its internal structure.	Parliament encourages the use of the Research Centre as a resource.	Parliament recognizes the Research Centre as an integral part in delivering its mandate.	Parliament values the Research Centre as an independent impartial body
The extent to which Parliament uses strategic planning to enhance its mandate	Parliament encourages committees to develop their work plans outlining areas of focus	Parliament requires committees to have agreed annual strategies focusing their intervention and debates	Parliament adopts a strategic planning approach institutionalising a systematic means of operation to effectively fulfil mandate	Parliament achieves high standard of monitoring the progress of their plans towards having effective Parliamentary norms and standards



Research Centre	
<i>Need to see: Parliament commits to transitioning the Research Centre into its internal structure.</i>	
1	Parliament signs an MoU that sets out clear commitments for the gradual transition of the Research Centre into the Parliament's structure and financial requirements.
2	Parliament agrees on the internal structure of the Research Centre (i.e. job descriptions, secondments etc.) which is officially announced.
3	Parliamentary committees and MPs request the products and services of the Research Centre through the official request form process
<i>Expect to see: Parliament encourages the use of the Research Centre as a resource.</i>	
4	Parliament establishes a staffing plan to ensure quality growth of the Research Centre (i.e. Director of Research Centre role becomes a parliamentary staff role).
5	Parliament introduces a protocol of relationship between the Research Centre and parliamentary committees (i.e. good practice guidance)
6	Heads of the active committees invite Research Centre staff to present papers at committee meetings on requested research
7	Relationships between research centre staff and committee clerks initiated.
<i>Like to see: Parliament recognizes the Research Centre as an integral part in delivering its mandate</i>	
8	Committee clerks and Research Centre staff coordinate research plan in line with the work agenda of the respective committees. ¹
9	Parliament initiates financial scrutiny service within the Research Centre in line with the financial oversight mandate of the parliament.
10	Committees and MPs increase demand for Research Centre products and services with use of evidence in committee and plenary discussions.
11	Parliament institutionalises an induction programme for newly elected MPs and embeds role as part of the Research Centre's functions.
12	Parliament has full financial responsibility of the Research Centre
13	Development of strategic partnerships with Think Tanks on specialised areas
14	Parliament establishes a bursary scheme for the Research Centre with a number of Jordanian universities
<i>Love to see: Parliament values the Research Centre as an independent impartial body</i>	
15	Financial scrutiny unit within the Research Centre is operational and fully functioning with specialised expertise
16	Parliamentary committees have an improved quality of work and debate linked to evidence provided by the Research Centre
17	Parliament has a culture of requiring and a standard for the use of impartial evidence in its work.



Case studies leading to ‘Stories of Change’

- Each year each programme submits a case study delving deeper into a ‘change’ identified through the outcome matrix
- Case studies can explore change at direct beneficiary level (Stage 1), indirect beneficiary level (Stage 2), mediating institution level (Stage 3), or citizen level (Stage 4)
- Stage 4 case studies are classified as ‘stories of change’ and feed back into the WFD logframe at impact level
- Case studies below that level provide more robust evidence base for progress markers in outcome assessment

Reflections on implementation thus far

Complexity breeds complexity – new framework has many moving parts to capture breadth of changes occurring; communicating this to implementing staff has taken time

Depth takes time – outcome focused programme design is more time-consuming than previous approach; need for more stakeholder engagement enriches the process but slows it down

Tipping points – there is need to convince not only staff but our Board, our donors, and their proxy external evaluators to give this new framework time to show results; there is a danger that one bad review may throw the balance off kilter