Annual Review 2020

Title: Strengthening Political Participation in Bangladesh, Phase 2 (SPP 2)	
Programme Value (full life): £16.2 million	**Review Date:** 17 February- 5 March, 2020
Programme Code: 203487	**Start Date:** April 2017	**End Date:** March 2021

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Summary of Programme Performance

Year	2018	2019	2020	
Programme Score	A	A	A	
Risk Rating	Major	Major	Major	

DevTracker Link to Business Case:	http://iati.dfid.gov.uk/iati_documents/5761734.odt
DevTracker Link to logframe:	https://ec.vault.dfid.gov.uk/otcs/cs.exe?func=ll&objaction=overview&objid=54674184

A. Summary and Overview

Description of programme

"*I have talked with many of them [young leaders who received training] and they have been enormously benefitted. …. There is a wall that has been broken down (between AL and BNP leaders). That is their biggest achievement of this programme.*" Senior Awami League Leader, March 2020

"*Most useful is the programme's ability to act as a conduit linking junior and senior leaders.*" Senior BNP Leader, March 2020

Strengthening Political Participation 2 (SPP2) is DFID Bangladesh's primary political governance programme. As set out in the business case, its **outcome** is to increase public understanding of and engagement in political processes, with a focus on women and young people. Its stated **impact** is more effective checks and balances over the functioning of government. This intervention is part of long-term efforts to improve the way the political process supports development, poverty reduction and stability in Bangladesh.

The programme works towards four outputs to try to achieve changes in the way politics is conducted:
1. promoting more inclusive, peaceful, and representative political governance;
2. making political parties more policy-oriented, and inclusive;
3. supporting political parties for cross-party collaboration and willing to form coalitions with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and others to respond to the demands of citizens;
4. through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO's) flexible interventions, support media and youth to promote peace, tolerance and freedom of speech.

The four components of the project are implemented by four main partners:
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID) with downstream implementing partners Democracy International (DI) and Counterpart International (CI)[1];
- FCO with implementing partners Management Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) and Dhaka University Micro-Governance Research Centre (DUMGR);
- The Asia Foundation (TAF) with implementing partners Rupantor and Noakhali Rural Development Society (NRDS); and
- The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) with implementing partners The Hunger Project (THP), Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), and DUMGR.

From the outset, the programme's Business Case offers a flexible menu of options rather than prescribing a rigid set of activities, recognising the changes it seeks to support require innovation and manoeuvring to address complex technical and political challenges. SPP2's approach pays close attention to political

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[1] DI is implementing the Strengthening Political Landscape (SPL) project and CI is implementing the Political Advocacy and Rights (PAR) project

dynamics. The programme contributes to UK policy priorities on collective security, the rule of law, human rights, conflict and the rules based international system. The programme contributes primarily to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, by promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, and accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels[2].

During SPP2's three years of implementation since April 2017, Bangladesh's political context has shifted significantly. The 2018 national elections saw allegations of significant electoral irregularities, and intimidation of opposition parties and those expressing dissenting views. Neither independent domestic nor credible international observers received the timely accreditation required to undertake observations. Following the elections, the former UK Minister for Asia issued a statement raising concerns over the electoral process. In 2019, the SPP2 Annual Review noted the need to shift away from elections support and towards a more differentiated support to the main political parties. Throughout the past year the project partners worked with DFID to adapt their interventions to the new context. The programme is now in its final period, and during this time, it will focus on: (a) multi-party leadership training and networking for young and women politicians to promote internal democracy and cross-party collaboration; (b) initiatives to reduce conflict and violence in communities; and (c) new ways to open up civic and political space by bringing people together to solve issues at the local level. The programme risk is Major. In addition to other risks there is now a contextual risk that COVID-19 causes deaths; development disruption; economic suffering including hunger; social tensions and particular suffering for vulnerable groups, including women and girls. SPP2 can tackle some of these and in addition delivery and safeguarding risks are being addressed through revised programme plans. The SPP2 programme is co-funded by USAID and the FCO. DFID actively works with all funders and partners to identify and mitigate risks.

Summary supporting narrative for the overall score of A

During the review period the majority of activities were undertaken by DI, CI, TAF, and IFES and their downstream partners THP, DUMGR and BIPSS. Activities had met initial milestone targets and partners performed well in delivering them. The work continued to generate and make use of good political access to senior political party leaders and public officials across Bangladesh.

The programme **maintained the shifts it implemented following the 2018 national election**, including the shift away from electoral support. DFID and USAID asked TAF and DI to commission political economy analyses (PEA) to understand the political dynamics following the national elections, to test the programme's underlying assumptions, and to seek adaptation from programme partners as required. In 2019, DFID worked with implementing partners to restructure and rebalance each programme component to focus on internal party democracy, cross-party collaboration on issues of community concern, opening civic and political space at the local level, and promoting peace and harmony through conflict mitigation. SPP2 has a gender and youth focus and aims to increase representation of women, youth and people with disabilities.

The work to address **conflict and violence at local level and in universities** stands out as a highlight of the programme, as does the IFES-managed analysis. The IFES project Peaceful and Democratic Elections (SPADE II) has been renamed to Democratically Engaged, Peaceful and Inclusive Citizens (DEPIC), with a renewed focus on fostering a pluralistic and inclusive citizenry, preserving and promoting civic spaces, and mitigating and preventing violence. IFES continued its peacebuilding work[3] in partnership with THP and DUMGR with a special focus on the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and peaceful university campuses. IFES is working with women and disabled people to promote their voices in political processes, and also produced useful analysis through its partners DUMGR and BIPSS.

USAID's implementing partner DI's analysis was strong and welcome, contributing to our collective positioning of this work. While training is ongoing, a year after the national election, the new party support offer is in early stages. Cross-party collaboration bringing Bangladesh Awami League (AL), Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), and Bangladesh Jatiya Party (JP) together was particularly valued by senior party leaders as was the ability of DI to bring together aspiring and senior leaders. The programme supported youth and women

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[2] In particular, indicators 16.1.2, 16.1.3 on reducing violence and conflict; 16.3.1 on rule of law through conflict resolution; 16.6.2 on transparent and accountable institutions; and 16.7.1, 16.7.2 on inclusive, responsive and participatory decision making; and 16.10.1 on media freedom and human rights.

[3] Through its Peace Pressure Groups (PPGs), People Against Political Violence Everywhere (PAVE), Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE) and Women's Active Voice in Everywhere (WAVE) projects.

political leaders who are open to cross-party, evidence-based policy debate and reduced political violence in communities. In small, but sustained ways, DI's work has increased political parties' attention to grassroots opinion and on women's leadership. USAID's other implementing partner CI's leadership changed twice during the reporting period, and progress was more limited.

TAF is experimenting with using the lens of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to open civic space at local levels. Because the approach is new, this work, in particular, warrants further analysis to assess its benefits. Currently TAF is piloting the new approach with two downstream partners NRDS and Rupantor, aiming to foster civil society, party and administrative collaboration in two districts, Khulna and Noakhali. Using health, education and environment related goals as the entry point, the programme has been able to discuss SDG 16 especially the targets on reducing violence and conflict, inclusive, responsive and participatory decision making. The approach has so far received good feedback and participation from local authorities.

The FCO is focusing on youth and media in partnership with MRDI and IFES downstream partner DUMGR. The FCO and DFID are now jointly implementing IFES's SAVE programme with FCO funding allocated to support Dhaka University's Micro-Governance Research Centre to develop and implement a package of training for students across nine public universities in thinking about conflict, peace, mobilising for peaceful resolution of differences. This is relevant particularly because of the violence often found on campus and which is mobilised more widely.

The range of approaches brought together under this programme is powerful and enables a stronger offer than any one partner working alone. Conversations with partners are substantive and constructively challenging as DFID brings its analysis to bear in actively and continuously shaping the work. DFID provides support either through coaching on approaches or raising suggestions, incorporating global evidence, and actively debating change processes with partners and with senior leaders. The combination of national and international organisations, US and FCO helps balance the programme's risks and reach.

Recommendations for the year ahead

Output 1 N/A [closed]

Output 2
R1. IFES should work with partners to conduct deeper level political economy analysis reflecting on the changing locus of political power (by project end).
R2. IFES should generate a learning product on how the PPG - PAVE, SAVE and hate speech interventions promote peace, harmony and social cohesion (by March 2021).
R3. DFID should review the CI workplan to ensure maximum value for money across its intervention strands (CI to share plan by June 2020).
R4. DFID and IFES should agree a new indicator and milestones to measure use of research and evidence in informing and adapting IFES's programming (IFES to propose, by June 2020).

Output 3
R5. DI should reinforce several shifts already underway: away from priorities driven by a rigid logframe and towards priorities driven by ongoing political analysis; away from a mechanistic schedule of events and towards more flexible approaches; away from an identical offer to both parties and towards offers tailored to their respective needs while respecting political balance; away from formal training manuals and towards facilitated learning (DI, ongoing).
R6. DI should increase efforts to link junior and senior party leaders through events and possibly additional mentorship, responding to requests from junior activists to be able to speak with those taking party decisions (DI, by March 2021).
R7. USAID and DFID should analyse and assess DI's proposed innovations (meeting by September 2020) and before the workplan is agreed. Measurement of success should include indicators around this ability to change, learn and adapt (USAID, DFID and DI, by December 2020).

Output 4
R8. TAF, NRDS and Rupantor should conduct a short reflection piece to set out the differences and learning in working through TAF versus 'standard' implementation where the focus is on something other than opening civic space. (TAF, NRDS and Rupantor by December 2020)

Output 5

R9. The FCO should further develop usage of the fund for strategic engagement, playing a convening role and creating platforms for dialogue between the government, political parties and CSOs, identifying where this would add value in the current context. Increase higher-level FCO representation e.g. at High Commissioner level, where appropriate, whilst recognising the sensitivities of some activities not open to the public. (FCO, by December 2020)

R10. The FCO and IFES should further capitalise on the momentum created by activities on youth empowerment, following up on campus activities to engage with young leaders in political parties, creating sustainable engagement between beneficiaries and politicians. (FCO, by December 2020)

R11. DFID and the FCO should maintain governance arrangements to manage SPP2 programmes and ensure cross-government collaboration. FCO-DFID SPP2 core team to meet every six weeks. (FCO and DFID, by April 2020)

R12. As the fund under this component is being channelled through DFID financial management, FCO milestone indicator 5.1 needs to be amended in line with the new projects implemented by IFES and MRDI. (FCO and DFID, by June 2020)

Risk, Measurement, Partnership, Learning

R13. Building on the Theory of Change workshop held in February 2020, DFID should work with partners to finalise revisions to the outcomes, reflecting ongoing changes to the context and ensuring measurable indicators. (DFID and all partners, by August 2020)

R14. DFID, USAID and FCO should lead an SPP2 partners session focused on risk and escalation points. They should conduct spot checks on risk management approaches of downstream partners (USAID, DFID, FCO by August 2020).

R15. Context permitting, DFID should facilitate training for a set of partners, using the example of DI and party work, on every day political economy analysis, power mapping and other PEA tools to enhance adaptation and reflect on pathways to achieve more inclusive and democratic practices in political parties. Funders (USAID, FCO and DFID) should seek to incentivise their partners' adaptation. (DFID, by March 2021)

Abbreviations
AL – Bangladesh Awami League
BSMRSTU - Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University
BNP – Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BIPSS - Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies
BRIDGE - Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
CI - Counterpart International
CLA – Collaboration, Learning and Adaptive
CSO - Civil Society Organisations
CHT - Chittagong Hill Tracts
DEPIC - Democratically Engaged, Peaceful and Inclusive Citizens
DI - Democracy International
DU – Dhaka University
DUMGR - Dhaka University Micro Governance Research Initiative
EWG - Election Working Group
FCO - Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GoB - Government of Bangladesh
ICNL - International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law
IFES - International Foundation for Electoral Systems
JP - Jatiya Party
MRDI - Management Resources Development Initiative
NGOAB – NGO Affairs Bureau
NRDS - Noakhali Rural Development Society
PAR - Promoting Advocacy and Rights
PAVE - People Against Violence Everywhere
PEA - Political Economy Analysis
PPGs - Peace Pressure Groups
SAVE - Students Against Violence Everywhere
SDC - Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

SPAC - Strengthening and Promoting Active Citizenship
SPL - Strengthening Political Landscape
SPP 2 - Strengthening Political Participation, Phase 2
TAF - The Asia Foundation
ToC - Theory of Change
ToT – Training of Trainers
THP - The Hunger Project
USAID - United States Agency for International Development
VIMS - Violent Incidents Monitoring Systems
WAVE - Women's Active Voice Everywhere

B: DETAILED OUTPUT SCORING

Output 1 'Credible, well-informed election observers have greater capacity to conduct accurate and objective election observation in Bangladesh' was ended in early 2019 following the 2018 national election and is not scored as part of this Annual Review. As agreed, all other election support has also been closed.

Output Title	*Provide stakeholders with knowledge and training on peaceful, inclusive, and representative political and electoral processes*			
Output number per LF	2		**Output Score**	**A+**
Impact weighting (%):	20		Impact weighting % revised since last AR?	N

Indicator(s)	Milestone(s) for this review	Progress
2.1 Number of positive actions to address gaps in women's electoral participation resulting from advocacy by WAVE advisory group	N/A (This was an IFES election activity and DFID requested all election-related activity stop in early 2019)	**Not applicable.**
2.2 Percentage of training participants who report increased knowledge as a result of training	70% (IFES 70% + CI (PAR) 70%)	**Moderately exceeded expectation.** IFES 95%. CI 100%
2.3 Percentage of research recipients who report utilising research in their work	IFES 30%	**Moderately exceeded expectation.** 79%. The milestone progress figure is based on partial analysis available.
2.4 Percentage of BRIDGE training participants that report increased knowledge on inclusive access to electoral processes	N/A (BRIDGE training is an IFES election support activity and DFID requested it be stopped)	**Not applicable.**

Output moderately exceeded expectation.

IFES brings strong analysis, creativity and an adaptive approach which allowed it to shift to the changes in context throughout 2019 following the 2018 national election. With the approval of the cost extension of the programme in November 2019, the IFES project was renamed Democratically Engaged, Peaceful and Inclusive Citizens (DEPIC). It focuses on promoting gender equality and advocating for the rights of minorities and persons with disabilities and the participation of all citizens in political spaces. Building on the lessons learned from previous work, DEPIC addresses the causes and effects of intercommunal and ethnic conflict and builds citizens' understanding of skills to advocate for more inclusive, peaceful political process. IFES's adaptive management technique permitted constant re-assessment of activities and an iterative programme implementation framework, operationalising activities in line with a 'do no harm' approach.

Under indicator 2.2, based on an analysis of DUMGR's political violence data and other research, IFES developed a substantial amount of new People Against Violence Everywhere (PAVE) training and discussion materials. IFES ensured that the curriculum remains up-to-date and relevant in the current context. The new materials include hate speech and disinformation, and the gender dynamics of conflict, as well as a stand-

alone module called PAVE Faith, aimed at fostering peaceful civic engagement rooted in religious principles. In total IFES conducted five training of trainers sessions (ToT) on various themes, including hate speech, disinformation, conflict and gender dynamics, and peaceful civic engagement. IFES's implementing partner THP, carried out a total of 74 training sessions for a network of volunteers called Peace Pressure Group (PPG)[4]. PPGs reached a total of 22,163 individuals (10,185 women, 11,914 men, and 11,077 youth) through 466 peace events.

The review team observed IFES-supported peace building and conflict prevention work facilitated by THP with its PPG members. Through discussions with the Cumilla PPG the review team found that Laksham PPG was able to navigate socially and politically polarising barriers, promote peace and harmony, and mitigate social and religious conflicts. For example, in one instance the PPG succeeded in averting a potential conflict between Hindu and Muslim communities in Cumilla. In December 2019 during a Hindu religious festival in Jagannath Bari of the locality of Laksham Pauroshova in Cumilla, a Muslim food seller made local snacks (*Singara and Samocha*) with beef (which is a prohibited food in Hinduism) and sold it to the people. This created social and religious tension which had the potential to escalate into wider social and religious conflict. A PPG member brought all the religious leaders, political leaders and the wider community together to share experience and understanding and to reduce the tension and maintain social harmony. Finally, the grievance was resolved. Conversely in the locality of Monohordi in Cumilla district, the PPG could not achieve the expected results due to opposition from political elites. IFES and THP are assessing the performance of all PPGs to navigate the barriers and find ways to make them functional or to adjust locations.

IFES provided training and capacity development support to traditional leaders in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) using the well-established PAVE curriculum. The training covered theoretical and practical issues related to democracy, peace, conflict resolution, disinformation and hate speech, violence against women, as well as other differential challenges that women leaders face. Following the training, these traditional leaders helped to mitigate local problems such as land and other disputes and sexual harassment issues utilising their traditional rules and laws. The training also provided traditional leaders with a clearer understanding of the criminal cases that cannot be mitigated through traditional law but must instead be addressed by district courts.

The Promoting Advocacy and Rights (PAR) project implementation faced difficulties due to two changes in CI's leadership: delay in finalising its workplan, late partner selection, and the time taken for NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) approval. CI, in partnership with International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), published a legal manual and launched an online advocacy toolbox for civil society organisations in Bangladesh. CI conducted two workshops in two districts in Rangpur and Khulna on advocacy skills with the participation of 69 CSO participants. The report revealed that one hundred percent of training participants reported increased of knowledge as a result of the training. The CI team acknowledged that CI did not follow up the training with activities that would have enabled participants to apply their newly-acquired skills. CI noted the importance of providing civil society partners with guidance on how to be more adaptive in volatile environments.

Under indicator 2.3, IFES and its partner finalised ten research products and three additional research products are in draft form. The research was utilised to inform the context and for forward thinking, which was beneficial for reconfiguring the programme and managing the risks. The three draft research products will be finalised in the coming months. IFES and DUMGR organised semi-public events on political finance and student violence research, as well as democracy teaching at nine public universities across Bangladesh. With the support of this programme the course 'Democracy: From Theory to Practice' was piloted as an extra-curricular course at the University of Dhaka's department of Political Science and 47 students attended during Autumn 2019. The course materials and approach were informed by a cross-faculty discussion between academics from nine public universities across the country. As a result, the political science faculty from the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU) in Gopalganj District has incorporated the course into its curriculum for this academic year. DUMGR produced and refined a data visualisation tool for its political violence data from 1991 to present.

Output indicator 2.4 has not been assessed for this Annual Review as the milestone was not set due to reconfiguring of this component with a focus on addressing disinformation and hate speech towards marginalised groups and persons with disabilities.

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[4] A Peace Pressure Group (PPG) is a network of volunteers comprised of retired government officials, journalists, lawyers, teachers, businessmen, and social workers coming together to address local level conflicts.

Lessons
L1. Violence against women and gender equality can only be addressed if both men and women understand and address these issues together. For example, while female traditional leaders in CHT applied new skills and knowledge through PAVE and WAVE training, they faced some challenges which could be addressed if traditional male leaders were also aware of these same concepts. For this reason, IFES future training sessions in CHT will include men as well as women.
L2. The success and challenges of PPGs vary region to region. PPGs tended to be more effective and learn from each other when located in districts with a dense number of PPGs in adjacent *upazilas*. THP decided to discontinue less active PPGs and add new PPGs where factors for success were more favourable.
L3. Mainstream journalism and social media continue to be a source of hate speech against women, people with disabilities and marginalised groups. The patterns of this are constantly evolving as people's use of social media changes.

Recommendations
R1. IFES should work with partners to conduct deeper level political economy analysis reflecting on the changing locus of political power (by project end).
R2. IFES should generate a learning product on how the PPG - PAVE, SAVE and hate speech interventions promote peace, harmony and social cohesion (by March 2021).
R3. DFID should review the CI workplan to ensure maximum value for money across its intervention strands (CI to share plan by June 2020).
R4. DFID and IFES should agree a new indicator and milestones to measure use of research and evidence in informing and adapting IFES's programming (IFES to propose, by June 2020).

Output Title	Political parties in Bangladesh more policy orientated, inclusive and willing to form coalitions to respond to demands of citizens.		
Output number per LF	3	**Output Score**	**A**
Impact weighting (%):	25	Impact weighting % revised since last AR?	N

Indicator(s)	**Milestone(s) for this review March 2020**	**Progress** (as of January 2020, with March 2020 results reporting due by the end of April 2020)
3.1 Number of political activities and trainings led by women and youth	486	**On track to moderately exceed expectation by March 2020.** 399 (AL 104, BNP 138, JP 78, Multiparty
3.2 Number of dialogues held on key party policies and issues between central and grassroots leaders	520	**On track to meet expectation by March 2020[5].** 338 (AL 105, BNP 126, JP 23, Multiparty 84)
3.3 Number of women in mainstream leadership positions or nominated as candidates or campaign managers in political parties	336	**Moderately did not meet due to external factors[6].** 198 (AL 109, BNP 82, JP 7)

Output met expectation.

Output 3 is administered by USAID and implemented by downstream partner Democracy International (DI) under its project Strengthening Political Landscape (SPL). USAID and its implementer work to a different yearly reporting cycle, and, as such, milestone indicators were set for activities between April 2019 to March 2020. In the last ten months, SPL achieved two third of its target and it is on track to achieve the milestones by the end of March 2020.

Under this output, DI supported the three major political parties: AL, BNP and JP. DI promoted women and youth leadership by providing training to be effective leaders to advocate for more inclusive party policies and practices, and to engage constructively with other parties to mitigate political conflicts. Despite the increasing

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[5] The recent spread of Corona virus (Covid-19) in Bangladesh may hamper March progress and this is beyond the partner's control. All March reporting will be received by end April 2020.
[6] Bangladesh Awami League National Council held on 20 December 2019 but its grassroot council is yet to be held. BNP could not conduct its National Council during this reporting period. Hence the target was not on track to achieve by March 2020 which is beyond the partner's control.

consolidation of power towards the ruling AL, DI carefully and successfully balanced its relationships and maintained access to three major political parties. Nurturing and utilising these accesses through diplomatic and programmatic interventions can be useful to achieve the outcome of the project.

Under output 3.1, DI SPL programme supported 399 women and youth-led political activities and training (AL 104, BNP 138, JP 78, and multi-party 79). It focused on women and youth leadership at political parties, internal party democracy, cross-party collaboration on local social issues, and transparency in party financing. Through 236 Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop programmes, 5410 party leaders and activists (3455 male and 1955 female) learned and practised participatory and inclusive decision making, tolerance to dissent, and working together beyond party identity. This provided some tools and a platform for grassroots women and youth party activists to showcase their leadership skills. It also created a small space for women and youth activists to bring new ideas forward for improving democratic practices within their parties.

DI formed advocacy teams at the grassroots level which included master trainers from three political parties, alumni fellows, and civil society representatives to identify and discuss issues facing their communities in a constructive manner. It addressed the polarised political environment and the lack of communication and understanding between political activists and civil society. Through 42 multiparty initiatives, the advocacy teams served as platforms for constituents and community leaders to engage directly with cross-party political leaders regarding local issues and find common ground for solutions. For example, following a successful advocacy initiative on fire safety in Chattogram in April 2019, the local government authority (the city corporation and WASA) installed 50 new fire hydrants in two city wards. In Jhalokathi, the mayor of Pauroshova locality agreed with the recommendations of multi-party advocacy team to identify four locations to establish public toilets for women.

Under output 3.2, DI facilitated 338 discussions between central and grassroots leaders on party policies and issues, including internal democracy practices for example, meeting agenda setting and follow-up, party candidate nominations and decision-making processes, and gender. These dialogues brought together 9409 political leaders, including 4041 from AL, 4369 from BNP, and 821 from JP. They contributed to decentralising decision-making process and laid the groundwork for a participatory decision-making process within political parties.

Under output 3.3, DI's *Narir Joy Shobar Joy* or 'When Women Win, We All Win' campaign, SPL continued to promote women's leadership in party positions in line with Bangladesh Representation of the People Order (RPO) law. This law requires that political parties' mainstream party leadership committees include 33 percent women. Between April 2019 and January 2020, political parties included 198 women (AL 105, BNP 72, JP 7) from the SPL network in mainstream leadership positions or nominated as candidates in elections. The review team observed an event 'Women in Politics' bringing together 100 women political leaders from AL, BNP, and JP across the country. Using the International Women's Day 2020 theme **'EachforEqual'** as an opportunity to advocate for women inclusion at party leadership position, DI helped the grassroots women leaders to present a set of recommendations to central party decision-makers. These recommendations set out how to advance women's leadership within the political parties. DFID's presence at this forum reinforced UK's commitment on women's political empowerment as a means of gender equality, advancing gender parity.

The review team conducted semi-structed interviews with the beneficiaries from AL, BNP and JP and key external expert in Dhaka and Cumilla. The senior respondents from political parties and an external expert confirmed the need for the programme and suggested DFID continue, given this is the only donor driven support to political parties in Bangladesh. The review team pressed the participants further on what external support had been most and least useful. Most useful of the programme support was: (i) cross-party work where AL and BNP and JP come together; and (ii) the programme's ability to act as a conduit linking junior (especially youth and women) and senior leaders. One senior AL leader argued that "*there is a wall that has been broken down [between AL and BNP leaders]. That is the biggest achievement of this programme.*" The political party beneficiaries in Dhaka and Cumilla, two senior leaders from AL and BNP and one external political governance expert argued that the programme should continue as "*it was important to empower youth and women political workers and activists in the right direction, to sensitise them to be aware of internal democracy issues and to create change from within.*" A senior political party leader said DI training support to polling agents in in the last national election was least useful due to external political factors (e.g. the training manual was suitable, but training did not bring results as ultimately the polling agents were blocked from attending polling stations). DFID's decision to stop electoral support and scale up work on internal party democracy and cross-party collaboration at local level still holds.

Lessons

L4. DI's strategic interventions on cross-party collaboration, focusing on local social issues and community needs, created an avenue for political parties to act together on agreed issues. Working together ensured shared accountability, mutual trust and interdependency among political parties - leading to broader inter-party peaceful collaboration in targeted districts.

L5. The outcome of DI's equal technical support to three main political parties varies. Given the disparities amongst the three major political parties, DI's political party support needs to be customised, based on individual party needs aligning with SPP2 project objectives. This requires tact, balance, and careful negotiation to get buy-in from the targeted political parties.

Recommendations

R5. DI should reinforce several shifts already underway: away from priorities driven by a rigid logframe and towards priorities driven by ongoing political analysis; away from a mechanistic schedule of events and towards more flexible approaches; away from an identical offer to both parties and towards offers tailored to their respective needs while respecting political balance; away from formal training manuals and towards facilitated learning (DI, ongoing).

R6. DI should increase efforts to link junior and senior party leaders through events and possibly additional mentorship, responding to requests from junior activists to be able to speak with those taking party decisions (DI, by March 2021).

R7. USAID and DFID should analyse and assess DI's proposed innovations (meeting by September 2020) and before the workplan is agreed. Measurement of success should include indicators around this ability to change, learn and adapt (USAID, DFID and DI, by December 2020).

Output Title	Political parties in Bangladesh are more willing to form coalitions to respond to demands of citizens.		
Output number per LF	4	**Output Score**	**A**
Impact weighting (%):	45	Impact weighting % revised since last AR?	Yes (increased it from 25% to 45% after reconfiguration of the programme in 2019)

Indicator(s)	Milestone(s) for this review	Progress (as of January 2020, with March 2020 reporting due by the end of April 2020)
4.1 Number of SPL produced reports on political violence in Bangladesh	N/A. This indicator was stopped in early 2019 following the national elections and to reduce duplication of violence monitoring conducted elsewhere.	*N/A*
4.2 Number of consensus-building forums (multi-party, civil/security sector and civil/political)	604 (DI-524; TAF-20; CI-60)	**On track to meet the expectation by March 2020.**[7] 320 (DI-295; TAF-18 and CI-7)
4.3 Number of people who received political training	22654 (DI)	**On track to meet expectation by March 2020.**[8] 14,805 (Male 8112, Female 6693); AL 5282 (Male 2445, Female 2837); BNP 5847 (Male 3117, Female 2730); JP 2319 (Male 1563, Female 756); No party affiliation/Journalist/Citizen/Other 1357 (Male 987, Female 370)

Output met expectation.

DFID's funding for the activities under Output 4 is administered by USAID (with its two downstream partners DI and CI) and TAF (with its two downstream partners NRDS and Rupantor). The Asia Foundation, USAID, and implementers work to a different yearly reporting cycle, and this milestone's indicators were set for

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[7] However, the recent spread of Corona virus (Covid-19) in Bangladesh might hamper the progress which is beyond the partner's control.
[8] *ibid*

activities between April 2019 and March 2020. However, the milestone progress was shown for 10 months (April 2019 to January 2020) using the data provided by partners.

Based on the recommendation from last year's Annual Review, DFID realigned output 4 to address longer-term strategic chances for opening up civic and political space. Working closely with DFID, all the implementing partners, including TAF, DI and CI, reconfigured their programmes to bring out citizens' voices through an organised platform, applying adaptive approaches and methods.

Through the Asia Foundation Strengthening and Promoting Active Citizenship (SPAC) project, NRDS and Rupantar formed 18 citizen fora to hold constructive dialogues and discussions on local issues focusing on SDGs. Once all the fora are formed, members will receive capacity building training on democracy and the constitution, Right to Information (RTI), Grievance Redress System (GRS), issue-based policy advocacy, SDG mobilisation, solidarity and tolerant societies, negotiation skills and conflict resolution. The review team observed one multi-party discussion in Noakhali facilitated by NRDS. Using localising SDGs as an entry point, NRDS was able to bring together a wide group of participants from government, political parties, and CSOs. The participants raised local issues such as better health and education services, local government issues, gender based-violence, and how to improve inclusive development planning and implementation. This demonstrated the ability of NRDS to create space for all citizens, political parties, CSOs, and the government to discuss local issues and their solutions.

In collaboration with CI partner the WAVE Foundation, the PAR project organised seven thematic discussions in Dhaka, Barisal, Rajshahi, Chattogram, Khulna, Rangpur and Mymensingh between July and September 2019. The discussions covered issues such as environmental pollution, unplanned urbanisation, economic opportunity, and livelihood options for marginalised people. This served to identify priority social issues for communities across Bangladesh. CSOs are now taking forward advocacy around government policies and service delivery in these areas. However, CI's overall progress under this output is low, both due to the delays of the grant agreements, as well as the time needed to build critical consensus about the overall approach and outcome of the fora.

DI, through its own initiatives, and those of downstream partners The Hunger Project (THP), Institute of Development Affairs (IDEA), and Rupantar, organised 295 consensus-building fora. THP, with peace ambassadors and other network members, worked with the aim of building community harmony and mitigating conflict in Sunamganj, Rajshahi, Bagerhat, Sylhet, and Cox's Bazar districts. Over the last ten months, Peace Facilitator Groups (PFGs) have organised meetings, peace events and rallies to campaign on different local issues such as drugs, extremism and corruption. These efforts by the PFGs aimed to strengthen sense of community and harmony among inter-party and inter-faith groups. The events brought together different political and social agencies, along with the local administration and law enforcement.

Under the SPL Young Leaders Fellowship (YLF) programme 80 young political leaders, including 34 AL, 38 BNP and 8 JP leaders (44 male, 36 female) across Bangladesh have been mentored. SPL also organised 10 Training of Trainers' programmes (TOTs) in Dhaka on internal democracy with 239 grassroots leaders (91 AL, 101 BNP, 47 JP). And following the TOTs, new trainers trained 5410 party leaders and activists (3455 male and 1955 female).

SPL oriented 213 participants in the PAVE programme. Three PAVE training sessions were conducted, of which two were special PAVE trainings for women. 63 participants, including 54 political leaders, 7 general citizens and 2 members of the media participated in the PAVE trainings. The Peace Ambassadors conducted 49 events such as roundtable discussions, debates, rallies and human chains to promote peace. Through the Youth Ambassador development training, 78 participants (28 AL, 19 BNP, 12 JP, 19 citizens) were trained on promoting peace and conflict prevention. In addition, 577 participants have been trained on community-based violence and conflict mitigation through 26 PAVE Harmony workshops.

Overall, SPL trained and supported i14,805 political party and citizens, members of the media, and civil society representatives. The participants were involved in various events at the local level including multi-party press conferences, roundtable discussions on youth priorities, workshops on ensuring transparency in party finance and policy dialogues on the electoral system.

Lessons

L6. Overall, the implementing partners have reoriented or revised their programmes using a political economy lens, taking an adaptive approach, and by applying thinking and working politically principles. The citizen fora initiated by TAF and CI are in the early stages of formation. CI identified topics for local-level consensus building including around the National Integrity Strategy (NIS) to address corruption issues. However, the selection process for themes, in particular how this agenda will generate consensus between the government, citizens, and other stakeholders at the grassroots level, is not well articulated. DI's programme was successful as it was able to successfully balance its relationships and maintain access to all sides (AL, BNP and JP). However, creating an avenue for political parties to act together on agreed issues at the grassroots level remains a challenge. TAF's approach to build consensus around the issues like RTI, Grievance Redress System is innovative and important, but how it will interplay with the local context and demands remains unclear. The progress against the milestone is mostly achieved, however the quality of the adaptive approach is not well reflected in the indicators.

L7. Local-level consensus building fora continue to project long-term incremental impact to create political space for citizens, while the central political environment is stagnant and remains captured by political elites. When focused around local issues of shared concern (for example, SDGs, pollution, livelihoods and environment) multi-party initiatives to respond to citizens could be more effective and help create practical opportunities for cross-party collaboration. These create entry-points and lay the foundation for inclusive discussions at the local level on development issues. Moreover, DI's young political leader alumni has the potential to create the space for women leadership into party and local inclusive development initiatives. DI should focus on the fellow cohorts and utilise the alumni to create opportunities for political parties and citizens to interact on common issues. Supporting parties to improve internal party democracy also comes with risks such as increasing tensions and competition within the party and is politically sensitive in terms of leadership and approach. Hence, the programme should consider the risks associated with that and design its support accordingly. There is also a risk of CSOs' work being diverted by the political parties, specially where the interrelationship and dynamics between political parties, administration and elected leaders are complex.

Recommendations

R8. TAF, NRDS and Rupantor should conduct a short reflection piece to set out the differences and learning in working through TAF versus 'standard' implementation where the focus is on something other than opening civic space. (TAF, NRDS and Rupantor by December 2020)

Output Title	*FCO political governance fund provides grants aligned with SPP 2 outcomes and the UK's country strategy for Bangladesh*		
Output number per LF	5	**Output Score**	**A+**
Impact weighting (%):	10%	Impact weighting % revised since last AR?	N

Indicator(s)	Milestone(s) for this review	Progress
5.1 Percentage of grant funding disbursed supporting SPP 2 goals	50%	**Moderately exceeded expectation.** 57% grant disbursed. The remaining funds have been allocated to two projects. Expected full spend by March 2021.
5.2 Number of public or closed-door events delivered through fund that highlight issues on human rights and democratic space in Bangladesh	4 events	**Substantially exceeded expectation.** 8 events delivered by IFES-DUMGR.
5.3 FCO provide quality analysis, representation and leadership at 100% of SPP2 programme coordination mechanisms.	No milestone was set for this review	The FCO took part in the SPP2 Theory of Change Workshop and other major events. Political activities took account of the SPP2 objectives and evidence provided.

Output moderately exceeded expectation.

This fund managed by the FCO (working in close partnership with DFID) provides small-scale flexible funding on issues relating to human rights, tolerance and protection of democratic space. The FCO commissioned two projects:

- IFES supported SAVE in partnership with DUMGR. This project worked to build a network of students trained and working to understand conflict dynamics and the role of peaceful politics and to have the tools to resist violence as a means of achieving political gain. Since January 2020 this has been manged by FCO through the SAVE component of the IFES project.
- The Management Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) project focusing on people's trust in the media.

Under output 5.1, 57% of the total fund was spent, in line with a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between FCO and DFID under SPP2. Under this MoU, FCO takes on the technical leadership and DFID is managing the finances.

Under output indicator 5.2, there were a series of events, though due to some sensitivities around each project the focus was less on public or open-door events. IFES's Youth Network held eight workshops across seven public universities from December 2019 to February 2020 and reached over 276 participants (108 women and 168 men). Through those eight workshops for the youth, particularly for university graduate and undergraduate students, SAVE contributed to building social and youth resilience, and worked to promote peace, respect for tolerance and diversity, and democratic values. The workshop module was designed to facilitate students to exercise leadership, critical thinking, creativity and passion for peace and diversity. SAVE has managed to build student knowledge of peace and democracy, built relationships within and outside universities and motivated students to become more involved in positive actions in their university communities. Many of the students who participated in SAVE reported being more likely to be called to respond and take action when they see an injustice or when violence erupts. Many of them highlighted that they have become more vocal and involved in stopping bullying. Students also report being more willing to listen to others, and valuing plurality of opinion. These groups are independently now mobilising for Covid-19 awareness raising and online campaigns. The MRDI project produced a handbook on ethical and objective reporting for journalists.

Under output indicator 5.3, the milestone target was not set. However, FCO representation was at political counsellor and political secretary level for most implementer events and workshops.

Lessons
L8. As in the previous year, implementers produced political reporting and analysis, often informed by implementers' engagement with interlocutors through programme activities. The FCO benefited from programme reporting which could be better utilised to inform diplomatic reporting and engagement. The FCO should continue to invest in delivering this aspect of the programme and take even greater ownership of activities under output 5.3 in the year ahead. The FCO political team would continue to benefit from the access and information available through the programme and should increase coordination and share reporting and analysis between implementers. Its leadership would likely add significant value.
L9. The number and range of activities increased in some areas compared to the previous year and there is scope to be scaled up further through implementing youth (IFES) and media (MRDI) projects in the remaining period of the project.

Recommendations
R9. The FCO should further develop usage of the fund for strategic engagement, playing a convening role and creating platforms for dialogue between the government, political parties and CSOs, identifying where this would add value in the current context. Increase higher-level FCO representation e.g. at High Commissioner level, where appropriate, whilst recognising the sensitivities of some activities not open to the public. (FCO, by December 2020)
R10. The FCO and IFES should further capitalise on the momentum created by activities on youth empowerment, following up on campus activities to engage with young leaders in political parties, creating sustainable engagement between beneficiaries and politicians. (FCO, by December 2020)
R11. DFID and the FCO should maintain governance arrangements to manage SPP2 programmes and ensure cross-government collaboration. FCO-DFID SPP2 core team to meet every six weeks. (FCO and DFID, by April 2020)
R12. As the fund under this component is being channelled through DFID financial management, FCO milestone indicator 5.1 needs to be amended in line with the new projects implemented by IFES and MRDI. (FCO and DFID, by June 2020)
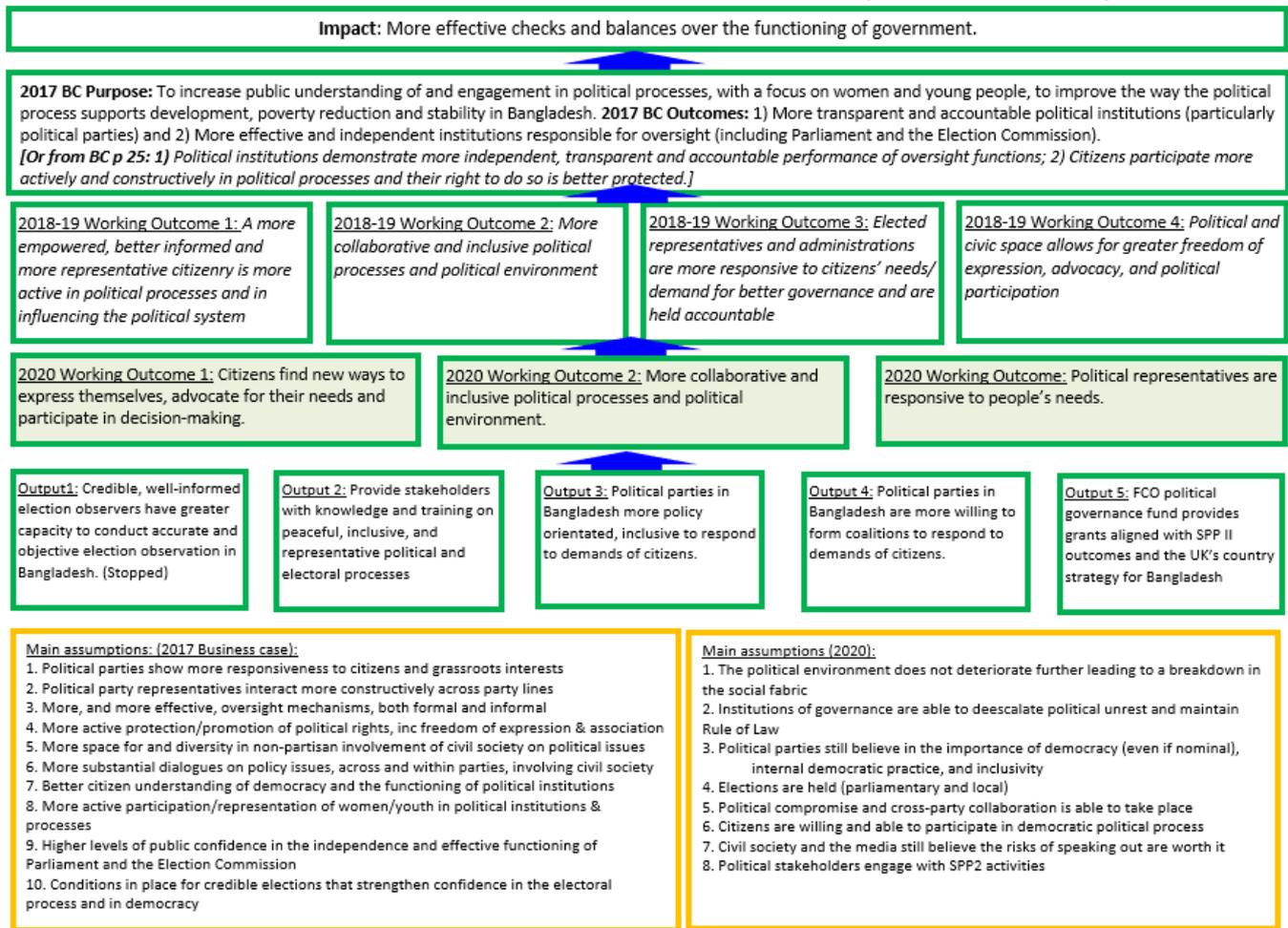
C: THEORY OF CHANGE AND PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES

Summarise the programme's theory of change and any major changes in the past year

SPP2 overall. The overarching theory of change as described in the 2017 business case was significantly reconfigured at a DFID-led theory of change workshop in August 2018. This shifted the outcomes (or purpose) away from a focus on independent institutions. This was in recognition of the challenges in identifying how independent oversight institutions – which were not independent – provided a strong line of sight towards more effective checks and balances. The emphasis on inclusive and accountable politics was reaffirmed. Following the December 2018 national elections and throughout 2019, SPP2 partners adjusted their work to reflect a new shared analysis of how and what change was possible and to meet the demands of the increasingly restricted political context. During 2019-20, the agreement to stop output 1 on elections support (made January-February 2019) held, and implementation focused on outputs 2-5.

At a second theory of change workshop in February 2020, partners suggested that outcomes 1 and 4 should be combined and that outcome 3 could be reworded. They are currently working with DFID to assess how these might be measured and updating the indicators at outcome level. The table below shows the readjustment of the outcomes during the life of the programme as partners sought new ways to reach the desired programme impact.

FOLLOWING THE CHANGES IN THE SPP2 THEORY OF CHANGE (DRAFT MARCH 2020)

Impact: More effective checks and balances over the functioning of government.

2017 BC Purpose: To increase public understanding of and engagement in political processes, with a focus on women and young people, to improve the way the political process supports development, poverty reduction and stability in Bangladesh. **2017 BC Outcomes:** 1) More transparent and accountable political institutions (particularly political parties) and 2) More effective and independent institutions responsible for oversight (including Parliament and the Election Commission).
[Or from BC p 25: 1) Political institutions demonstrate more independent, transparent and accountable performance of oversight functions; 2) Citizens participate more actively and constructively in political processes and their right to do so is better protected.]

2018-19 Working Outcome 1: *A more empowered, better informed and more representative citizenry is more active in political processes and in influencing the political system*

2018-19 Working Outcome 2: *More collaborative and inclusive political processes and political environment*

2018-19 Working Outcome 3: *Elected representatives and administrations are more responsive to citizens' needs/ demand for better governance and are held accountable*

2018-19 Working Outcome 4: *Political and civic space allows for greater freedom of expression, advocacy, and political participation*

2020 Working Outcome 1: Citizens find new ways to express themselves, advocate for their needs and participate in decision-making.

2020 Working Outcome 2: More collaborative and inclusive political processes and political environment.

2020 Working Outcome: Political representatives are responsive to people's needs.

Output1: Credible, well-informed election observers have greater capacity to conduct accurate and objective election observation in Bangladesh. (Stopped)

Output 2: Provide stakeholders with knowledge and training on peaceful, inclusive, and representative political and electoral processes

Output 3: Political parties in Bangladesh more policy orientated, inclusive to respond to demands of citizens.

Output 4: Political parties in Bangladesh are more willing to form coalitions to respond to demands of citizens.

Output 5: FCO political governance fund provides grants aligned with SPP II outcomes and the UK's country strategy for Bangladesh

Main assumptions: (2017 Business case):
1. Political parties show more responsiveness to citizens and grassroots interests
2. Political party representatives interact more constructively across party lines
3. More, and more effective, oversight mechanisms, both formal and informal
4. More active protection/promotion of political rights, inc freedom of expression & association
5. More space for and diversity in non-partisan involvement of civil society on political issues
6. More substantial dialogues on policy issues, across and within parties, involving civil society
7. Better citizen understanding of democracy and the functioning of political institutions
8. More active participation/representation of women/youth in political institutions & processes
9. Higher levels of public confidence in the independence and effective functioning of Parliament and the Election Commission
10. Conditions in place for credible elections that strengthen confidence in the electoral process and in democracy

Main assumptions (2020):
1. The political environment does not deteriorate further leading to a breakdown in the social fabric
2. Institutions of governance are able to deescalate political unrest and maintain Rule of Law
3. Political parties still believe in the importance of democracy (even if nominal), internal democratic practice, and inclusivity
4. Elections are held (parliamentary and local)
5. Political compromise and cross-party collaboration is able to take place
6. Citizens are willing and able to participate in democratic political process
7. Civil society and the media still believe the risks of speaking out are worth it
8. Political stakeholders engage with SPP2 activities

Below this programme level theory of change, partners work also with project specific plans for how change might happen:

IFES. The theory of change states that as a result of the programme, citizens will be better equipped to address student and community violence and there will be a greater demand for democratic values and inclusive citizen participation. During 2019-20 IFES's theory of change moved away from a focus on electoral violence towards university campuses and community-level politics.

TAF. The original theory of change was that increasing citizen participation in the electoral process and enhancing accountability between citizens and government, active citizenship in the democratic space in Bangladesh would be strengthened. 'Electoral process' in the theory of change is now replaced by 'political process' recognising politics taking place outside and beyond elections. The programme now focuses on addressing closing space, again a reflection of the changed political context. The new indicators will assess political and civic space at very local levels.

MRDI. The programme shifted away from a focus on capacity building of media around election news given the low level of election news in the media following the 2018 national election. MRDI's main work was the analysis for the shift in reporting.

Democracy International. DI's theory of change focuses on strengthening the institutional capacity and practices of political parties. In terms of shifts, firstly, DI is increasing its focus on mitigating political conflict as a goal for the whole programme. Secondly, it is seeking to better understand and work with politics conducted outside formal political party structures. Thirdly, a focus on local and national elections in the previous theory of change will be removed.
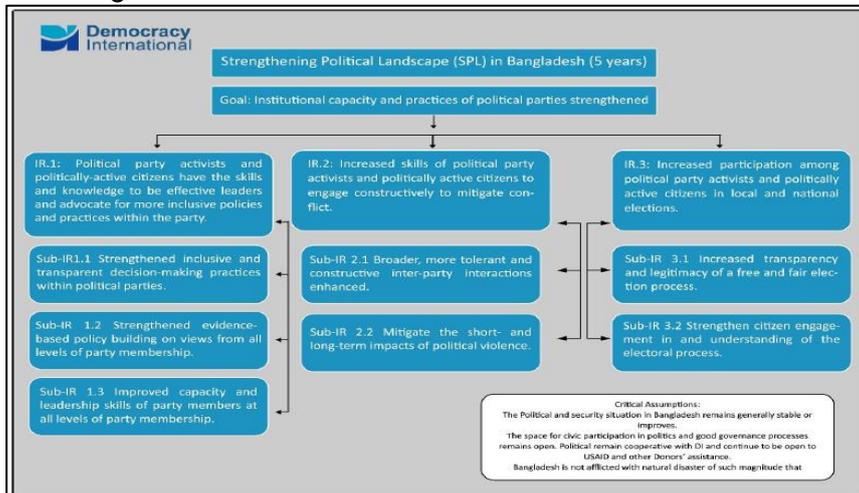
The programme is expected to reach its intended outcomes as these are adjusted according to the analysis, judgements and challenges set out by internal and external programme partners. These are the outcomes of the programme at its end rather than at its beginning given the new set of working outcomes developed in 2018 and the revised outcomes developed in 2020. The impact of more effective checks and balances over the functioning of government is outside the scope of this programme and external indices reveal this is on a downward trend.

The theory of change diagram and the logframe will be adjusted through March and April 2020, building in the findings from the February workshop. The next Annual Review will therefore assess outcome indicators in place for a full year

R13. Building on the Theory of Change workshop held in February 2020, DFID should work with partners to finalise revisions to the outcomes, reflecting ongoing changes to the context and ensuring measurable indicators. (DFID and all partners, by August 2020)

D: VALUE FOR MONEY

The value for money (VfM) proposition of the business case still holds. For example, the majority of programme funding (65%) through USAID (without any additional management cost to DFID) represents very good VfM. USAID is exercising close control over budgets and disbursements to DI and CI projects which ensured and reinforced economical spending. DFID is working with USAID and FCO at a strategic level to manage the risks and influence the policy to achieve the intended outcomes, and to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness. The focus on women and youth political leadership and disability rights represents the equity aspect of the programme. The partners are following DFID VfM guiding questions on how to ensure value for money in programme implementation.

Economy
IFES secured support from its US head office and Sri Lankan regional office which allows it to maintain a limited in-country presence and operational footprint. This reduced input cost (including housing for expatriate staff) and avoided possible operational restrictions though it increases travel costs (due to the number of trips). Democracy International (DI) used in-house expertise for several technical activities in the last year, including a recent collaboration, learning and adaptive (CLA) training, an internal programme evaluation, a political economy analysis, and ongoing analysis. Using in-house expertise drives down costs otherwise spent on consultants and removes the need to spend resources on competitive recruitment of outside experts, as well as the administrative resources required to field outside consultants.

Overall, the programme employs mainly national staff, which helps keep costs lower than employing a full contingent of internationally deployed staff (salaries, allowances and travel). The DI sub-awardee The Hunger Project (THP) draws on an extensive network of volunteers who come at no salary cost to the programme.

Efficiency

The programme strives to resolve administrative issues around fund channelling between FCO and DFID. For example, SPP2 programme partners incorporate lesson learning into the on-going programme to ensure the programme is agile with the changing context.

DI continues to encourage and facilitate cross-party collaboration, which many participants note is a positive chance for them to interact. Considering the high risk of political violence and need to protect and safeguard our partners and stakeholders, IFES has transformed the cost extension programme activities to incorporate lessons learned from the previous phase's activities and revised the programme priorities. For example, IFES refocused programming efforts with the following steers in mind:

- focusing more on verbal briefings, policy discussions, and frequent analysis rather than on lengthy written research products;
- developing a more holistic approach to the risk mitigation strategy to include youth (especially students), women, and persons with disabilities;
- broadening the definition of political and election-related violence due to changes in political dynamics as evidenced by violence data; and
- improving partner coordination and collaboration; and consolidating the programming to deepen impact.

Effectiveness

DI is capitalising on its strong relationships with senior central and grassroots party leaders to facilitate relationship for its network members to achieve positive change and democratic practices within the party. DI continues to encourage and facilitate cross-party collaboration between AL, BNP and JP. DI's capacity in organising, hosting, and providing technical leadership for such multi-party initiatives delivers effectiveness within the programme in the current political context.

DI successfully formed a multi-party steering committee of women and youth leaders from AL, BNP and JP with the objective of discussing strategies for identifying qualified women and youth leaders who are aspiring to be included in mainstream leadership committees. Based on political economy analysis, TAF designed a new programme focusing on inclusive and localised SDGs.

IFES's programme has increased its reach in terms of number of participants engaged in each activity. For example, SAVE is now running in nine universities in Bangladesh and its reach across Bangladesh has resulted in multiple students and faculty engaging in conversations about democratic values. As a result, faculty are learning how to teach the concept of democracy and students are learning how to engage in democratic and non-violent ways. For example, students highlighted that they have become more vocal, strategic and involved in stopping incidents related to bullying. Students are more willing to listen to others, and valuing plurality of opinion. THP volunteers are able to liaise with senior party, religious and civil society leaders in their localities, bringing them together to resolve small disputes and community religious tensions.

Equity

IFES has adapted its PAVE programming to include components on gender-based dynamics of conflict, hate speech and disinformation, and faith and democracy. Building upon successful programming with the Women's Active Voice Everywhere (WAVE) members, IFES has been conducting PAVE in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) for indigenous traditional female and male leaders since 2014. The central focus of the programme was on promoting gender equality and advocating for the rights of minorities and persons with disabilities and the participation of all citizens in democratic spaces.

DI works to advance the political participation and leadership opportunities for women and young people. Over the last year through the programme activities, 489 women network members obtained mainstream political leadership positions. Senior party leaders requested continued assistance from DI to support implementing the 33% gender quota and youth representation in the parties' Executive Councils.

VfM assessment

Although the programme is operating in a challenging environment, it maintains good performance and scored A in the last two Annual Reviews. The programme represents good value for money and should continue the remaining period. SPP 2 is working in partnership with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and USAID and is unique in working with political parties in Bangladesh. Considering DFID's wider portfolio and the current political context, a programme such as SPP 2 is important for opening civic and political space as well as helping government and other stakeholders to implement various SDGs. Some partners are incorporating lessons and designing new interventions to address new challenges. There is potential for the programme to support other DFID programmes by using its well-established senior network and relationships.

E: RISK (½ to 1 page)

Overview of programme risk and mitigation

SPP 2 continues to be a major risk programme which has the potential for high return. The contextual risk of closing space and self-censorship, safeguarding risk around surveillance of CSOs and opposition political parties, and reputational risks on possible co-option are major three categories of risks in this programme.

Management of the major risks depends on:
1) strong collaboration with USAID and open and frank conversations with the implementing partners on political obstacles, reputational risks, security concerns and proposed changes in approaches;
2) FCO involvement in and agreement of party and student approaches where these are particularly sensitive;
3) HMG being able to observe dynamics in practice rather than rely on second hand reporting, plus to gain the benefits of the local access and analysis.

A session focused on risk and escalation points for all implementing partners could be useful. A periodic spot checks on risk management approaches of all downstream partners could also help to identify the needs of support required for them.

R14. DFID, USAID and FCO should lead an SPP 2 partners session focused on risk and escalation points. They should conduct spot checks on risk management approaches of downstream partners (USAID, DFID, FCO by August 2020).

F: DELIVERY, COMMERCIAL & FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE (1-2 pages)

Performance financial issues

Delivery
Overall programme delivery is on-track. IFES continues to deliver the activities as per the agreed work-plan. DFID extended the IFES component for fifteen months with an additional £1 million budget from 1 January 2020 to 31 March 2021. Democracy International (DI) and Counterpart International are both also tier 2 partners of SPP2 contracted by USAID. Delivery of DI is on-track but CI is revising its programme activities to comply with the changing political context. TAF has redirected its activities.

Financial performance
The programme maintained good forecasting throughout the year. In the reporting period, the programme spent a total of £4,261,043 against the forecast of £4,362,703. This represents 97.67% of spend with less than 3% variance. The total value of the SPP2 Programme is £16.2m and the total spent in last three years is £10,486,395 which is 65% of the total programme allocation. The remaining balance of the programme is £5,713,605 and needs to be spent within a year as programme is ending in March 2021.

DFID disbursed £7.2m (70%) out of £10.5m to USAID. The IFES Accountable Grant (AG) agreement value was increased to £2,998,975 following a time and cost extension. DFID disbursed £2,198,975 to IFES and the remaining balance is £800,000 which is forecast for FY 2020/21. Under the AG agreement, DFID disbursed £987,420 out of £1,872,059 to TAF. FCO's remaining fund is £147,423 which is in the final process of allocation to MRDI. DFID has £681,543 uncommitted funds under this programme which was allocated during business case design stage to use as a strategic fund and for monitoring and evaluation purposes. For the remainder

of this programme DFID will undertake the financial management of IFES support on behalf of FCO. This avoids budget transfer between the two UK Government departments considering the difficulty of doing this for multi-year funding.

Monitoring of Assets
TAF and IFES have updated their asset/inventory registers and the last update was provided to DFID in February 2020. Both organisations maintain lists for their head offices as well as for their field offices. As part of the Annual Review, DFID team conducted spot checks to physically verify assets in Dhaka and found that lists were updated. USAID as lead donor has managed the asset list and other compliance requirements for DI and CI.

Commercial
The major procurement part of the programme was completed by USAID with the participation of DFID representatives following a competitive procedure when USAID contracted Counterpart International for the PAR project. IFES hired international consultants to deliver various training sessions for the programme. IFES followed its procurement policy and hired consultants through bidding processes. During the reporting period, TAF followed a blended approach in identifying their downstream partners in line with their procurement policies and procedures.

Audit
DFID received the external audit report from IFES on 28 February 2020 and the audit report from TAF on 16 February 2020. Both reports were satisfactory, and no qualified opinion was found. The DFID programme team should check with TAF and IFES Finance Team how the DFID project funds are clearly segregated from other funds.

As per the MoU with USAID, the lead donor USAID agreed to perform an annual financial audit of the programme based on the lead donor's policies and procedures. USAID is responsible for maintaining books, records, documents, and other evidence in accordance with their usual reporting and financial accounting procedures in order to sufficiently substantiate charges to the co-donor's funds under this agreement. DFID received an audit report from USAID for the PAR programme on 26 February 2020 and for the SPL programme on 27 Feb 2020. The audit reports are satisfactory.

Date of last narrative financial report(s)	TAF: 9 February 2020 IFES: 28 January 2020 USAID: DI and CI 19 November 2019
Date of last audited annual statement (s)	IFES: 28 February 2020 TAF: 16 February 2020 USAID: PAR 26 February 2020, SPL 27 Feb 2020

G: MONITORING, EVIDENCE & LEARNING

Monitoring

This Annual Review was conducted between 17 February and 5 March by a seven-person DFID and FCO Bangladesh team comprised of a Political Governance Adviser (Lead) with the support of Political Section and three DFID teams bringing Social Development, Governance and Programme Management expertise.

The data for this review came from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources of data included a two day field visit in Cumilla and Noakhali, interviews with all project implementing partners, stakeholders, beneficiaries and an external expert. This allowed DFID to independently assess ownership of programme approaches, to verify the progress of the programme and to identify areas to help improve programme delivery. The review team visited Cumilla to triangulate the progress of the DI and IFES programme, met with DI beneficiaries from AL, BNP and JP, with IFES, and with THP local peace pressure group volunteers. The review team also visited Noakhali to observe an inclusive workshop on SDGs' localisation led by a local CSO forum supported by TAF and its partner NRDS. Secondary sources of data included the review of documents, such as the business case, theory of change and logframe, last Annual Review, partners' progress reports and publications, and risk registers. The review was informed by cross-HMG strategic discussions and analysis.

Evidence and Learning

Equal and inclusive politics is one of the major drivers of women's political power and influence. The UK Overseas Development Institute (ODI, 2015)[9] suggests that women's political leadership can be improved by investing in their political organisations and their political apprenticeship, focusing on political systems and, and supporting locally-led and problem-driven responses. This is why under the DI component the work to support women and youth political apprenticeship through a fellowship programme as well as working with the parties on pathways for women's leadership are so crucial and relevant for the current context in Bangladesh.

USAID partner DI organised a workshop with all staff on how to promote a collaborative, learning and adaptive (CLA) agenda. With technical support from DFID, TAF also provided training to its two downstream partners NRDS and Rupantor on political economy tools (power mapping), safeguarding and risk management in January 2020 for day-to-day programme implementation. The DFID SPP2 programme revised its logframe during June to November 2019 and signed it off in January 2020 to adapt the programme in response to the changing political circumstances. In partnership with USAID, FCO and all partners, the DFID SPP 2 team organised a workshop on the Theory of Change on 27 February 2020 to check its assumption and outcome targets in line with the changing political context and reconfigurations of the programme as stated above. This Annual Review's recommendations aim to further encourage partners to promote the agreed CLA approach. Further coordination and collaboration between implementing partners, DFID, FCO and USAID, will help partners to share learning and identify possible areas for collaboration.

R15. Context permitting, DFID should facilitate training for a set of partners, using the example of DI and party work, on everyday political economy analysis, power mapping and other PEA tools to enhance adaptation and reflect on pathways to achieve more inclusive and democratic practices in political parties. Funders (USAID, FCO and DFID) should seek to incentivise their partners' adaptation. USAID should schedule three-way meetings between USAID, DFID and the implementers DI and CI. (DFID, by March 2021)

Progress on recommendations from previous reviews

General Recommendations	
1. Generate political economy analysis (PEA) which is predictive, informs scenario planning for programme activities, and ensures that they are not having unintended consequences.	**Achieved.** Two political economy analyses conducted by TAF and DI. IFES conducted three conflict studies using PEA lens.
2. Update the Theory of Change to reflect the new political context and revise the logframe to include stopped/started activities, including any required redistribution of the impact weighting for outputs.	**Partially achieved.** The logframe was revised during November 2019 to January 2020 following realignment of the programme in post national election context. The SPP2 team is working to update the Theory of Change (ToC) following partners' workshop on 27 February 2020 (to be completed by June 2020).
3. Prevent duplication between implementers and ensure overall strategic coherence between activities, given the planned realignment of work into the same areas of intervention, streamlining and potentially merging outputs.	**Achieved.** DI's violence monitoring (VIMs) work was stopped to avoid duplication with DUMGR. Output 1 on (election observation) was postponed in 2019. TAF's work realigned and integrated with Output 4. CI's work realigned with Outputs 2&4. Two indicators related to election or electoral process under Output 2 were postponed.
Output 1 Recommendation	
1. Revise the output statement to reflect realignment of work away from election observations.	**Achieved**. This output was postponed in 2019.

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[9] For more details, please read O'Neil, T. and Domingo, P (2015), 'The power to decide: Women, decision-making and gender equality'. London: ODI.

2. DFID should immediately pause any further funding to EWG. EWG will require time to take stock and develop a new strategic approach.	**Achieved.** Stopped EWG support. The money has been returned from EWG members to TAF which is utilising this money in new project interventions in line with SPP2 objectives.
3. TAF should undertake PEA to capture lessons learned from the EC and EWG's experiences during the 2018 elections, to understand the political rather than technical obstacles to work on election observation. Use this to maintain relationships with stakeholders, should opportunities for their effective operation quickly re-emerge.	**Achieved.** TAF commissioned a PEA in May 2019. TAF used this PEA to redesign the programme and identified the SDGs as a potential entry point at local level in opening civic and political space.
4. Adopt an issues-based approach, and support locally-led coalitions for change which identify issues of greatest popular traction, to design new feasible interventions which fit the current political context.	**Achieved.** TAF is implementing an issue-based approach at local level using an SDGs' lens.
5. DFID should introduce a new indicator on use of PEA, which recognises partners' understanding of the political context and ability to adjust and respond.	**In progress**. PEA approach has been integrated into project planning and implementation. DFID provided power mapping training to TAF and two downstream partners NRDS and Rupantor. The logframe revision will now be completed by June 2020.
6. Given similar planned shifts by other partners, DFID should ensure coherence and complementarity with initiatives being undertaken under other workstreams to avoid duplication and to streamline activities.	**Achieved.** Violence Monitor (VIMS) work has been postponed.
Output 2	
1. Develop mechanisms for sharing PEA conducted by IFES with their downstream implementers and other SPP 2 partners more widely.	**Achieved.** IFES began to develop a customised easy-to-read version of its analysis for the downstream partner THP so that it can be used to adapt the project. DFID needs to continue to monitor.
2. Explore how to align research products with the needs of partners at local level.	**Achieved.** Initiated but DFID needs to continue to monitor.
3. Develop the capability of The Hunger Project's programme staff and volunteers to utilise PEA for ongoing day-to-day use in the design, planning and implementation of their activities.	**On-going.** IFES has begun to share a customised version of the analysis produced by BIPSS and DUMGR. DFID needs to continue to monitor. This recommendation has been included in this year's recommendations.
4. Establish better collaborative working on violence monitoring data between Dhaka University and TAF, sharing methodology and analytical interpretation tools. IFES should seek statistical advisory support for this, from DFID or others.	**In progress.** Evidence shows us that THP is using DUMGR analysis to shift/adapt their work in terms of geographical coverage and issues.
5. Develop a robust risk mitigation strategy for scaling up work with student bodies through SAVE, given potential vulnerability of SAVE participants to wider pressure, intimidation and political violence.	**Achieved.** IFES developed a risk mitigation strategy to especially focus on CHT and SAVE work. DFID is partnering with FCO to manage high risk peaceful campus work with students of seven public universities across the country.
6. Revise logframe indicators for outputs 2.2 and 2.3 to provide more substantive insight into the	**Achieved.** Output indicator 2.2 been changed to 'Percentage of training participants who report increased knowledge as a result of training' from

benefit of trainings, and to demonstrate how analysis has informed programme adaptation.	'Percentage of PAVE participants who report increased knowledge on peacebuilding'. Output indicator 2.3 has also been revised to 'percentage of research recipients who report utilising research in their work' from 'number of IFES-supported research products produced on election violence and the impact of violent extremism on elections'.
7. Revise the output statement to reflect realignment of work away from formal electoral processes and capture intended outcome of work to strengthen inclusive and representative political processes.	**Not applicable.** The indicator changed in line with the Output statement, so the revision of the output statement was not required.
8. In this period of strategic reorientation, IFES should ensure coherence and complementarity with initiatives being undertaken by other workstreams to avoid duplication and to streamline activities.	**Achieved.** IFES initiated a monthly meeting with all downstream partners and DFID. DFID needs to continue to monitor the progress.

Output 3	
1. DI needs to undertake a root and branch review of their programme with clear justification, argument and evidence supporting the direction they want to take next. Maintaining current approaches is not a suitable course of actionDI should undertake rapid and immediate shift into analysis and planning so that work is focused on the new political context.	**Achieved.** DI commissioned political economy analysis (PEA) in early 2019 and USAID commissioned a mid-term evaluation of DI's SPL programme in April 2019. Following the recommendations from PEA and evaluation the approach and interventions of SPL programme were reconfigured in June 2019.
2. USAID and DFID should work with DI to develop their approach and consolidate this into a comprehensive strategic workplan which brings practical, feasible options for implementation.	**Achieved.** Following the mid-term evaluation, DI submitted a revised work plan which was reviewed and approved by both DFID and USAID.
3. USAID and DFID should ensure that the reorientation away from elections related work into other areas is coherent with the wider programme – particularly given the engagement of CI under this workstream, and its focus on civil society organisations.	**Achieved.** Election poll agent training stopped.
4. USAID and DFID should incorporate CI activities into the logframe and agree milestone indicators for these as soon as possible. Also consider revising the impact weighting for DI activities downward to accommodate this.	**Achieved.** CI's work has been incorporated into Outputs 2 and 4. Further revision will be made after completion of full partners' contract.
5. As part of a rethink of the programme, DI should consider ways to strengthen collaboration with other programme partners to meet SPP 2 objectives.	**In progress.** USAID is following a CLA (Collaboration, Learning and Adaptation) approach with its two downstream partners DI and CI. DI has initiated discussions with Counterpart International to identify points of synergy and collaboration between the two projects.
6. DI should think about how best to work with young leaders across political parties, to deliver long-term culture change towards cross-party collaboration. And link this to improvements in internal-party democratic processes (for the	**Achieved.** Following SPL programme mid-term evaluation and follow up discussion with DFID and USAID, DI programme has been reconfigured. The programme is focussing on two issues: internal democracy and cross-party

selection of candidates and appointments to party positions).	collaboration emphasising youth and women's leadership.
7. DI should make a differentiated, tailored offer to each of the political parties to better respond to their fundamentally different needs.	**Slow progress** due to political sensitivity and party's readiness to receive more tailored assistance. This recommendation has been included again in this year's recommendations (R5).
8. DI should apply robust risk management to prevent harm to beneficiaries of training and start with accurately understanding the interests and incentives of stakeholders at all levels with regards to improving internal-party democracy, to design feasible interventions which do not have unintended consequences.	**Achieved**. DI updated risk matrix and mitigation strategy.
9. DFID and USAID should strike the right balance between the benefits of political access and influence at the national level from programme activities, and any potential reputational risks to their neutrality which might occur through this engagement.	**On-going**. DFID is working closely with FCO and US political team to manage reputation risk of the programme and maximise the programme and diplomatic effort.
10. DI should develop mechanisms to make wider use of analysis and insights generated by this workstream, for benefit across the programme.	**On-going but slow progress**. DI is trying to shift their approach and strategy. DFID and USAID should continue to follow up on the progress.
Output 4	
1. Undertake a full redesign of the entire party support element of the programme. Design interventions which are tailored to the political circumstances of different parties, identify opportunities to deliver for their short-term needs, as well as activities aimed at longer-term strategic changes for opening up civic and political space.	**Achieved** as stated above.
2. DI should focus on consensus building at the local level around issues of shared concern to create practical opportunities for cross-party collaboration. DI should capitalise on entry points and foundations created for a wider cultural shift in party politics, with impact at the national level. And link this to improvements in internal-party democratic processes (for the selection of candidates and appointments to party positions).	**Ongoing.** DI is bringing BNP, AL and JP together to solve the local social and environmental issues.
3. DI should take measures to ensure interventions do no harm and do not have unintended consequences.	**Achieved.** DFID raised this several times with USAID and DI and considered this during reconfiguration of this component. DI postponed poll training and reconfigured the project.
4. DI should build on reporting to provide subsequent analysis of information and events, which is predictive and highlights implications for programme activities, assisting implementers with their scenario planning and ability to adapt their programme activities as necessary.	**Ongoing**. USAID is supporting DI to apply approach as stated above. DI has designed a holistic analytical process to synthesise and analyse the information systematically to measure the outcome and adapt the programme.
5. DFID should introduce a new indicator on usage of PEA, which recognises partners' understanding of the political context and ability to adjust and respond.	**Partially achieved**. With support from DFID and USAID, DI commissioned PEA in 2019. The indicator needs to be integrated following the revision of Theory of Change workshop and logframe, by June 2020.

6. DFID should also work with USAID to revise the SPL Results Framework, with particular focus on milestones indicators for output 4.3, which capture the qualitative impact of training rather than quantitative measures of service delivery.	**Achieved** as stated above point 2 under Output 3.
Output 5	
1. FCO should develop a strategic work plan with DFID which identifies how the FCO can apply its comparative advantages for furthering the programme objectives of SPP 2, under a fusion approach. Use this to develop a more structured approach, and reflect this in a revised indicator for 5.3, which would help capture impact.	**Achieved.** FCO developed a strategic document highlighting two priority workstreams (youth and media freedom) to contribute to SPP2 objectives.
2. FCO should capitalise on the momentum created by activities on media freedom, to develop more ambitious work in this area, which pushes against the boundaries of closing civic and political space. FCO should also capitalise on current UK priorities around media freedom and the safety of journalists, to build on current work of capturing lessons learned from the media component of the programme.	**On-going**. Following the first phase of its media work, the FCO is in the process of finalising the project with MRDI focusing on media trust (by June 2020).
3. FCO should capitalise on the momentum created by activities on youth empowerment, following up on use of the youth manifesto to engage with young leaders in political parties, creating sustainable engagement between beneficiaries and politicians.	**Achieved.** The FCO is contributing £400k to one component of the IFES programme, working on peaceful campuses across country in partnership with nine public universities.
4. FCO leadership could include use of the fund for strategic engagement, playing a convening role and creating platforms for dialogue between the GoB, political parties and CSOs at senior levels, identifying where this would add value in the current context.	**Not applicable.** The FCO has its own funds so did not use DFID funds for this work. However, DFID and FCO are closely collaborating to maximise programmatic and diplomatic influence.