

## SIERRA LEONE 2012 ELECTIONS PROJECT

### PRE-ANALYSIS PLAN: POLLING CENTER LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

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DATE: 2 June 2014

This study examines the impact of providing citizens with information about Parliamentary candidates via structured inter-party debates in the lead up to the Sierra Leone November 2012 Elections. Earlier PAPs govern the analysis of treatment effects on voter behavior and candidate/party response up through Election Day. This pre-analysis plan sets out the main parameters of analysis for post-Election effects of debates on the behavior of election winners who are now serving in Parliament, over the course of their first year to 18 months in office. The research design corresponds to the highest level of randomization for this project, where 14 of what we expected to be the 28 most closely contested constituencies were randomly assigned to participation in debates and the remaining 14 were assigned to the control group. This plan was lodged in the AEA trial registry on June 2, 2014, which is before any data analysis began, and before much of the data collection was completed (where the current anticipated completion of fieldwork for the suite of CFF surveys is June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014, and data entry from these paper surveys will follow).

A key part of this analysis is an attempt to substantiate on the ground the development expenditures the MPs claimed to have made under their first annual constituency facilitation fund (CFF) and post-election engagement with constituents. The fieldwork plan for this involves triangulation of responses across a number of different respondents and surveys, each of which may be more or less informed and credible, which will complicate data analysis. Our plan moving forward is thus to: i) lodge this initial PAP before field work ends to lock in our main domains of hypothesized effects; ii) enter and clean all survey data; iii) analyze data from the control sample only to generate a more specific list of indicators across surveys and analysis procedures; iv) data enter and code official Parliamentary records by topic; v) lodge an update to this plan with more specific indicators and strategies of triangulation across sources; and v) conduct analysis of treatment effects. The advance analysis of the control sample (item iii above) aims to accomplish a few objectives. First, we will assess variation in outcome measures and baseline levels of activity, to refine the set of outcomes sensible for analysis. Second, we will test our operating assumptions that residents in the constituency headquarter towns (respondents in the main town CFF surveys) have good information about MP activity throughout the constituency and are relatively similar in their views of MP performance compared to those in smaller villages. To do so, we will use the target village responses as a cross check. If we find that either of these assumptions do not hold empirically, we will devise a strategy for how best to make use of the information collected in the (non-random) target village sample. Third, we will assess how well we can determine the accuracy of responses from different sources. We anticipate that the judgments by our enumerators on the relative truthfulness across respondents will be sufficient here, but if we find that the enumerators were unable to make decisive rankings and that there is considerable differences in view across respondents, then we will develop a strategy for balancing and reconciling conflicting reports.

**Key caveat:** It is important to note that power at this level is limited due to the small sample, so we will be particularly cautious in interpreting a lack of evidence of treatment effect as suggestive of evidence of no effect in practice.

## 1. Background

All candidates in the 28 constituencies were surveyed in the pre-Election period. After that, the control group in the 14 control constituencies were otherwise not contacted by the research team. Candidates in the treatment group were invited to participate in a structured inter-party debate that was moderated and filmed by our NGO partner, Search for Common Ground. The debates were then taken on a polling-center level “road show” in a randomly selected 112 of 224 polling centers plus an additional 85 screenings in satellite villages. We estimate that roughly 19,000 individuals were exposed to this treatment. Additional individual-level screenings were held in a separate set of 40 polling centers. Early in their tenure, winners in the treatment group were shown a video of the debate they participated in, edited down to include only their own statements, to remind them of the commitments they made during the debate and explain how many of their constituents saw the debate via the road show. The research hypothesis is that the publicity of the debates screenings could help solve the candidate commitment problem and thereby enhance the consistency of elected MP behavior with their pre-election promises and generally enhance accountability pressure toward better performance in office.

*Second caveat:* There are two key ways in which the roadshow treatment is considerably less intense than other obvious ways to disseminate the debates to voters. First, the road show was shown to a relatively small subset of constituents: a back of the envelope calculation would put this figure at around 3%. Broader dissemination, e.g. via radio, would reach many more. Second, the MPs themselves were not present at these screenings, so if the winners did not understand or internalize the number of constituents exposed, it is unlikely to affect their future behavior.

Data for this segment of the analysis draws on multiple sources: i) the official Votes and Proceedings produced by Parliament administration (V&Ps); ii) the official Hansards produced by Parliament administration; iii) committee assignments and minutes of committee meetings, produced by committee clerks; iv) MP candidate pre-election survey; v) winning MP post-election follow-up survey (supplemented with post-survey follow-up phone calls to clarify CFF project locations and expenditures); vi) CFF main community questionnaire; vii) CFF clinic follow-up questionnaire; viii) CFF verification sheet; ix) CFF school follow-up questionnaire; and x) CFF Target village community questionnaire. The first 8 sources apply to all MPs in a standard and equal fashion. The last two sources do not, as they are sampled based on MP reports about the location of school support and general development projects, and are intended primarily as an input into the verification sheet. We will also use information from these latter two sources descriptively to cross check our main assumptions about the level of informedness of main town and clinic respondents and their similarity to more rural constituents.

## 2. Domain D: Effects of PC-level debates on Elected Officials - Hypotheses and data sources

This sections specifies the main areas of hypothesized effects and lists the corresponding sources of data. In general, we will look for effects in both “hard facts,” for example CFF expenditures that are verified via field visits, as well as in MP behavioral or priming responses, where they may be more likely to claim better performance in self-reports.

### A. Activity in Parliament

Hypothesis: Accountability pressure of constituent exposure to debates is expected to increase the activity and engagement level of elected MPs. All tests are one-sided towards increased activity. Relevant indicators:

- i) **Attendance** in Parliamentary session as recorded in the V&Ps
- ii) **Participation** via making public statements in Parliamentary sessions as recorded in the V&Ps and Hansards
- iii) **Committee** membership
  - a. Number of committees serving on as compiled by the Clerk of Parliament
  - b. Attendance in committee meetings as recorded by committee clerks. This data will need to be assessed for completeness and accuracy before proceeding with analysis as many MPs serve on multiple committees and recordkeeping may vary substantially across clerks.
- iv) **(Secondary) Self-reported** MP activity in follow-up survey regarding discussing topics with other MPs, raising issues during committee meetings, and other promotional work (GEB: Q17, 18, Issue: Q21, 22, 23)

### ***B. Consistency with pre-election promises***

Hypothesis: The publicity of the debates helps solve the candidate commitment problem and makes their post-election behavior in Parliament more consistent with their pre-Election promises. All tests are one-sided towards increasing consistency. Relevant indicators:

- i) Participation in **Parliamentary session in key priority areas**, where pre-election priorities were collected in the MP candidate survey and in the debates for treated MPs, and post-election participation is recorded in the V&Ps and Hansards
- ii) **Voting** in accordance with pre-election stated preferences for the Gender Equity Bill (when it arises in Parliament); for the Freedom of Information Bill; and votes that relate to the sectors specified as first priority issues as recorded in V&Ps and Hansards (relevant votes need to be identified and coded)
- iii) **Membership in committees** that govern stated key priority issues
- iv) **Constituent assessment of consistency** with and **performance in promoting** priority areas in CFF Main Town and Clinic surveys (QC5-C14 in main; QC11-15 in clinic)
- v) **(Secondary) Correspondence between MP self-reports** in pre- and post-Election surveys (GEB Q15, Issue Q19, CFF Q24, Transparency Q25)

### ***C. Constituency engagement***

Hypothesis: Accountability pressure of constituent exposure to debates is expected to increase post-election engagement with constituents. All tests are one-sided towards increased engagement. Relevant indicators:

- i) Number of **visits** to constituency as verified across the CFF main community and clinic surveys (QM2-5 in Main and M2-5 in Clinic)
- ii) Number of **substantive meetings** held with constituents as verified across the CFF main community survey (Main QM6-8, with truthfulness check QM8)
- iii) **(Secondary) Self-reported visits** to constituency in the MP follow-up survey (Q28-30)

- iv) **(Secondary) Self-reported number of substantive meetings** in the MP follow-up survey (Q31-32)
- v) **(Secondary) Number of clinic oversight visits** captured in clinic survey (QC1-5)

#### ***D. CFF spending***

Hypothesis: Accountability pressure of constituent exposure to debates is expected to increase development expenditure under the CFF (and potentially through mobilizing other funds, TBD). All tests are one-sided towards increased engagement. Relevant indicators:

- i) Overall **proportion of CFF funds spent** that can be verified; and **proportion dedicated toward constituency development** as opposed to transport. Many sources to this, but primary metric should be summarized in the CFF verification sheet. Triangulation from: CFF projects in Main (QC15-17; and Section P); Target (QC18-19, and Section P); contributions to clinic development (QC6-9 in clinic survey); contributions to scholarships and school development (QC3-9 in school survey); and note truthfulness assessment questions at end of relevant sections
- ii) **(Secondary) Self-reported** expenditures in MP follow-up survey (Q33) and post-survey clarification phone calls – proportion reported and proportion for development;
- iii) **(Secondary) Self-reported biggest accomplishments** as MP in follow-up survey (Q34)

### **3. Descriptive analysis**

These surveys also were designed to collect indicators that flesh out other areas of primarily descriptive analysis.

- A. Descriptive analysis of Target village and School survey responses to questions about MP consistency, MP visits, meetings, and performance
- B. MP self-reports of participation in key areas will be used to select relevant Hansards and cross-check official records in MP follow-up survey: Q13-14 general debate, Q16 GEB, Q20 priority issue, Q26-27 on Freedom of info to both cross check and potentially add nuance to TE estimate of accountability and activity level if find variation in abstention or failed participation attempts
- C. Content or textual analysis of the V&Ps and Hansards

Two other areas relate to earlier stages of the research design but the data for which was collected in the MP follow-up survey that this plan governs.

- D. Secondary data on party response to assignment of treatment and control in MP follow-up survey Q8-9 campaign support
- E. Check on T/C balance and/or (rule out) party selection response to treatment assignment in MP follow-up survey Q10-12 quiz questions. Supplement this with data on candidates in pre-election survey