

# PROGRESSIO

## Independent Progress Review

Final

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

APPG	All-Party Parliamentary Group
ART	Anti-retroviral Therapy
BC	Business Case
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CAT	Capacity Assessment of Partners
CIIR	Catholic Institute for International Relations
CIT	Comité Inter-Municipal Transfronterizo (Cross-Border Inter-Municipal Committee)
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CoEH	Coordination Europe-Haiti
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DW	Development Worker
EU	European Union
FCO	Foreign Commonwealth Office
FEDOMU	Federación Dominicana de Municipios (Dominican Federation of Municipalities)
FONGTIL	The NGO Forum for Timor Leste
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOLD	Governance and Local Development programme
GPAF	Global Poverty Action Fund
HAART	Highly active antiretroviral therapy
HAPI-UK	Haiti Advocacy Platform Ireland-UK
HQ	Headquarters
ICS	International Citizen Service
IPTCS	Integrated Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support Centre
IPR	Independent Progress Review
LIDER	(Lian District Ermera) a consortium of member organisations in Ermera District that are members of FONGTIL
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium development goals
MIS	Management information system
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSATM	Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management
MTCT	Mother to child transmission
NGO	Non-governmental organisational
PATT	Participation and Transparency Tool
PLHIV	People Living with HIV and AIDS
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
PPA	Programme Partnership Arrangements
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Co-operative Directorate
OTIMEP	Oficina Técnica Inter-Municipal de Elías Piña (Inter-Municipal Technical Office of Elías Piña)
QA	Quality Assurance
RICA	Regular Impact and Capacity Assessment
SF	Solidaridad Fronteriza

SFw	Solidarité Fwontalye
SSI	Semi Structured Interviews
TOC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNAPROBOSQUE	Union of Producer Associations from Forests of Restauración
VFM	Value for Money
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
ZEN	Zimbabwe European Network

## Executive Summary

### Background

From its emergence as Sword of the Spirit in the 1940s to operation as the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) and then adoption of its new name in the new millennium, Progressio has held a respected position in the UK's development NGO community. The organisation was once probably better known for the profile of its UK-based advocacy providing a platform for the voice of Southern civil society organisations seeking to empower poor people. At the same time, the former Overseas Development Administration provided core funding to establish a secular overseas programme, later known as International Cooperation for Development, which continued to receive DfID core funding. This won a strong reputation for solid work recruiting high-skill professionals internationally to share their expertise in partner-led capacity-building initiatives in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America and the Caribbean.

By the turn of the century, it was decided to focus Progressio's international advocacy solely on countries where it ran capacity-building programmes and since the late 1990s, DfID, latterly under the Programme Partnership Agreement (PPA) mechanism, has supported both strands of work under the arrangement. The NGO's theory of change is based on a vision that development change is led by poor and marginalised people themselves and that achievement of stronger civil society voice and organisation is crucial to their ability to make positive changes in their lives. Progressio strives to facilitate such a process through a combination of partner-led capacity-building programmes at country-level (involving the placement of skilled professionals with partner organisations) and international policy initiatives in which Southern partners are involved. In 2011 Progressio was awarded a three-year PPA for April 2011 to March 2014.

### Evaluators' approach to the Independent Progress Review (IPR)

The evaluation team was commissioned by Progressio to conduct the IPR as part of the wider mid-term review being held of the overall PPA civil society support mechanism, with the request from the organisation that it should serve as a learning tool to inform the remaining period of its PPA. The IPR team reviewed the first 18 months of the organisation's work, looking in particular at reporting against Year 1 under the Annual Review Process, using Progressio terms of reference based on the criteria for evaluation of the overall PPA (results, effectiveness, efficiency and relevance).

With the Progressio's PPA in its early stages, the IPR team approached the exercise as a review rather than as a definitive evaluation or impact assessment. It assessed results to date and plans to ensure further achievement in the future, and worked to identify, in consultation with the grantee, areas for strategic attention in the second phase of the grant period. A field research visit was made to the Dominican Republic and Haiti and, along with reviews of documentation and London workshops, interviews were held with informants in London and at country level.

### Findings

**Results:** Overall, the evaluators are confident that the progress recorded by Progressio in its first annual report is valid. The IPR team found, even at this early

stage, important instances of positive results under Progressio's PPA outcome 1 (on participation, governance and policy change) and its PPA outcome 2 (on sustainable environmental practices and changed attitudes and behaviour on HIV and AIDS).

In terms of Progressio's capacity-building, achievements have been made at grassroots, intermediary and policy levels. In bi-national work on the Dominican-Haitian border areas, for example, there was evidence that Progressio-supported improvements in sustainable agricultural practices is helping to boost farmers' production and the food security and nutrition of communities and families; in Somaliland, Progressio support for an Integrated Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support Centre has led to an uptake of services targeting people living with HIV and AIDS; in Yemen, there is evidence of important shifts in the attitudes of faith leaders on HIV and AIDS; in Timor Leste the government recognised civil society as legitimate interlocutors, following Progressio support to equip organisations to monitor official projects; and in the Dominican Republic a government pledge to increase pre-university education spending can be plausibly linked with civil society research and advocacy Progressio helped to strengthen.

In terms of international policy work, Progressio's environmental advocacy, complementing earlier success in promoting EU legislation banning illegally logged timber sales, won some official recognition around the Rio+20 summit of the importance of international water resources management, including as part of DEFRA's agenda in the UK; and it is possible that Progressio's advocacy contributed to Haiti's post-earthquake reconstruction and development being kept on the policy agenda in the UK and the EU, through engagement of parliamentary and multi-stakeholder groups and policy-makers during the 2012 UK visit of the Haitian prime minister. These achievements build on earlier results achieved on Zimbabwe and in Somaliland where Progressio helped enable changes in electoral laws benefiting hitherto excluded young people .

Progressio has long since been a highly respected thinker and actor on faith and development. Its independent pluralistic identity has put the NGO in a strong position to contribute to DfID's growing interest in this issue. PPA additionality has enabled Progressio to step up its work in this area, with evidence that its contribution has been highly appreciated at senior levels in DfID and elsewhere.

The IPR found that Progressio has made a concerted effort to improve its results-based assessment through the promotion and further strengthening of its Regular Impact and Capacity Assessment (RICA) monitoring and evaluation system. This system, enabling the NGO to track much more systematically work progress and results, has the makings of a robust framework integrating all elements of the organisation's work across all stages of the project cycle from planning onwards. But further efforts are required to systematise RICA's capture and processing of data so as to boost, insofar as possible, the absolute accuracy of beneficiary numbers and measurement of development changes against the project objectives and indicators (and lying behind the figures aggregated in Progressio's PPA logframe). This will mean addressing the significant challenges of gathering, sustaining and verifying information on more regular basis.

A strong feature of this system is its focus on tracking changes favouring Progressio's ultimate social beneficiaries. At the same time, the IPR team believes more should be done to capture the crucial significance of Progressio's capacity-building as a prerequisite for progress towards such changes. Progressio is about empowering *people* but essentially through the facilitation of effective *organisation* as an intrinsic feature of the process. The NGO grantee, in the view of the IPR team, should focus more on assessing how organisational gains connect specifically with improvements in partners' performance that benefit people's lives. As Progressio works accordingly to clarify and tighten its definition of beneficiaries, based on a typology of interventions, partners and levels of work, it will need to articulate the value of such capacity gains so they are properly recognised by donor partners as legitimate building blocks for change. The link with social beneficiaries is often not direct, but this should in no way count against the grantee if work is relevant and effective. Progressio delivers change by improving and catalysing the work of partners, not primarily through its own direct operational programmes, and it works with them to improve the lives of poor communities by influencing policy and decisions.

In meeting the legitimate information needs of donors – in this case, the IPR team would suggest greater dialogue to clarify DfID's information needs, expectations, capacity and uses and the reporting strengths and weaknesses of the grantee – Progressio, as it develops tools to complement and enhance the RICA system, could capitalise on opportunities to boost partners' capacity in this area, with information collection concentrating first and foremost on optimal benefits to their work.

**Relevance:** The results outlined above on different themes are relevant to key issues in DfID's own theory of change on the value of civil society support, and Progressio's geographical reorientation (a strong focus on African and the Middle East) fits in with DfID's own priorities. This includes moves by the UK to increase its presence in Haiti, with Progressio's current focus on bi-national Dominican-Haitian development highly relevant to UK humanitarian concerns. In terms of the relevance of Progressio's own interventions to the poor, a key strength of its country-level capacity-building is the range of partners it accompanies at grassroots, intermediary and policy levels. This creates the potential for beneficial upward and downward effects and micro-macro linkages. Strong evidence was found during the IPR of Progressio working strategically to capitalise on opportunities for scaling up impact in this way. All the same, the IPR team believe Progressio should keep under constant review the best impact-chain options for maximising poor people's empowerment. Field research suggested that, even if positive results are achieved at a micro or macro level, the sustainability gains for poor people may be vulnerable if strategic connections are not properly made.

**Effectiveness:** Progressio's efforts to facilitate networking and effective sharing of knowledge and expertise among partners and development workers – in effect, a deliberate strategy of cross-pollination – provide encouraging evidence the organisation is taking the above challenge seriously.

Evidence similarly emerged during the IPR of Progressio's entrepreneurial qualities. As well as wishing to share learning on its RICA monitoring and evaluation system within the UK development community, field research brought

to light Progressio's efforts to adapt the tools it has successfully used in leading promotion of participatory municipal budgeting in the Dominican Republic to its bi-national work on municipal planning on both sides of the Dominican-Haitian border, with plans also for exchange with Somaliland partners. Similarly promoted has been the work on masculinity originally pioneered in Central America as part of Progressio's gender mainstreaming, with the lessons being applied to preventative work on HIV and AIDS with men in Africa and the Middle East.

Nonetheless, the IPR team believes Progressio, with possible PPA pilot investment, might do more to promote internationally the lessons of its rich programme experience, drawing on the strengths of its governance work promoting civil society-state interaction. In this vein, it believes a more strategic framework is needed to enhance synergies between Progressio's country-level capacity-building and its international policy work, with voice and dialogue providing a possible bond for collaboration in international lessons promotion and advocacy initiatives. This would build more strategically on collaboration that frequently exists between Progressio development workers specialising in research, advocacy and communication in their support for local partners and international policy and communications staff.

The IPR team found overwhelming evidence that partners, both in Progressio's international policy work and its country-level capacity-building, attach great value to the approach and quality of its partnership. Policy informants interviewed considered Progressio to be an effective and respectful bridge-builder, engaging constructively with different viewpoints rather than seeking to further its own institutional agenda and profile. A Dominican state-linked partner during IPR field research, commenting on the positive capacity-building role Progressio in nurturing constructive civil society interaction with local governments, referred to the NGO as a facilitator of 'dialogue alternatives'.

At a country level, partners voiced appreciation of the multi-dimensional benefits of Progressio's capacity-building, including the human qualities as well as the high calibre of its professionals, and the organisation's commitment to partner-led work and participation. The NGO's partnership strengths may paradoxically be an emotional factor inhibiting its ability to articulate clearly and assertively the value of its contribution, fearing it might unduly detract from partners. At a country level the approach of Progressio's capacity-building is far more sophisticated than the misleading 'volunteer-sending' and 'skillshare' agency stereotypes with which it can be associated.

**Efficiency:** The IPR team concludes that when Progressio works well, it achieves impressive results for an organisation of its size and resources. If the Dominican government upholds its pledge to increase education spending, for example, the value for money return on PPA investment in Progressio's plausible contribution could be handsome for the country's children and young people.

Progressio would appear to strive to weight the economy-efficiency-effectiveness balance in favour of the equation's third 'e' in view of the organisation's commitment to development equity. Recent cost-cutting and economy-of-scale measures – some possible or advisable anyway, others inescapably driven by the

ongoing funding challenge, including final announcement of a smaller PPA allocation on this occasion under new rules – seem to have been handled in ways to minimise programme sacrifices, notwithstanding the painful loss of operationality in much of Latin America on expiry of DfID's previous separate regional PPA.

A concern for the IPR team is whether Progressio, after a stressful and disruptive period, can protect and boost the investment crucially needed to safeguard the strengths of its current work and further its ambitions. The team suggests that, in fundraising, the NGO puts in place a stronger strategy for greater cost recovery with its London and country teams.

The IPR found Progressio has effective systems and procedures to promote value for money in daily practice. But Progressio could sharpen and pull together its tools, and develop new ones, as part of a more integrated strategy to be embedded globally on value for money. For example, work on a flexible range of models for development workers and typologies of interventions, as well as use of value-for-money tools in pre-placement project assessments and design of project plans and country strategies, could yield gains additional those being achieved daily already. This could be combined with plans to embed RICA as a comprehensive planning, monitoring and evaluation tool.

### **Conclusion**

DfID can take credit for many results described in this report. In some cases, such work can be largely, if not wholly attributed to DfID. In others, the fact that DfID is but one of several donors should not detract from the vital importance of its matching contribution (without which projects might not happen) and the possible leverage it provides in view of the department's international profile.

The IPR team believes that, behind Progressio's often modest, low-key approach, lies an organisation that, for all the financial challenges facing it, has the potential to build on existing progress and achieve even further results. Though a relatively small NGO, it demonstrates hard commitment and an analytically well-ground nimbleness of approach, its work strongly rooted in and informed by the rich array of civil society organisations it has relationships with and is respected by. Progressio, though having made significant progress, can of course do more to boost the quality of its monitoring and evaluation in order to gauge with greater accuracy the emergence of results, outcomes and impacts. But clear evidence exists that it is intent on doing so, and it should be noted that the optimal coherence of its planning and M&E is vulnerable not only to the very nature of the development challenges it faces, but also to the impact of an often unpredictable funding environment affecting both Progressio and its partners.

In this environment, which poses much greater challenges for smaller NGOs such as Progressio, DfID's PPA has been of incalculable value, not only in providing a greater degree of organisational stability but also supporting development achievements and innovation. Without PPA investment, and its flexibility, much of this would not be possible, and nor would Progressio, at least immediately, be able to operate at its current level and sustain the essential organisational infrastructure required to support and enhance project impact. In the longer run, the choice for DfID is whether it sees Progressio as an NGO it wishes to fund on an optional basis or whether, if it values what is a longstanding relationship, it is

committed to keeping the partnership on the more stable footing provided by a flexible mechanism such as the PPA.

The IPR team believes Progressio reviews carefully and accountably whether PPA money is meeting the strategic objectives it has pledged to pursue (in this sense the PPA is in fact tied rather than unrestricted) in line with the current thrust of its operations. Yet more could possibly be done to strengthen proactive discussion of how the PPA can be best harnessed to the NGO's future strategic evolution.

Overall the evaluators have seen evidence of results being achieved by Progressio that are impressive for an NGO of this size and resources. It runs a lean but effective organisation, albeit with some areas for further improvement, as in the case of further efforts currently being made to promote and embed stronger monitoring and evaluation.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

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This evaluation is conducted as the Independent Progress Review (IPR) required by the Department for International Development (DFID) as part of its Programme Partnership Arrangement (PPA) grant facility. The purpose of the IPR is threefold;

1. To assess the extent the comments provided as part of the Annual Review Process have been acted upon by Progressio.
2. To verify, and supplement Progressio's reporting through the Annual review, changing lives case study, the additionality report, and
3. To independently evaluate the impact that DFID funding has had on Progressio and projects and to assess the value for money of the funding.

It covers the first 18 months (nominal) of the current PPA grant timeframe, 2011-14.

### 1.2 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

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The evaluation examines the performance of Progressio in the use of the DFID PPA grant (GBP £2,025,015 a year, a potential total of GBP £6,075,045 over the three years) between March 2011 and October 2012. The review was conducted between May and September 2012. The evaluation draws on the 2011 Progressio PPA Annual Report, its managerial response to feedback from DFID, and the impact of overall DFID PPA funding.

### 1.3 FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

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The evaluation focuses on the work conducted by Progressio. The review is focused on six countries while they work in 11 countries globally. Progressio has 83 development workers over all programmes in 2011/12 but 60 are relevant to PPA reporting. The organisation income averaged over three years is estimated at about £5.4 million per year. Progressio is a faith based organisation though not exclusively faith oriented. Their work spans participation and effective governance, sustainable environment and HIV and AIDS.

### 1.4 ORGANISATION CONTEXT

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Progressio is has a long tradition as a respected international civil society organisation in the UK. Founded in 1940 Progressio has a long history with faith and development. In the early years, the organisation was named The Sword of the Spirit. Its main goal was to focus on the oppression in eastern Europe during the second world war. In 1963, the Sword of the Spirit started working in conjunction with the British Voluntary Programme investing in people to enable finding solutions overseas. In 1964, the Sword of the Spirit was renamed Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR).

While establishing reputations as a leading international organisation in policy work, they continued to provide a moral voice to influence both the Church and state. CIIR was well respected for its analysis and commentary on international

issues and established good relationships with the global South working with grassroots initiatives.

While, initially, the overseas sending model first focused on the Church, the overseas sending programme then adopted a more developmental perspective working with people of all faiths and none. The British Government's Overseas Development Administration (ODA) had first intended organisations such as Progressio and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) to promote cross cultural exchanges and to build an understanding of overseas development to educate British nationals. Reflecting the needs of the people of the South, rather than recruiting volunteers, the organisation chose a different direction and has focused on recruiting skilled professionals in response to specific needs with their partners. The Development Worker model began in Nicaragua in 1974 and was one of the first organisations to recruit South to South staff and local staff to form true partnerships with the South. In fact, the average development worker has had over 10 years of experience in the development sector.

In 2006, CIIR changed its name to Progressio. While proud to reflect Catholic roots, the old name no longer represented the breadth and depth of the organisation's work. Currently, Progressio has two main streams of work as part of an integrated programme pursuing its theory of change; the placement of highly skilled and experienced Development Workers (DWs) to provide capacity-building support to local partners at a national level, and their International Policy work targeting audiences in the global North.

Within both of their two streams of work, Progressio has chosen to focus on three areas: participation and effective governance, HIV and AIDS, and promotion of a Sustainable Environment.

The DW programme was an evolution of the original overseas volunteer sending model. As the nature of work and funding has evolved, the objectives of the funds have now also evolved to something very different to those at the start of Progressio. As such, UK funds have always played a large role in the organisation. As the funds evolved over time, Progressio modified the DW model to sharpen its responsiveness to partners, working to their development agendas in supporting poor people as the agents of change, ensuring that the voices of the poor are amplified in supporting civil society organisations.

With the evolved focus, DWs are now no longer mainly British but generally have nationalities from the Global South. Thus South to South skill exchanges comprise over 60% of the DW programme. Further DWs tend to have more than 10 years of experience and are professionals in the international development sector. DWs are recruited based on terms of reference created by Progressio along with their civil society partner and are generally on 2-5 year contracts. Currently, they are working in 11 different countries.

Table 1-1 gives the breakdown of where Progressio works separated by country and focus area. Figure 1-1 illustrates the spending allocations in all the countries Progressio works.

Table 1-1 Where Progressio works, separated to country and focus area

Country	Governance	HIV	Sustainable Environment
Dominican Republic	X		X
El Salvador		X	X
Haiti	X		X
Nicaragua	X	X	
Peru			X
Somaliland	X	X	X
Timor-Leste	X	X	
Yemen	X	X	X
Zimbabwe	X	X	X

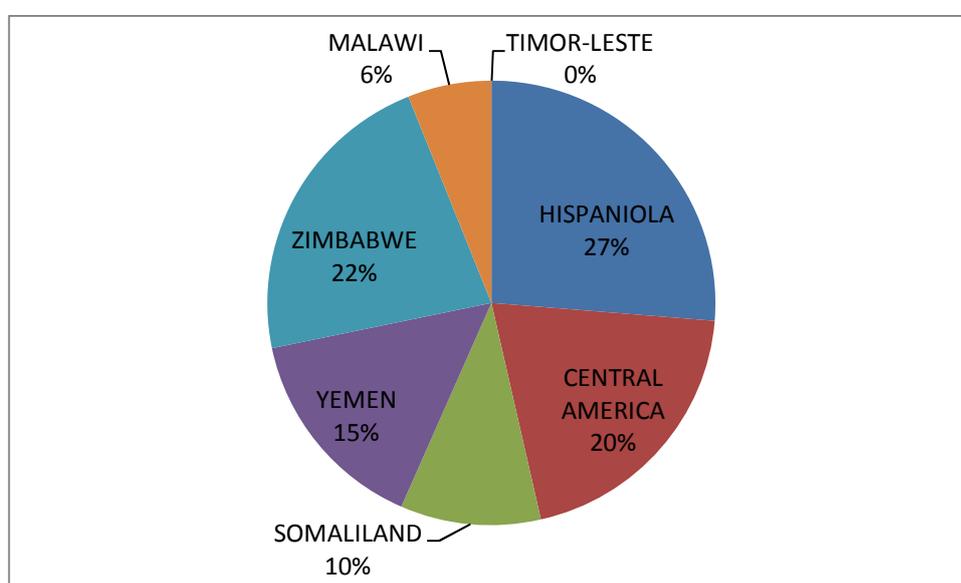


Figure 1-1 Spending allocations in each country for 2011-2012. While this chart illustrates Timor Leste not currently receiving funding, it has more to do with funding cycles than a lack of financial support.

### **1.5 LOGIC AND ASSUMPTIONS (I.E. THEORY OF CHANGE) SUPPORTING DFID PPA FUNDED PROJECT AND/OR PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES**

Progressio believes in people working together with people. The main focus of their work has been primarily demand driven. Progressio's programmes revolve around two main programmes; the development worker model and Progressio's focus on policy. Both streams of work are based on the hypothesis that a) strengthening civil society and b) linking policy makers to voices from the ground will enable more effective policies.

Specifically, the theory of change for their development worker model follows a very similar logic. The hypothesis is that by ensuring a demand led process, Progressio's partners would be able to request for skill sets they would require in the organisation. The development worker would be embedded in the partner

organisation and, by working alongside an identified counterpart to transfer skills and knowledge, be able to have a catalytic effect in the organisation. Many of the organisations Progressio works with focus on governance, environment and HIV and AIDS with the idea of linking policies with voices from civil society. Partners with stronger skills and capacity would be able to feed civil society voice into governance structures.

A similar theory of change also supports their policy work. Progressio focuses on linking policy makers with voices from the ground to enable more effective policies thus ensuring more effective and well thought through programmes.

## 1.6 OVERVIEW OF PPA FUNDED ACTIVITIES

Progressio limits its PPA-funded activities to 6 countries, mainly in fragile states. The countries are Timor Leste, Yemen, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Dominican Republic and Haiti. They combine support from skilled workers to help poor people to solve their own problems with advocacy to change policies that keep them poor. The current PPA grant provides £2,025,015 a year for three years from 2011 to 2014, it comprises about 37% of Progressio's total revenues. Progressio's work is divided up into two areas;

- The development worker model. Development workers strengthen the capacity of Civil Society Organisations. They mainly focus in countries with weak state institutions. They primarily work in a) effective governance and participation, sustainable environment and climate change, and HIV and AIDS.
- Progressio's advocacy work focuses on policies related to environmental sustainability.

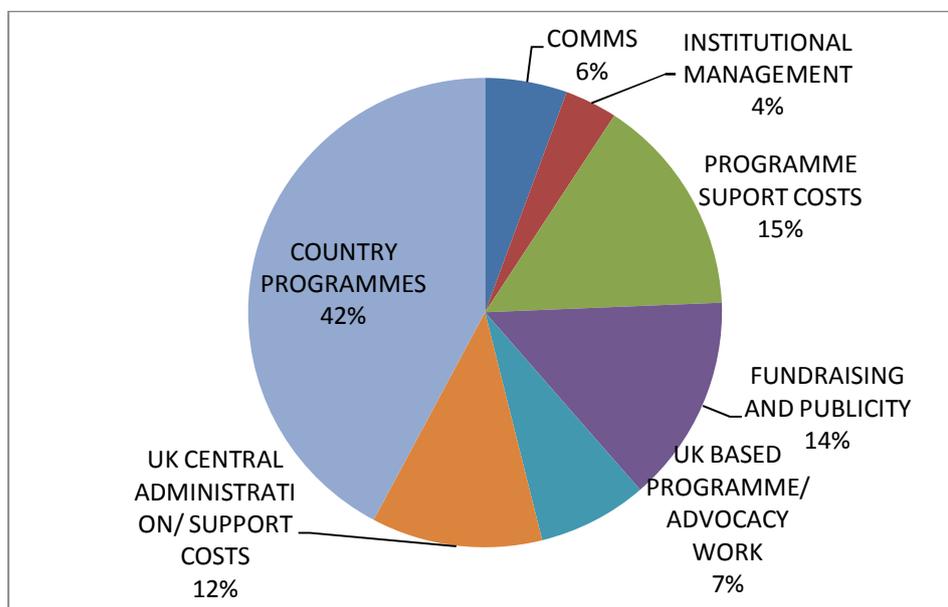


Figure 1-2 Allocation of Progressio's PPA budget for 2011-2012

As illustrated in Figure 1-2, Progressio's work has chosen to use DFID's PPA funds mainly in country programmes

### **1.7 RELATIONSHIP OF DFID PPA FUNDED ACTIVITIES TO OTHER PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES**

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Progressio is a member of the consortium delivering International Citizen Service (ICS). The ICS programme is a consortium headed by VSO and funded by DFID. ICS arranges short term voluntary placements for 18- 25 year olds where they work alongside local partners and local volunteers in developing countries. On their return from placements, participants are also required to undertake voluntary “returnee action”. Progressio is striving to articulate the work of ICS with its country programmatic work and with our international advocacy and campaign work.

## 2 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 EVALUATION PLAN

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#### 2.1.1 Evaluation questions

Evaluation questions follow the OECD-DAC and DFID criteria with respect to the relevance of the work funded; efficiency of process in the delivery of work streams; discernible results (at this point); effectiveness of work in itself, and in its influence on wider circuits of knowledge and practice; impacts of work (anticipated or actual); considerations of value for money (both in economy/efficiency/effectiveness terms, and in terms of value to PPA grant-maker), and additionality (including the question of a counterfactual narrative for work that would not have been achieved in the absence of the grant). Please refer to Annexe C for a detailed list of our questions.

#### 2.1.2 Evaluation design (and rationale for design)

Our evaluation design draws on contribution analysis, on the grounds that quantitative and causal analysis is less likely to be fully feasible at this interim stage of the grant period. We use contribution analysis as a methodology for assessing the relationship between what the grant-holder has said they will achieve (outcomes) and the strategies they adopt (inputs, process). We use quantitative information, as available, to assess the results chain in terms of inputs, outputs and outcomes; and we apply logic and coherence analysis to documentary and narrative interview accounts of the expected or asserted linkage between choice of interventions and expected effects (ToC).

#### 2.1.3 Research methodology (and data collection strategy)

The review uses a mixed-methods approach, including documentary review and quantitative data analysis (as and where such data were available), complemented by semi-structured interviews (SSI) with Progressio staff, non Progressio staff, and primary and secondary beneficiaries. The IPR team conducted one field visit as part of the review to the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

The data collection strategy was formed at the beginning of the review. Primarily through examining the theory of change and using contribution analysis, a set of hypothesis and questions were determined. These questions were narrowed down and tailored through a meeting with Progressio senior staff, semi-structured interviews with further Progressio staff at the international office and referring to the OECD-DAC criteria. The answers to the questions were sought either through further analysis at the international level or at the country specific level (through the field visits to the Dominican Republic and Haiti, phone calls with staff in Yemen). Lastly, the impressions of these field visits were discussed at the national level to ensure a realistic and firm understanding of the situation.

#### 2.1.4 Analytical framework

All of the data was collected using a framework of criteria combining the OECD-DAC standards (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability), and DFID areas of interests (results, theories of change, value for money, additionality). See Annex C to view the analytical framework and the questions. For the semi-structured interviews, question fields were established and checked for consistency against documentary and quantitative information, and modified for each category of informant.

**2.1.5 Approach to quality assurance of research**

*theIDLgroup* comprises an in-house team of research consultants, consultants, senior and principal consultants, with substantial experience of evaluation including extensive experience of DFID evaluation methods and expectations, and a range of roles in evaluation quality assurance (QA) beyond the PPA/IPR process. A senior or principal consultant leads and supports the IPR team, providing substantive input as well as QA support. Our approach to the IPR process is to maintain close consultative communications with the grant-holder, ensuring open dialogue relating to matters of process orientation and quality. We use the QA checklist included in the Coffey GPAF/PPA Evaluation Guidelines, Annexe 8, pp. 11-12.

**2.2 RESEARCH PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED**

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There were no significant research problems encountered. However, to improve upon the review, the IPR team would like to point out the tension between time and resources available and the level of detail expected from the TOR. There was only one country visit afforded with the financial resources, which prevented the review team to be able to compare and contrast different programmes. Further, during the one field visit, to the Dominican Republic and Haiti, some research had to be cut short due to Hurricane Isaac which prevented further visits to explore the views of social beneficiaries.

**2.3 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF SELECTED EVALUATION DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODS IN RETROSPECT**

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A mixed method approach to this IPR supports access to a wide range of types of information, and some degree of triangulation among them (in the absence of quantitatively-verifiable data). The analysis proceeds from a review of the results framework. But our evaluation design rests more substantively on qualitative and quantitative evidence arising through documentary review and interviews regarding the broader effects of processes and the kinds of potential impacts this point to. This emphasis on the forward-looking implications of interim results, would aid Progressio to consider how it may widen its concept of effects, and how it may seek evidence to demonstrate effects in the form of impact in the final evaluation phase of the grant.

Working from results, through estimations of effect, we were able to appraise in a systematic and cross comparable way, applying the OECD-DAC and additional DFID criteria, investigating plausible linkages between Progressio’s theory of change, its chosen intervention approaches (relevance) through the modes and sites of delivery (efficiency, effectiveness) to the evidence of outputs and outcomes. In addition the evaluation team was able to contextualise this process by employing a flexible interview template at both global HQ and country office levels, including Progressio staff, partners, counterparts and beneficiaries, to critically substantiate quantitative data with technical and organisational insights.

## 3 FINDINGS

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### 3.1 RESULTS

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#### 3.1.1 Performance assessment against logframe

Progressio's PPA logframe for 2011/14 is based on the organisation's route map setting out how the goals and objectives of its 2010/15 strategic plan will be achieved. The intended impact of the logframe is to empower people to promote greater transparency, accountability and responsiveness from local and national governments. They have two outcomes. Outcome 1 of the PPA logframe, reflecting Progressio's concern with participation and governance (whether as a significant area of work on its own right or as a cross-cutting issue in relation to its other key themes), refers to the pursuit of changes in national and international policies and practices that will ultimately benefit poor people as a result of civil society participation and empowerment. Outcome 1 comprises both the results of Progressio's capacity-building support for partners' own pursuit of policy change nationally (Progressio does not undertake advocacy itself in its country programmes) and of international advocacy initiatives coordinated by Progressio's global office in London. Outcome 2, meanwhile, aimed at benefiting almost 555,000 people, refers to the intended achievements of Progressio's capacity-building at a grassroots level whereby the boosted performance of partners leads to practical gains for the communities they work with (eg environmentally sustainable farming practices). Please refer to Annex G for the logframe.

Table 3-1 DFID – Progressio PPA Progress Assessment Against the Logframe

Outcome 1	Impact Weighting	Progressio Scoring	IPR team response
Poor and marginalized communities in target areas are empowered and equipped to demand greater transparency, accountability and responsiveness from local and national governments.	N/A	<b>Indicator 1.1</b> Achieved <b>Indicator 1.2</b> Achieved <b>Indicator 1.3</b> Achieved <b>Indicator 1.4</b> Achieved	<b>Confidence: High</b> <b>The Evaluators agreed with the scoring made by Progressio</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Internal data sets, underpinning the NGO's RICA monitoring and evaluation system which it has taken major steps to strengthen, indicate progress.</li> <li>2) RICA relies on self-assessment by Progressio development workers and staff, however. This is not to question objective intent but to point out additional exercises such as external project assessments, reviews and evaluations could give a useful independent view and systematise information and analysis.</li> </ol>
Outcome 2	Impact Weighting	Progressio Scoring	IPR team response
Targeted communities will have greater sustainable benefits through piloting appropriate approaches in sustainable farming and natural resource management and improved levels of Knowledge, Attitude, Practice & Behaviour for people living with HIV & AIDS	N/A	<b>Indicator 2.1</b> Achieved <b>Indicator 2.2</b> Achieved <b>Indicator 2.3</b> Achieved	<b>Confidence: Medium -High</b> <b>The Evaluators agreed with the scoring made by Progressio</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) These data sets indicative of Progressio's work to create tools to measure their progress.</li> <li>2) We have evidence from field visits or interviews with regard to the work in the Dominican Republic and Haiti and Yemen.</li> <li>3) See comment in 2 above on self-assessment.</li> </ol>
Output 1	Impact Weighting	Progressio Scoring	IPR team response
Progressio provides development workers to strengthen the capacity of Civil Society Organisations	30%	<b>Indicator 1.1</b> Achieved	<b>Confidence: High</b> <b>The Evaluators agreed with the scoring made by Progressio</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The IPR Team has first hand evidence from development workers in the Dominican</li> </ol>

Output 2	Impact Weighting	Progressio Scoring	IPR team response
<p>The capacities of Progressio’s partner Civil Society Organisations are strengthened in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Effective Governance and Participation</li> <li>2. Sustainable Environment and Climate Change</li> <li>3. HIV and AIDS</li> </ol>	20%	<p><b>Indicator 2.1</b> Not achieved <b>Indicator 2.2</b> Not achieved <b>Indicator 2.3</b> Not achieved</p>	<p>Republic and phone conversations with stakeholders in Yemen.</p> <p><b>Confidence: Medium</b> <b>The Evaluators agree with the scoring by Progressio but field research evidence suggests achievements may be higher</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) It is difficult to measure the capacity of civil society organizations. While the IPR team commends the use of “Keystone” as an independent survey to assess the level of partner satisfaction, it does not give a full analytical picture.</li> <li>2) As Progressio has noted, possibly only civil society organizations unhappy with their development worker are motivated to answer the survey, leading to a possible de facto bias. Satisfaction levels in the Dominican Republic and Haiti as expressed in interviews were much higher.</li> <li>3) The IPR team suggests including feedback rate with your indicators.</li> </ol>
Output 3	Impact Weighting	Progressio Scoring	IPR team response
<p>Progressio’s Partners Projects reach Civil Society Organisations and Beneficiaries</p>	20%	<p>Indicator 3.1 Achieved Indicator 3.2 Achieved Indicator 3.3 Redefined</p>	<p><b>Confidence: Medium-High</b> <b>The Evaluators agreed with the scoring made by Progressio</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Progressio has clarified with DfID an original mistake with respect to Indicator 3.3. Previously it was thought that the output would be targeted beneficiaries but it has now been changed to direct beneficiaries.</li> <li>2) While the IPR team has confidence in the reporting of the numbers, there is a question on how to estimate the number of targeted beneficiaries given the levels at which the NGO works and the need to capture more the intrinsic value of capacity-building. DFID can aid in producing a tested methodology.</li> </ol>

Output4	Impact Weighting	Progressio Scoring	IPR team response
Policy interventions rooted in partner experience, researched and appropriately targeted towards agreed policy makers by Progressio	10%	Indicator 4.1 Achieved	<p><b>Confidence: High</b>  <b>The Evaluators agreed with the scoring made by Progressio</b></p> <p>Interviews with both internal and external stakeholders confirmed that Progressio has gone a long way advocating for civil society. Some examples collected from interviews and field visits are cited below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Zimbabwe European Network</li> <li>2) Rio + 20 advocacy and the work with changing DEFRA’s own policy messaging on Water Resource Management.</li> <li>3) Faith and Development “Prayer is Not Enough”</li> </ol>
Output 5	Impact Weighting	Progressio Scoring	IPR team response
Progressio promotes learning and sharing of good practices	20%	Indicator 5.1 Achieved	<p><b>Confidence: High</b>  <b>The Evaluators agreed with the scoring made by Progressio</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Interviews with DWs and UK staff demonstrate these case studies being disseminated and shared and growing institutional commitment to this. But the IPR team believes more could be done, if resources were available, to capitalise on rich programme experience.</li> <li>2) The IPR team cannot assess the quality of learning and sharing of good practice through the number of case studies published. However, evidence in Section 3.3.1 on Learning indicates there has been learning between development workers.</li> </ol>

**Target robustness**

The evaluators are confident that the scores provided by Progressio in its first APR report covering progress against the PPA logframe are generally valid. The organisation has worked extremely hard to quantify their impact on capacity building and advocacy. As well as drawing on the concerted efforts that the organisation and its development works and policy staff are investing in various surveys to assess work progress and achievements through its Regular Impact and Capacity Assessment (RICA) monitoring and evaluation system, in some cases, such as partner satisfaction, the organisation has outsourced the data collection to an independent survey organisation: “Keystone”. These efforts demonstrate Progressio’s commitment to maximising rigour and objectivity in the assessment of results. The confidence of the IPR team in the robustness and the quality of the results is high. Progressio has undertaken a major effort to put in place and mainstream a system to capture much more rigorously the results of its work.

Further, the overall impressions of capacity-building projects visited in the Dominican Republic and Haiti was one of very effective initiatives that are extremely well structured, supported and coordinated, both in terms of DW partner relationship and in terms of the teamwork occurring between DWs and partners within the Progressio projects they belong to.

**Data collection and measuring impact*****Tools for gathering the data***

Progressio has worked hard to gather the data in a quantifiable form in order to demonstrate results. The level of effort and robustness of the data collection raises the IPR team’s confidence in Progressio’s accuracy of self-perception. There are two pieces of evidence to demonstrate the robustness of the data collection. First, they have outsourced the data collection for Output 2 which focuses on increasing the capacities, skills and attitudes index of their civil society partners (please see Annexe G for the logframe) to another body called “Keystone”. “Keystone” surveys Progressio’s partners through the internet and gives an independent assessment of capacities, skills and attitudes in a numerical format. Outsourcing these results is costly for the organisation but Progressio decided it was worth the investment to have an independent assessment. Second, Progressio, adapting to its needs a method developed by the Catholic development agency CAFOD, has devised new tools such as the Participation and Transparency Tool<sup>1</sup> (PATT) to measure the effectiveness of capacity-building and international advocacy. Through a five point scale, the organisation measures the level of engagement and response from governments thus giving an indication of success with different advocacy tools, as well as relevant advances in the capacity of partners. In the case of capacity-building, PATT sits alongside other tools to gather information from beneficiaries on issues such as water, food security and attitudes to HIV and AIDS.

***Work levels and the difficulties of attribution***

Progressio tends to engage in projects which work at intermediary and policy levels, as well as at the grassroots, with the aim of pursuing wider systemic effects. This approach is a strength but it makes it difficult to measure the

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Belisario Nieto, Progressio learning manager, 10/08/12

number of target beneficiaries. Difficulty in establishing the attribution of Progressio's involvement and the effects of their interventions make it more difficult to compare their impact with that of other organisations working at a single level or running their own operational programmes directly linked to social beneficiaries. For example, according to milestone 1 under output indicator 3.3 on the logframe (please see Annexe G), the total number of stated beneficiaries for 2011/12 already stands at 3,140,920 people (as against the planned target of 1.9 million and just below the eventual 2014 target of 3,145,000). The high volume of number is determined by the type of work Progressio undertakes, such as promoting the inclusion of youths and women in forthcoming local elections in Somaliland, but it does require crude estimates of the number of target beneficiaries. It must be noted that the inflated numbers are most likely due to the type of interventions and not due to Progressio's self-inflation of results. Indeed, the IPR team has witnessed Progressio possibly being overly cautious in estimating numbers of beneficiaries in the Dominican Republic and Haiti stemming from the results and potentially longer-term success of its efforts to promote productive civil society-state interaction and partnerships. In light of this, Progressio, as well as its own planned efforts, can work with DFID to find more accurate ways to define beneficiaries at different levels and measure attributions with different types of civil society engagement work.

#### ***Strengthen baseline information***

Another opportunity for further improvements in M&E data collection and quality might also arise from the continuation of Progressio's welcome efforts to strengthen baseline information. Collection of baseline data has traditionally occurred before the arrival of the DWs through pre-placement situation analysis and technical project assessment with partners and beneficiaries, with development workers then working with stakeholders to verify and update the findings at the very start of their assignments. This is a very positive aspect of the system in that it allows Progressio to lay a strong foundation for a work agenda to be shared and owned by all stakeholders. However, for various reasons, it would appear it is not being applied universally. In the case of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, for example, the gathering of baseline data currently appears to rely on the initial stage of DW placements, rather than on pre-placement assessment, though this may be due to the existence of longstanding partners. The situation in other country programmes would need to be established, but the IPR evaluators would recommend that the strength of pre-placement assessment needs to be maintained/reintroduced, given its vital role in analysing and distilling project options.

#### ***The challenge of sustaining and verifying information collection and processing in line with the coherence of on-the-ground work***

On examining DW-partner MoUs, DW reports, RICA surveys and project plans for the Dominican Republic and Haiti country programme, the IPR evaluation team found in some cases variations between descriptions of objectives/results/indicators and beneficiary numbers. This problem means that, while the anticipated impact changes are generally stated clearly and progress towards them is being effectively tracked and achieved, it is difficult to tie down with entire accuracy what the specific objectives and targets are at different levels. Clarity is further complicated when several DWs are working with the same partner organisation, within the same thematic project, or contributing

relevant expertise from other projects. Further efforts are needed to align source documentation and maintenance of the RICA system, and Progressio is committed to strengthening them.

#### **The PPA logframe, Progressio's values and the shift to results**

Taking the difficulties in data collection outlined above and the importance of DFID as a funder, Progressio has invested a lot of energy into the logframe as a tool for reporting. From the initial submission of the logframe, Progressio has corrected and resubmitted a revised logframe twice. This demonstrates Progressio's values of transparency and ensuring an accurate and robust tool for DFID.

Strong evidence exists that Progressio has taken and is taking seriously the need to assess results, including in quantifiable terms, rather than just "the most significant change" model of reporting. But the challenges of gathering numerical information, as shown above, are high and there is also the challenge of interpreting whether figures are in fact indicative of real change. Sensibly, Progressio treats its M&E information more as a management tool to highlight trends for analysis and reflection rather than as a tool to provide a definitive verdict, and the IPR team believes this is a sensible approach. Further, in meeting the legitimate information needs of DfID, a concern exists that the logframe, and the RICA monitoring and evaluation system that generates the information to report against it, must also centrally benefit the daily work of partners and the people on the ground they support. The IPR team would support the view that accountability to partners and beneficiaries and accountability to donors must be effectively combined to serve their ultimate development purpose.

Further, the IPR team asks that Progressio re-examine the impact level indicators and the outcome level indicators. The impact indicators are measured through sources such as UNDP and the World Bank which is far removed from Progressio's impact, given the complex range of other factors, forces and actors involved in shaping the scores. As a result they do not realistically measure Progressio's contribution and could lead to a false and unfair sense of Progressio failing to achieve progress and impact. The IPR team recommend that Progressio rewrite the indicators to be more indicative of its own progress as a plausible contributor to change.

#### ***Levels of work, the impact chain and capturing the distinct value of Progressio's capacity-building***

A concern for the IPR evaluators is whether Progressio is actually capturing successfully the value of its distinct contribution to change as it assesses and reports progress against the PPA logframe and wider RICA framework. Progressio has worked hard to separate their contribution from their partner's impact in terms of direct beneficiaries, and the IPR has confidence in efforts to avoid and address any such distortions. But with the focus on measuring and assessing gains for ultimate social beneficiaries, the IPR team is concerned that Progressio, as it works with/through partner organisations rather than primarily in direct contact with social beneficiaries, is not properly capturing or demonstrating the real value of the organisation's capacity-building in achieving impact at the organisational and institutional level within partners and in their performance vis-a-vis pursuit of external goals. Progressio feels their main focus is through capacity building but

lack clarity on how to describe their impact organisationally. Finding ways to assess what is Progressio's contribution organisationally would help in communicating to future partners, and in measuring the specific impact.<sup>2</sup> In order to find clarity on their impact, Progressio needs to have a clear understanding of their impact chain.

Progressio needs to focus more on analysing the direct and indirect impacts of its work at the very points of contact with the partner organisations and track their wider reverberations at community, civil society and policy levels. Attribution may always be a tricky and sensitive challenge for Progressio as they value working to partners' agendas, rather than enhancing the institution's own recognition and profile. The IPR team feels that Progressio needs to do further work on defining their specific contribution (of which capacity building is a key factor).

IPR discussion of these issues and challenges proved of considerable interest to the organisation. With this in mind, the IPR team produced a more detailed analysis with recommendations for Progressio's consideration on its project planning cycle, the RICA monitoring and evaluation system and results assessment (see Annex G3).

#### **Addressing DFID's feedback**

DFID has made two critical comments on Progressio's Annual Review of 2011. First is the alleged general lack of evidence to support the narrative. Second is apparent suggestion of the need to shift from a descriptive to analytical editorial style. The exchanges between the two organisations appear to indicate confusion about what kinds of information Progressio thinks it needs to provide and what types and levels of information DfID expects, can digest and will use. Further insight into the issues raised and the IPR team's view of the exchanges during the reporting, which appear to indicate problems on both sides that need further dialogue and resolution before the second report, are provided in Annex G3.

The IPR review team concurs with DFID that Progressio needs to shift their communications with DFID from descriptive to analytical editorial style. Progressio's report to DFID needs to have a clearer analytical focus of their content and the strategic purpose. These highlights could help bridge the current gap between the report's narrative and the considerable pool of quantitative and qualitative information lying in the RICA system. This would require a more thorough understanding of Progressio's contribution to capacity building and of the important landmarks being achieved by the organisation's international advocacy, with Progressio investing in the approaches needed to be more effective in communicating it to DFID. Simultaneously, this would result in a more compact and easily digestible report for DFID.

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<sup>2</sup> An illustrative example of this problem is Progressio's recent work to systematise the lessons of its success in helping to promote participatory municipal budgeting in the Dominican Republic over the last decade. A draft publication, *The participatory municipal budget: an experience to be shared*, is full of fascinating insights on the challenges and process of change. Yet, though written by DWs for Progressio, it lacks explanation of what Progressio specifically did itself and how its interventions successfully contributed to changes benefiting people. A very informative summary of this experience, albeit with the same problem, was submitted to DfID as one of the case studies belonging to the 2011/12 APR.

The IPR team does feel there is adequate evidence to support Progressio's progress against the logframe. However, in submitting its original report Progressio, having apparently taken PPA assessors through its workings, assumed that DFID had a clear understanding of its M&E system, thus they attempted to submit the raw data by way of evidence to substantiate their annual review. The IT barriers in DFID meant Progressio's data could not be received and has left the DFID advisers and Progressio's M&E staff confused. While Progressio does have the evidence to back up their impacts for the logframe, Progressio must realise that DFID does not want to interpret the raw data and is instead looking for synthesised analytical evidence to support the logframe.

#### **DFID's communication**

While Progressio needs to work harder at synthesising their data to make it more digestible for DFID, the IPR team is, simultaneously, of the view that DfID can itself do more to help the grantee by being much clearer in the future about the types of information it needs and expects and for what purposes. This clarity is vital in a context in which major uncertainties surround expectations of this PPA, not to mention the future of the PPA mechanism itself, with important debates taking place to tighten definition and understanding of important concepts (such as additionality and value for money) informing its management and review. Progressio has to some extent interpreted the current climate, following apparent PPA assessment advice as one demanding numerical information to provide evidence results whereas DfID would appear to want more reflection and analysis.

### **3.1.2 Intended and unintended effects (positive and negative changes) on poor and marginalised groups and civil society**

Given the lack of adequate time and resources for the IPR, it was not possible for the evaluators to review comprehensively the likely/actual effects of Progressio's in-country capacity-building programmes and international advocacy across its whole portfolio. Nevertheless, the evaluators are confident that the organisation is working effectively to pursue and achieve development results and change. One year into the PPA agreement, the results being achieved are understandably more output-related, but the evaluators did find distinct instances of outcomes not only bringing immediate benefits to partner organisations and poor people but also creating the potential for lasting changes in country programmes, as well as evidence of important gains stemming from international advocacy.

As well as attracting positive comment from across civil society, state, parliamentary, church and business partners and informants on the quality of its work and its very approach to partnership – a result in itself – the findings gathered by the IPR team indicate that Progressio has achieved positive results at the grassroots, intermediary and policy levels it works at and seeks to target.

Full analysis of the results being achieved, how Progressio has worked to achieve them, and of the challenges facing efforts to build on such progress, are explored in full detail in relevant field research and case studies in Annex G, with additional reflections on enabling factors and barriers also provided in section 6 on lessons. Among the highlights of progress and achievements in terms of results are the following:

### Capacity building

#### *Dominican Republic and Haiti*

- Work at a grassroots level with farmers and communities in the north of the Dominican Republic and Haiti are leading to community production gains, with the potential also created for boosting local food security, nutrition and health, and expanding markets. The progress over a short period of time has so far been much more rapid on the Dominican side of the border, but techniques are successfully being shared with Haitian partners as part of a cross-border approach.
- At an intermediary level, Progressio, building on its successful promotion of participatory municipal budgeting with Dominican civil society and state partners over the last decade under a national framework it helped to create, Progressio is applying the training and awareness-raising tools that it used in a new phase of work with mayors and civil society actors on both sides of the Dominican-Haitian border. This is aimed at promoting citizens' involvement in municipal planning decisions and involves working with mayors. With Progressio's support, a mayor from one of poorest Dominican provinces won EU support for a bi-national project involving Haitian stakeholders as equal partners in the central border area. Meanwhile, a nation-wide Dominican municipal government network has asked Progressio to support civil society empowerment in a new bi-national citizenship project in the south.
- At a policy level, the new Dominican government has announced it will uphold a pledge to spend 4 per cent of GDP on pre-university education. There is evidence that Progressio's capacity-building support for stronger civil society research and advocacy on budget policies and management of public finances made a plausible contribution to this significant development.

#### *Somaliland*

- With Progressio support, and through work with the Talowadaag ("Coalition"), Hargeisa Group Hospital set up an Integrated Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support Centre (IPTCS) in Somaliland has led to an uptake of services targeting people living with HIV and AIDS. Support was provided by Progressio development workers (DWs) Dr Abdirahman Mohamed (a Somalian Ethiopian) and HIV educator Edward Musinguzi (Ugandan), both Decentralisation and Citizen Engagement Advisers.
- Establishment of the IPTCS centres has in turn had an important impact on the provision of Anti-retroviral Therapy (ART) and psychosocial treatment for people living with HIV and also led to an on-going programme to prevent transmission of HIV and AIDS to others.

#### *Timor Leste*

- Progressio support for civil society networks has contributed to recognition by the government of civil society as legitimate actors and interlocutors in monitoring official projects, with a memorandum of understanding now signed. This will put civil society in a stronger position to influence a planned law on decentralisation.
- Progressio capacity-building, building on lessons of a training initiative to pilot tools to monitor public works, water, health and community projects in a single district, has now equipped key staff and representatives from a national

network of civil society organisations to roll out the methods in six of the country's 13 districts and pursue replication among its 450 members.

### International policy work

#### *Haiti and Dominican-Haitian relations*

- In the UK, Progressio's international advocacy contributed to Haiti and Dominican-Haitian relations being kept on the policy agenda by supporting parliamentary and multi-stakeholder groups on Haiti and influencing policy-makers during the London visit of the Haitian prime minister. There is evidence that the dynamism of these groups is, to a significant extent, due to the contribution of Progressio and may in turn been a factor in the UK's growing humanitarian interest in Haiti, as marked by the UK's decision to open an embassy in Port-au-Prince. Those involved in promoting business investment in Haiti have valued Progressio's efforts.
- With Progressio also engaging policy-makers at the EU level as well as in the UK, it is possible that apparent gains at the international level may even be helping to nurture indications of palpable shifts within Haiti itself in terms of openness to civil society participation.
- Progressio's efforts have been welcomed by both Haitian and Dominican officials, with the NGO engaging constructively with efforts to facilitate confidence-building between the two countries. This matches the cross-border capacity-building being carried out by Progressio described above.

#### *Zimbabwe*

- Progressio was instrumental in the forming of the Zimbabwe European Network (ZEN), a trans European lobby group which informs European foreign offices of Zimbabwean civil society's perspectives. Progressio has also been the chair of the organisation, has had positive reviews from the UK Foreign Commonwealth Office and has been important in European dialogues with Zimbabwean civil society.
- Progressio has developed close relationship with the FCO through the Zimbabwe European Network.

#### *Somaliland*

- **Election monitoring.** Progressio has been invited to provide special election monitoring in the Puntland, Somalia. It attests to Progressio's values of working with people and their ability to provide fair quality election monitoring in conflicted regions. Build in reference to Progressio support for its partner SOYO enabled a ground-breaking change in electoral law, reducing the minimum legal age of candidates from 35 to 25 years of age, thus opening the way for the participation of some sections of the younger population hitherto excluded.

#### *Advocacy targeting the Rio +20 summit*

- Bringing civil society voices from Yemen on water resource management which was noted from Nick Clegg. Changing the nature of discussion of Water from Water and Sanitation to Integrated Water Resource Management system and thus pushing it to be on DEFRA's mandate.
- Builds on earlier success on EU regulation banning sales of illegally logged timber. Progressio was able to make clear contribution to the passing of

legislation and the inclusion of several key aspects of the legislation. Their advocacy was rooted in evidence of social impact of illegal logging on the lives of partners and beneficiaries.

- Progressio works in very close dialogue with DEFRA, the UK policy lead, during the run up to Rio +20, and active, constructive engagement and written dialogue with the Secretary of state at the time, Caroline Spelman, and the Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg who led the UK delegation.

#### *Faith and development*

- Progressio's efforts to encourage the development community to recognise the importance of considering the crucial bearing that faith-based actors can have on positive or negative development outcomes have been welcomed at a ministerial and senior official level in DfID (eg during its the Faith Partnership Principles consultation), as well as by NGOs and church partners involved in this work.
- At a country level, Progressio has successfully promoted a positive faith-based response to HIV and AIDS in countries such as Yemen and Somaliland. As is apparent from testimonies, there is strong evidence that Progressio's work has nurtured changes in the views of faith leaders, with such shifts in turn creating the potential to transform the lives of those facing the isolation, fear, violence and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS stigma. Some 62 religious leaders (38 male and 24 female) were trained in 2011/12.
- In UK-based policy work Progressio's high reputation in this areas of work has enabled it to engage church leaders. Ahead of the state visit of Pope Benedict to the UK Progressio briefed church and government officials on development issues which were relevant to the political discussions held. Ahead of the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to Zimbabwe in 2011, Progressio coordinated a briefing for him drawing on partner and peer agency perspectives on the human rights situation.

The IPR team analysed a representative sample of work from across the organisation. It examined each strand of Progressio's work programme underpinning its theory of change (country-level capacity-building in the South with local partners and international advocacy in the global North) in a range of country/regional settings and on key institutional themes, and it assessed the achievement or likelihood of results at the different levels at which the organisation pursues impact – grassroots, intermediary and policy. The research and case studies include:

- In-depth field research in the Dominican Republic and Haiti on Progressio's capacity-building, focusing on bi-national work on the border areas to promote sustainable agriculture and food security and responsive municipal planning through citizen's participation. Straddling Progressio's traditional strength in Latin America and its growing focus on fragile and conflict-affected states and transferring lessons internationally, this case has relevance to the UK in view of the government's growing humanitarian interest in Haiti (see IPR country report Annex G1)
- Capacity-building work in Somaliland to promote HIV and AIDs prevention and care and reduced stigma (see Annex G2) and in Timor Leste to promote effective civil society monitoring of official works and service delivery projects in the context of moves towards decentralisation (see Annex G2)

- Case studies of Progressio’s international policy work on particular countries or targeting international policy-making. These comprise advocacy on Haiti’s post-earthquake reconstruction and Dominican-Haitian bi-national relations (see Annex G2), Zimbabwe (see Annex G2) and on sustainable environment issues, including Progressio’s recent work around/at the Rio +20 summit and earlier work on EU regulation of illegal logging (see Annex G2).
- Work on faith and development, which would appear to have attracted recent DfID interest and provides an example of PPA additionality (see Annex G4).

## 3.2 RELEVANCE

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### 3.2.1 Progressio's Theory of Change and the PPA logframe

The PPA logframe aligns well with Progressio's overall strategy, its Theory of Change and its corporate indicators as was discussed in Section 1.5. The work is relevant to DFID's civil society sector strategy. This section examines the relevance of Progressio's work to civil society and its representativeness and targeting in relation to the poor.

### 3.2.2 Relevance of Progressio's work to UK's and local partner's priorities

The IPR team confirms through interviews with external stakeholders that Progressio's work is relevant to government and local partners' priorities.

Progressio has a close relationship with multiple UK ministries. They have close relationships with DEFRA and with Caroline Spelman, the former Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Further, through various international advocacy projects Progressio has made a name for itself within the FCO in the Zimbabwe unit.

As Progressio's main work is with civil society partners, the ethos of their work is to focus on their strategic objectives. As a result, organisations have fed back comments to the IPR team that Progressio is a "true partner" and values its commitment. Asked carefully on numerous occasions, partners stated they valued the gains of Progressio's support far more than had they received money equivalent to the cost of a development worker's salary.

### 3.2.3 Representativeness

Based on their review of Progressio's in-country capacity-building and of its international advocacy, the IPR evaluators firmly believe that the organisation's interventions and approach are highly relevant to the needs and interests of poor people.

This stems in large part both from Progressio's sophisticated knowledge of country contexts and its ability, demonstrated over many years, to build and sustain high-quality relationships with civil society organisations committed to a vision of development and empowerment in which poor people themselves are the agents of change. This intelligence is clear in both the organisation's in-country capacity-building and in its UK-based and international advocacy where the ability to facilitate the inclusion of key civil society voices in policy debates has been a traditional hallmark of the organisation's strengths.

This effectiveness in partner selection is proven by Progressio's ability to recruit professionals with high levels of relevant expertise and a strong social ethos. The ethos focuses on in-depth dialogue to meeting the organisational needs of working for change with poor people.

Over the last decade Progressio has also sought to ensure much greater connection between its capacity-building work and international advocacy, with advocacy initiatives now required to focus on the countries where the

organisation has programmes. The greater potential for practical collaboration and planning has thus boosted the potential for the even greater rootedness and representativeness of Progressio's work, which, in the case of international advocacy in the past, tended to rely mainly on high-quality distance partnership rather than on on-the-ground contact as in the case of its capacity-building programmes.

The range of partner organisations Progressio works with and the various types of interventions and approaches it adopts enhance its relevance. Typically the organisation, particularly in its capacity-building work, employs a combination of interventions at different levels. In some cases this may mean supporting partners working very closely with poor groups, with the value of development workers' transfer of skills and knowledge directly benefiting the latter. In other cases, it may mean supporting individuals or teams within organisations to perform this role. It is also the case that Progressio works with a variety of intermediary organisations such as civil society support groups and networks, working on specific capacity-building areas or more general institutional strengthening initiatives focused on their ultimate benefits for social groups. This can also include working to boost the effectiveness of organisations involved research, advocacy and communication dealing with policy issues and public attitudes rather than/alongside practical work directly aimed at poor people's empowerment.

This combination of micro-macro approaches is a strong point in itself in that each type of work affords opportunities to overcome the possible shortcomings of the other. For example, on-the-ground work with small farmers can bring immediate benefits, but these may be undermined by the lack of supportive food policies, so support for stronger networking or advocacy in this area can potentially play a very productive complementary role. Conversely, the value and legitimacy of higher-level policy engagement may be reduced if it lacks rootedness, so Progressio's links with civil society groups strongly linked with communities can help. Progressio has long since moved from a situation in which projects were possibly seen as a series of separate DW-partner work plans available for aggregation to one in which a much more coherent effort is made to bring several DWs and partners together in projects aimed at tackling issues more strategically. Finally, the rich diversity and social justice focus of Progressio's partnerships provides vital analytical insights and very informed contacts and information sources for Progressio's international advocacy work concerned with providing a platform for civil society's and poor people's own expression of voice.

### 3.2.4 Targeting

Progressio invokes the importance of people as agents of change particularly in its capacity-building work, with the vital importance of *organisation* as a prerequisite for development change. The poorest of the poor are typically less well organised/unorganised, and some degree of organisation is needed for productive reaction to outside support. Progressio thus tends to work directly with groups that display relatively higher levels of organisation. At the same time, in order to boost efforts to target the poorest of the poor, Progressio engages its civil society – and state – partners about how this challenge can be addressed and supports their efforts indirectly.

It is important from a results and theory of change perspective for Progressio to be clear about the impact-chain gains for people potentially arising from its support for intermediary organisations and higher-level policy changes. This is a matter not just of ensuring the tightest and strongest possible links, but also the organisation being clear about the realistic changes than can be achieved. By the same token, one might guard against assumptions that a stronger focus on more direct work with the ultimate social beneficiaries would be automatically more propitious for the achievement of results. Partners understandably caught up with the pressing tasks of practical interventions risk overlooking the wider contextual factors threatening to curtail the undoubted benefits of their work.

Among the issues and groups that Progressio targets in its interventions are the following:

#### **Fragile and conflict affected states**

Progressio's geographical spread of work is highly relevant to DfID's country priorities, including its strong focus on fragile and conflict-affected states such as Timor Leste, Zimbabwe, Yemen and Somalia (through the leading role it has played in supporting the development of stable institutions and civil society in Somaliland). Its work in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, assessed in some detail in Annex G in the country report, is very relevant to DfID in view of the UK's reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Haiti and continues to illustrate the traditional strength of the NGO's work in Latin America and the Caribbean, with continued engagement with Central American partners. This experience fills a gap in DfID's portfolio, now the department's institutional presence in the region has fallen.

#### **HIV and AIDS**

HIV and AIDS is one of the three strategic objectives of Progressio. They make a concerted effort in focusing on the needs of people living with HIV and AIDS, thus demonstrating the organisation's commitment to particularly vulnerable and/or marginalised groups. Progressio achieves this in two ways. First, it devotes energy and resources of its capacity-building programme to work with civil society to amplify the voices of people living with HIV and AIDS. Second, Progressio utilises their position as a faith organisation and works to inform people in faith communities on how to work with people living with HIV and AIDS.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Women and young people**

Progressio has made a strong concerted effort in mainstreaming gender throughout the organisation. Reflections of programmatic impact on gender relations are instituted in work plans at the development worker level, right up to strategic plans with respective partners. An example is in the Dominican Republic where in 2011, a development worker worked with partners to produce and promote a methodological guide on gender and municipal governance and how to carry out a gender audit of municipal plans. Further Progressio works to increase the voter turnout of women and young people with their work on election monitoring.

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<sup>3</sup> See *Prayer alone is not enough*, op. cit, for example the insightful testimonies from Yemen, pp. 21-33.

### 3.3 EFFECTIVENESS

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#### 3.3.1 Learning

Progressio has a strong reputation for the quality of its analysis and this has stemmed in large part from its UK-based policy and advocacy work, with publications and events sharing information and raising audience awareness of issues affecting people and partners. Over the last decade, however, the organisation has done much more to highlight the lessons of its in-country capacity-building programmes and to share materials relevant to this work, both in London<sup>4</sup> and in country programmes. Progressio focuses on learning in the following ways:

##### Country level

It is clear from the IPR field visit undertaken to the Dominican Republic and Haiti that sharing expertise and lessons is an integral feature of Progressio's work. There was clear evidence of DWs generously lending advice and expertise to other projects and partners within the country programme on a regular basis, independently of the annual meeting of development workers (DWs) with Progressio which affords a deliberate opportunity for such sharing to take place. Another key feature of work observed were some DWs strategically roaming from project to project and from one location to another to provide inputs. This was a product of their sustained involvement in the country programme, and the increasingly diverse expertise they had accumulated over time, which resulted in a process of cross-pollination within the programme. This was exciting to see and it is reasonable to conclude that it enables the programme as a whole to punch far above the weight of its individual parts.

##### Global level

Progressio shows many signs of wishing to boost external learning and sharing and promoting lessons internally. For example, plans have been developed and discussions held with the country programme in Somaliland about the potential value of sharing relevant lessons from the municipal participation work in the Dominican Republic. Whether this will lead to an exchange visit remain to be seen, but it is in instances such as this that PPA money make possible. Similarly, PPA funds have enabled DWs and partners to undertake international exchanges and take part in strategically relevant international meetings, with Progressio setting out terms of reference and procedures for feedback and wider sharing both in-country and internationally, a process much helped by advances in communication technology and social media. Indeed, Yahoo forums for development workers to network and share learning and experiences in English and in Spanish.

##### PPA level

Progressio is working closely with members of the BOND network of British development NGOs, as part of small team from its development effectiveness working group, to critically compare RICA with other planning, monitoring and

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, its 2005 publication, *Capacity-building for local NGOs: a guidance manual for good practice*.

evaluation systems. The aim is not only to share best practice and strengthen individual approaches but, potentially, to develop a scalar tool that might be relevant to the wider development sector, given the inefficiencies of organisations spending time and resources on grappling separately with similar challenges and opportunities and failing to share expertise. Progressio is also an active member of PPA learning groups such as that on empowerment and accountability.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Under the PPA, Progressio has made important progress in introducing and promoting its RICA system as the basis for stronger monitoring and evaluation system and institutional learning. Progressio is stepping up plans to use existing learning from RICA to strengthen the system, moving from perception of RICA as an M&E tool to one in which it is integral to all aspects of the planning cycle. To boost decentralised awareness, knowledge, ownership and long-term productive use of the system, Progressio is planning visits to country programmes, starting with Timor Leste, to use the system to review, develop and validate project and country plans in a participatory way with DWs and partners. While some partners and development workers in the Dominican Republic saw RICA as an essential opportunity to strengthen M&E and lesson-learning, others expressed worries that the system, unless handled well, might unhelpfully become more geared to the isolated assessment needs of donors than the aim of ensuring practical benefits for their daily work

### **Towards a stronger communication strategy for lessons promotion?**

Such is the richness of the insight that Progressio applies in its work with in-country partners, and such is their joint understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing poor people's organisation for change, that the IPR team wonders whether enough is being done to capitalise on what is still a somewhat hidden treasure trove of programme experience. Consideration might be given to an externally focused communication strategy bringing a strategic range of programme lessons to wider audience attention internationally, for example through a range of briefings and publications. Stronger work in this area could also be productively connected with Progressio's international advocacy, given its commitment to promoting the 'voice' of civil society and poor people.

Continued development, adaptation and use of RICA could strengthen its potential as a vital source of information for such a strategy. To take raw information to the processing stages needed for external communication products, however, investment in analytical and editorial skills might be required, with lesson-learning also forming part of the remit of the strengthening of the M&E accompaniment of DWs and partners suggested in this report. Teamwork between M&E, learning and policy and communication staff in country programmes and in London would be needed too, as would strong dialogue with in-country partners over the lesson-learning communication priorities in terms of key issues, audiences and impacts at national and international levels.

### **3.3.2 Innovation**

During the course of the IPR the evaluators have observed numerous instances of Progressio's efforts to innovate through new knowledge and effective tools and

approaches, and a selection of examples will be shared here. Through this section, we will examine the Development worker programme, the international advocacy programme, and the monitoring and learning aspect of Progressio.

### **Progressio's capacity-building programme**

At the heart of Progressio's capacity-building programme is the principle that the contribution of development workers to partner organisations should be demand-led. While Progressio has been working on demand-led skill exchange it has resulted in new solutions with a higher critical impact on deep complex issues. Examples include:

- In the Dominican Republic a key innovation of Progressio's governance work is that it has not sought to enhance civil society demand for official accountability in isolation but to nurture civil society capacity to engage in dialogue with the state, laying the basis for more constructive interaction. A diploma programme has been a key tool to facilitate a process of dialogue and awareness-raising which includes an intense training process on municipal laws, rights and responsibilities of the state and citizen. The diploma programme (see field research country report in Annex G1) has had such a catalytic effect that it is now recognised in educational materials among universities and is being replicated for use in border areas of Haiti.
- Progressio has pushed the boundaries on work with gender. In Central America, they have changed the focus of gender from being solely working with women to the area of masculinities. This is a change the gender and development academic community has been advocating for but has had difficulty being applied practically. The programme in the Dominican Republic, through a partnership with the UNFPA, has now adopted masculinities approaches to gender issues, and efforts are being made to apply them in Africa and the Middle East. Progressio is clearly making an effort to give this work solid strategic projection, as demonstrated by its 2012 review of efforts to mainstream gender throughout the organisation.<sup>5</sup>
- Links have also been made between the faith and development community internationally. Progressio, at a country level, is one of the few organisations that have built the trust and expertise about faith and development where they are able to make critical comments, as in discussion of HIV and AIDS.

An important feature of Progressio's innovation has been its policy of recruiting internationally for skilled development workers, with the large majority of DWs of coming from other countries in the global South rather than just the North, thus distinguishing Progressio from other agencies.

### **Progressio's international advocacy**

Matching efforts to support partner organisation's advocacy capacity in country-level work, the approach of Progressio's international advocacy is to bring and connect the voices of civil society with actors who are influencing legislation in

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<sup>5</sup> See Casey J, *A gender programme analysis of Progressio*, 2012

order to bring about more effective policies. How Progressio makes these connections depends on the context of the advocacy and the organisation does allow for flexibility. Some of the distinctive features of Progressio's approach include:

- Progressio is highly respectful of and committed to the autonomy of others views, so this helps its role as a convenor and bridge-builder.
- Progressio develops close relations with multiple sectors of the UK government including DEFRA, the FCO and DFID, as well as at an EU level.
- The organisation takes care to research the political process targeted in its advocacy programmes and works to strike relationships with those with influence such as the Special Rapporteur to the Environment Sub Committee, Caroline Lucas at the EU parliament.
- It often works behind the scenes to achieve influence, releasing context-specific reports backed with evidence on the political process. The Zimbabwe Unit of the Foreign Commonwealth Office has commented on the important role of of these reports in helping it to persuade other foreign affairs ministries within the EU.

Another area of future innovation the IPR team has raised with Progressio is how to exploit the full potential of further strengthening its work promoting the 'voice' of partners and poor people, including as a distinctive strand of international advocacy. Progressio's partnership qualities are already a strength from the point of view of 'voice' work, which, elsewhere, risks extractive tokenism. Developing an innovative voice and dialogue strategy might also be a way of strengthening the connection between Progressio's in-country capacity-building work and the rootedness of its international advocacy. A key strength to be drawn on is Progressio's extensive experience, particularly in-country, of working with partners to get poor people's voices not just *heard* but *recognised* so this could yield lessons for exploration and promotion.

Having a direct practical connection between Progressio's capacity-building and its international advocacy has not always been possible or easy in practice, often for understandable reasons such as firewalling partners and DWs from security risks. But there are ways round such problems and greater synergies between the organisation's two key work strands should be possible. The IPR recommends that, in view of the suggested voice and dialogue work, a stronger strategic framework might be required, based on closer and tighter joint planning, with both London and country programmes investing time and resources in the effort required to take forward selected key initiatives, including in-country skills and London visits and support. Progressio might learn from and contribute to other organisations developing such synergies.

### 3.3.3 Partnership working

The IPR found overwhelming evidence that Progressio's partnership – and its approach to partnership – is strongly valued by the organisations with which it works. Progressio makes a point of being partner-led in its work with civil society organisations, and the fact that it is not a donor agency enables dialogue relatively unaffected by power relations involving money.

In its capacity-building programme, Progressio, having developed a relationship with an organisation first, conducts a project assessment and surveys and questionnaires about what the organisation needs. Through a dialogue and determining the opportunities and limiting factors, Progressio and the partner organisation draw up agreements on the assignments of development workers. Partners valued the fact that the decision to recruit a DW and to plan his or her placement was the result of a sustained dialogue, informed by preparatory project analysis, in which they as partners had a key say, with their involvement in framing job description and interviewing candidates giving them the chance to decide whether the nature of the assignment and the qualities of the applicants were right for their organisation's needs.

A vital aspect of in-country partners' appreciation was the value they attach to the high-level of technical skills that Progressio's DWs bring to their work with the organisation. This, informants said, was a question not just of gaining access to professional know-how that might otherwise be unavailable or unaffordable locally but also the fact that the expertise was shared with the organisation with the express purpose of it being transferred both to counterparts within the organisation and to the stakeholder groups and target beneficiaries they work with. As a result, there was greater potential for the benefits of collaboration to be retained and sustained.

Beyond the professional qualities of Progressio development workers, partners also expressed strong appreciation of other, more intangible, benefits and qualities that Progressio's DWs could bring. These included the value of cultural exchange and new ideas, of DWs' professional enthusiasm and social commitment setting an example, motivating staff within the organisation and thus having a positive effect on 'institutional rhythms'. Others referred to what they called Progressio's 'accompaniment' of their work being a source of emotional and professional encouragement, with DWs working with in situations and locations that many local professionals might not be prepared to consider. Meanwhile, several noted the value of Progressio's support institutionally, such as advice, contacts, brokerage of donor and policy-maker support as well as synergies with other organisations.

Progressio also works with partners in consortia. Progressio is exploring and developing strategic alliances in various countries such as Yemen, Somaliland, Zimbabwe and Timor Leste. An example of Progressio's growing commitment to this approach is its current partnership agreement with Christian Aid in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Through its Santo Domingo office, Progressio hosts and provides administrative support and office space to Christian Aid staff in the country, while Christian Aid reciprocates the arrangement in Port-au-Prince, providing logistical and security support to DWs. But the benefits are also

extending to the programmatic area. As well as sharing analysis of context and the challenges and opportunities of development work, the two organisations are involved in joint planning of programme management and development.

Further, Progressio forms consortia to ensure a larger impact for international advocacy. Progressio was one of the founders of the Zimbabwe European Network. The network increases Progressio's impact in international lobbying, but it can make its attribution difficult to assess.

### 3.3.4 Sustainability

Progressio's work under the PPA is still at an early stage so in many cases it may be too early to assess outcomes and judge their sustainability.

However, Progressio's nature to work on system tends to have more sustainable results. Examples would include support for the electoral inclusion of women and young people in Somaliland, strengthened international regulation of logging, or the maintenance of pressure for the UK to step up support for Haiti's post-earthquake reconstruction and development.

A challenge Progressio faces along with many other organisations is the sustainability of its finances. This poses worries for the longer term sustainability of Progressio's traditional model of development workers on 2-5 year contracts. Progressio is examining a variety of shorter-term DW placements providing quick infusion of specific technical input, support for partners' work on given themes within/across countries, enabling a single DW to work with several partners in a given country, and a model facilitating regional peer-to-peer exchange. This should help to boost relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, providing incentives for tighter, goal-oriented planning and optimal use of resources. But Progressio needs to safeguard the well-grounded development ethos of its existing approach, given the risk of some donors dictating options based on their own expectations rather than appreciation of Progressio's way of working.

One suggestion made by the IPR team is that Progressio should strengthen its approaches to cost recovery in donor applications, particularly in the case of country programmes less familiar with the tools and approaches required. Stronger Progressio-partner dialogue is needed on how to articulate the value of a DW and present the costs of his/her contribution creatively so they are not seen – inaccurately – simply as personnel. All the same, Progressio feedback asserts that tighter and tighter rules are being applied by donors to prevent such an approach.

In this vein, another challenge for Progressio in sustaining the impact of its work is how best to sustain the role played by its international advocacy, largely supported by the PPA. As well as boosting the contributions of trusts and foundations and commissioned niche work by development agencies involved in funding initiatives aimed at UK and international policy processes, Progressio, in order to attract large donors concerned with in-country impact, may wish to consider the inclusion of voice and dialogue initiatives connected with Progressio's country programmes in applications.

The growing focus of Progressio in fragile and conflict-affected states raises the challenge of achieving sustainability in difficult environments, particularly in relation to Progressio's work on participation and effective governance. Much of Progressio's experience in this area, for example, has occurred in Latin America where, even in situations of political polarisation, institutions have existed for a more stable process of civil society organisation and state-civil society interaction. By contrast some country programmes in other regions display more repressive or turbulent circumstances or ones in which state-building and the emergence of civil society are at a more incipient stage. The recent need to withdraw foreign DWs from Yemen is indicative of possible challenges ahead in taking forward work on an issue such as governance, given the security considerations surrounding foreign DWs. If Progressio does plan to increase its work in fragile and conflict states as a strategic choice it would do well to consider carefully the major programming implications involved and also develop a solid policy framework for engagement. The past difficulties of establishing a stable institutional presence in Haiti, though a particular case, may offer lessons, as might its positive past experience of post-conflict work in Central America and long history of involvement in Zimbabwe, Yemen and Somaliland.

### 3.4 EFFICIENCY

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#### 3.4.1 Value for money assessment

Progressio is an organisation that focuses on capacity building and policy change. Facing challenging development circumstances and entertaining ambitious aims, the organisation's values are biased towards effectiveness and 'ethics' rather than just economy and efficiency.

Indeed, Progressio is working in conflict and affected states. Progressio's PPA contract is in six countries, of which five countries are fragile and conflict affected states, which artificially inflates the costs due to their unpredictable nature and inflated prices. However, Progressio believes this is where they can make the most impact and would rather stay working than move to countries with less conflict but where they could extract greater cost value. These issues need to be taken into consideration when reviewing Progressio's value for money assessment.

Progressio has a value for money policy which focuses on procurement capacity and effectiveness. In the policy, it focuses on their primary objectives in keeping cost conscious in all areas of their work and key performance indicators. They have also started measuring baselines against set targets with deadlines and outcomes. The definition of value for money within their policy, though focusing on the cost efficiency method dealing with the economy area of the value for money framework (of the 3E's of economy, efficiency and effectiveness) also insists an effective balance must be struck with the pursuit of development equity and 'ethics'. The organisation does not have the economies of scale enjoyed by larger agencies and also provides a more intense service, for example, through its development workers. Progressio is continually refining its concept of value for money in the light of the release of DFID's framework in 2011.

#### Economy

Progressio has been making significant efforts to reduce the cost of inputs of their programme. At the project level, evidence is seen of project assessments and strategies to reduce the costs of placements. Examples include using SWOT analysis to minimise risks of deficient placements, having a development worker work with two partners part time and having regional project assessments.

Working with development workers creates a tension with respect to keeping costs low. Progressio has had experience of their development workers being poached by other development organisations who are better resourced. Often the development workers are highly skilled and trained individuals. This is different as it departs from the retired overseas sending model of volunteers from the north who are willing to live on a lower salary as they gain global experience. Progressio values having trained professionals who work in development as a career and a majority of the DW are from the global south. These issues are also occurring with their staff as they struggle to keep the costs low for salaries.

Recently, Progressio has made efforts to ensure their supportive programmes in the head office are lean in order to support the overseas programmes. For example, they have moved offices to reduce rental costs. Further, their overseas offices are often shared with other organisations.

**Efficiency**

While we have explained how Progressio has been making large efforts in cutting the costs of their inputs, efficiency looks to the matter of comparing outputs with inputs. The difficulty here, as mentioned before, is that this type of measurement tool favours direct implementers involved in service delivery.

Progressio has made an effort to quantify their outputs. Output 2 is measured using the Keystone independent survey which measures the knowledge, skills and attitudes index of the civil society organisations. This form of measurement makes it difficult to be objective as many of the respondents only answered if they were unhappy with their development worker. Further, these indicators do not adequately reflect Progressio's work as the best way to capture their success is through anecdotes and cross referencing. Likewise it can be difficult to quantify the value of reaching beneficiaries, given the number of levels Progressio works across and the difficulty of attribution, for example in the case of increased numbers of people benefiting from electoral participation.

**Effectiveness**

Despite the challenges of the first two indicators there has been some overwhelming evidence demonstrating Progressio's effectiveness. When pressed with partners if you would rather take the money or Progressio's inputs, many organisations have expressed they favour the latter. For the civil society organisations that work with Progressio, they have found the true nature of the partnership has provided them with more effective tools than could have been solely provided by a financial grant. This was affirmed in the Dominican Republic/Haiti, in Yemen, and with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with respect to Progressio's international advocacy work.

### **3.5 IMPACT AND VALUE FOR MONEY OF PPA FUNDING**

#### **3.5.1 Attributable impacts of PPA funding on results, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency**

The IPR Team acknowledges that Progressio is doing high quality, systemic value for money work. Without the PPA funds, many of Progressio's programmes and projects would not exist at their current scale. This should not be seen as a sign of Progressio's weakness or dependency, but rather an ongoing challenge of funding diversification that is likely to remain.

A major problem in conducting value for money assessment is that the IPR terms of reference would appear to treat the PPA grant as being tied to particular programme or project outcomes when Progressio is free to spend the money as it wishes to support effective pursuit of its institutional strategic objectives that DfID has formally agreed to (in this more general sense, the money is in fact tied). The issue is therefore whether DfID, based on Progressio's reporting against its PPA logframe, has confidence in the grantee's ability to harness flexible use of PPA money to effective pursuit of its overall objectives centred on significant project results, with a strong measure of specific accountability provided through the logframe.

In some cases, PPA money is indeed vital to in-country project work, and to crucial areas of work such as international advocacy, but it is also playing a vital contribution to M&E, programme support, leveraging funds, learning, innovation and so on. The IPR team believes that supporting this wider infrastructure does add value and is a legitimate use of DFID investment,. It should also be remembered that in many cases in Progressio, PPA money, by enabling the release of funds to match those of other donors, is in fact allowing very effective project work to take place that might not happen. This has incalculable benefits for Progressio and the success of its work.

The PPA funds have made an impact in the following ways:

#### **Results**

As Progressio is a small organisation, and DFID PPA funds accounted for 37% of the organisational annual budget, PPA funds have played a large role in the organisation. Small organisations benefit greatly from sources of unrestricted funds because it allows for greater flexibility that larger organisations are privileged to have. At the same time, it allows the organisation to stay true to unique values that may be unexplored in the bureaucracies of larger organisations.

It would be difficult for Progressio to make the same impact it is now if PPA funds were restricted or not available. A significant portion of the international policy team is funded through the PPAs. This includes the Zimbabwe European Network, Faith and Development, Progressio's work at Rio +20 with respect to their relationship with DEFRA, and their success with banning the purchase of illegally logged timber in the UK. While PPA funds a part of the development worker

programme, the flexibility has allowed Progressio to stay in countries such as Yemen during the recent onset of conflict.

### **Relevance**

Unrestricted funds allow Progressio to work in difficult areas or under-served population. Two prime examples would be fragile and conflict affected states, and the area of Faith and Development. As DFID is placing a large emphasis on fragile and conflicted affected states, quick and flexible access to funds is critical. Without PPA funds, it would be difficult for small organisations like Progressio to continue working in these countries. Further, PPA funds have enabled Progressio to work in the area of Faith and Development as an additional contribution to the logframe which ought to be formally recognised. It has allowed Progressio to capitalise on its strength and the NGO is recognised within DFID and Lambeth Palace as an honest broker.

### **Effectiveness**

Due to the designs of the recent PPA, cross organisational learning has become a higher priority. The cross organisational learning has inspired Progressio to design new tools to better measure their capacity-building and policy work.

### **Efficiency**

Progressio was able to use DFID funds to leverage for more funding thus increasing its efficiency. Progressio has received match funding on nine separate projects leveraging DFID funds to gain EU funding. So far, Progressio has been able to garner over £423,716 UK Pounds Sterling from the European Union. Out of that amount, £387,621 UK Pounds Sterling is used for the 2011/12 financial year. The unrestricted funds allow Progressio to leverage for more funds while not having the burden of twice as many donor reporting procedures.

## **3.5.2 Value for money assessment of PPA funding**

It is not for the IPR team to reach judgment on whether DFID should consider continuing unrestricted funding as its signature to civil society. But it is the IPR team's task to make a call on whether the PPA funds have been good value for money in this case, and it believes that this is so.

A tension noted with multiple organisations is the difficulty in accounting for results when the unrestricted funds have been spent on core costs. As illustrated in Figure 1-2, in the case of Progressio, PPA funds have been spent on various areas including overseas programmes, the international policy programme, fundraising and support costs. It could be said that while many of the core costs forming this infrastructure are not specifically tied to a particular project, it makes it difficult to attribute impact. But it could equally be argued that these functions are essential not just to delivery but also to adding value, and even that, without them, project activities might not be able to exist and achieve impact in the first place. Progressio would in any case appear to be keeping its core infrastructure costs to a minimum and, if anything, the IPR team has concluded that more are needed to realise the fuller potential of programme work.

The IPR team encourages DFID to continue investing in flexible mechanism to support relatively smaller organisations such as Progressio where core costs are difficult in cost recovery despite their strategic use for institutional objectives.

There have been significant benefits for Progressio in having unrestricted funds.

- 1) They have been able to leverage the funds to gain more funding within the organization. The EU Civil Society Funds require matched funding. With unrestricted funds, an organization has the collateral required to match the level of funding.
- 2) Unrestricted funds help where flexibility between budget lines is needed. Especially in conflict affected states, costs can often be difficult to predict.
- 3) Unrestricted funds are also best used for institutional objectives more difficult to fund such as international policy work.
- 4) Unrestricted funds provide breathing space boosting creativity.
- 5) The flexibility of unrestricted funding often makes up for the shortfalls of the lack of donor coordination. Funds are often used as bridging funding to cover expenses while projects are starting up.

What the discussions on value for money have provided is an opportunity for cross organisational learning amongst all the PPA recipients. Learning groups have been organised to tackle issues of value for money in the areas of policy and capacity building. These organisational meetings enhance the additionality of DFID as a donor to be more useful and enhance the prestige of receiving unrestricted funds.

Perhaps the greatest value of unrestricted funds such as PPA is that it is an honour as an organisation to receive such a highly sought after source of funding. Organisations feel they are being rewarded and recognised for their hard work and achievements by DfID through being awarded the PPA.

As suggested above, the donor's concerns about a more flexible fund proving more unaccountable need not be the case if effective reporting is provided to show how all costs have contributed effectively to results. If it is decided a tighter approach is needed, it is the IPR team's opinion that DFID should continue unrestricted funding with PPAs but with clear guidelines on how these funds will be evaluated and with specifications of what these funds are to be used for or not used for.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1 SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST EVALUATION CRITERIA

A comparison between the approach of Progressio and DfID's own theory of change<sup>6</sup> indicates that they have much in common, not just in terms of themes but also analysis of the barriers facing, and the interventions needed, to overcome poverty. But the NGO's current work on these themes is also treated as being of significant cross-cutting relevance to economic and conflict and instability issues, even if Progressio does not specialise on these as distinct work areas. This approach enables the organisation to engage with conflict issues affecting Somaliland, Yemen or Zimbabwe, for example, as well as in the Dominican Republic and Haiti where the UK has a growing humanitarian concern. Progressio's ability to analyse and work on the underlying economic, social and political causes of conflict remains a hallmark of its work, so its support for state-building and civil society participation in Somaliland, for example, can be seen in this light. This is relevant to DfID's concerns with the link between development and security.

The IPR team believes that Progressio, as well as displaying strong thematic *relevance* to DfID's theory of change, is making a very important contribution to its effective pursuit, performing well against each of the IPR evaluation criteria and against the objectives of its PPA logframe with DfID.

In terms of *results*, under Progressio's PPA outcome 1 (on participation, governance and policy change), the NGO can show progress relevant to key issues in DfID's own theory of change outcomes such as active citizenship, responsive accountable governments and institutions, and partnerships between government and civil society. Evidence for progress in results, as covered in this report, include examples such as recognition by the government of Timor Leste of civil society as legitimate actors and interlocutors, following Progressio support to equip civil society organisations to monitor official projects; announcement by the new Dominican Republic government that it will uphold a pledge to spend 4 per cent of GDP on pre-university education, with Progressio's capacity-building support making a plausible contribution to stronger civil society research and policy on budget policies and management of public finances; the laying of foundations for stronger bi-national municipal planning and cross-border development projects benefiting communities along both sides of Dominican-Haitian border; and, complementing earlier success in promoting EU legislation banning sale of illegally logged timber, environmental policy gaining some recognition around the Rio+20 summit of the importance of international water resources management, including as part of DEFRA's agenda in the UK .

Similarly, under Progressio's PPA outcome 2 (on sustainable environmental practices and changed attitudes and behaviour on HIV and AIDS), the report has noted results relevant to key issues in DfID's own outcomes such as increased economic opportunities and survival and well-being for the poorest and most

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<sup>6</sup> As depicted in Annex 2 in Coffey International Development's evaluation strategy.

marginalised. Examples of progress include signs that improved agricultural practices supported by Progressio are boosting community production, food security and nutrition in the northern border areas of the Dominican Republic and Haiti; establishment, with Progressio support, of an Integrated Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support Centre in Somaliland, leading to an uptake of services targeting people living with HIV and AIDS; and evidence of important shifts in the attitudes of faith leaders in Yemen and Somaliland, creating the potential in both countries for an environment in which people living with HIV and AIDS face less stigma and enjoy a better quality of life.

In terms of *effectiveness*, one of Progressio's major strengths, emphatically validated by IPR field research and interviews, is the very high regard in which partners, particularly among civil society but also within the state, hold its approach to partnership. This is not just due to appreciation of the multi-dimensional benefits partners consider they receive from Progressio as a result of its capacity-building approach, but also to the organisation's commitment to working to their agendas rather than its own and to practical participatory methods such as partner involvement development worker interviews and job descriptions. Similarly, in its international policy, Progressio is considered an effective and a respectful bridge-builder between different positions. On lesson-learning and innovation, Progressio has shown itself to be pioneering, as demonstrated, for example, by its piloting and mainstreaming of participatory budgeting in the Dominican Republic, its current adaptation of tools to support for inclusive municipal planning along both sides of the Dominican-Haitian border, and the piloting and replication of work on masculinity as part of positive efforts to mainstream gender in its programmes. The IPR team concluded that a communication strategy is required both to articulate more clearly and assertively Progressio's theory of change and the key lessons of its promotion of pro-poor civil society-state interaction.

As part of innovation, an interesting facet of Progressio's partnership working is the growing moves by the organisation towards working in alliance and taking a consortium approach. This is due, as well as the value for money benefits, to an awareness that Progressio's capacity-building work is but one of several approaches that need to be combined to scale up efforts and enhance impact, building on the distinct value of the contribution that each can provide and the gains of stronger agency coordination. Evidence of this was noted in, for example, the Dominican Republic and Haiti, Yemen, Somaliland, Zimbabwe and Timor Leste.

Overall the essentials of design, implementation, management, and partnership arrangements are, in the opinion of the IPR team valid and effective, though further work is needed in some important areas. Progressio has made a concerted and very welcome effort to introduce, promote and strengthen its RICA monitoring and evaluation system to capture systematically the progress and results of its work. This system is already generating important levels of information that managers and staff can use as a management tool to assess possible changes and as a source of programme analysis, reflection and learning. It has the makings of quite a robust system integrating all elements of the organisation's work across all stages of the project cycle from planning onwards. But further efforts are needed to fine-tune and systematise RICA's capture and processing of data so as to boost, insofar as possible, the accuracy of beneficiary

numbers and measurement of development changes against the project objectives and indicators lying behind the figures aggregated in RICA and the PPA logframe. This will mean addressing the significant challenges of gathering, sustaining and verifying information on more regular basis in line with the coherence of the work being carried out in practice. The issue is not whether positive results are being achieved – this is undoubtedly the case – but the optimal precision of their original construction and ongoing measurement.

While a strong feature of the system is its focus on tracking changes favouring Progressio's ultimate social beneficiaries of work, the IPR team concluded that more needs to be done to capture the crucial significance of Progressio's capacity-building as a prerequisite for progress towards such changes, focusing on the very points of its catalytic connection with partner organisations' performance. Progressio is about empowering *people* but facilitating effective *organisation* is intrinsic to this aim. Progressio has already embarked on efforts to clarify and tighten its definition of beneficiaries, so this should help. Identifying and articulating the value of such capacity gains within organisations could also do much to promote donor awareness and recognition of their vital importance as a building block for change. Progressio aims to empower people, but its capacity-building is fundamentally about facilitating civil society's *own* ability and the will of the state to do so, not attributing to itself a leadership role in promoting change. Progressio delivers change by improving and catalysing the work of partners, and it works with them to improve the lives of poor communities by influencing policy and decisions (including on service provision).

This focus on the importance of organisation raises the question of how best to combine support for pro-poor change at grassroots, intermediary and policy levels in individual projects and across programmes. Just as approaches are needed to ensure micro-level gains are not undermined by damaging macro-level developments, it is important work with intermediary organisations or targeting public institutions has clear potential to facilitate propitious conditions for poor people to strengthen their organisation, voice and influence. The conclusion of this report is that, as highlighted in case studies, Progressio can get such judgments right, but it would do well to keep under constant review how to determine and nurture impact-chains optimising poor people's empowerment. As shown, even if positive results are being achieved or could emerge, sustainable gains for poor people may be vulnerable.

This dilemma is relevant too to the relationship between the grantee's two key programmes. Progressio's capacity-building and its international policy efforts demonstrate rich examples of positive work to back up its theory of change, even if the two work strands involve different methodological approaches, beneficiaries and target audiences at national and international levels. On some occasions they need to be kept quite separate – lest policy jeopardise the security of development workers and partners, for example. However, the IPR team concluded that Progressio should work on a framework to enhance the potential for stronger strategic synergies between the two programmes, given their common values, goals and thematic concerns. Voice and dialogue, because of the NGO's concentration on participation and governance, might provide a good focus and bond for joint work to promote programme lessons and future policy initiatives.

## 4.2 SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST RATIONALE FOR PPA FUNDING

DfID can take much credit for the achievements described in the report's case studies, as PPA investment has enabled work of this kind to be implemented and maximise its value. In some instances, such project work can be largely, if not wholly attributed to DfID, particularly in the case of Progressio's international policy work, which tends to rely on greater PPA funding in view of the preference of many donors to prioritise country-level work in the South. Progressio, for example, has long since been a leading thinker and actor on faith and development issues, with its independent pluralistic identity putting the organisation in a strong – and highly respected – position to contribute to DfID's own rising recent concern with this issue. Even so, the additionality of PPA funding has enabled the organisation to step up its contribution in such arenas.

In general, however, it is not possible to attribute progress towards impact exclusively to DfID, as the Department is but one of several donors contributing to Progressio's project and programme initiatives. But this should not detract from the undoubted value of the investment. Without DfID's contribution, many of Progressio's projects would not be able to operate at all, let alone to maximum effect. Indeed, the benefit of DfID's PPA is that it can be flexibly matched to other grants such as those that Progressio has continued successfully to secure from the EU. This is of great value to the organisation as it provides de facto leverage that would not otherwise exist. Furthermore, in country programmes where donors may only be prepared to fund work for short periods and to restrict investment strictly to given project activities, the PPA enables Progressio to overcome the danger of fragmentation and shore up programme coherence and stability to good effect, as seen in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. At the same time, the IPR team believes Progressio needs to put in place a stronger strategy for achieving greater cost recovery with its London and country teams.

Without the PPA's flexibility, Progressio would not be in as strong a position as it is to conduct its operations at their current scale, nor to sustain the organisational infrastructure needed to provide effective programme support and thus enhance the value of its projects – for example, through stronger M&E visits, promotion of networking among development workers and partners and so on. It would probably not be able to innovate to the same degree, as in the case of its efforts to strengthen and embed the RICA system, for example.

On the whole, the IPR team believes Progressio makes careful decisions about how best to use PPA money in furtherance of the strategic objectives it has pledged to meet (in this sense the PPA is in fact tied rather than unrestricted). Nevertheless, more could possibly be done to strengthen such discussions on best PPA use, particularly in view of mechanism's uncertain future. Progressio has benefited from core UK funding for many years, first under the former Overseas Development Administration and recently under DfID. The longstanding nature of the relationship has perhaps led Progressio, possibly with good reason, to view such funding as an enduring structural feature of its financial base. But this may have inadvertently created disincentives for proactive discussion of how the PPA can be best harnessed to the NGO's future strategic evolution as well as how

things stand now. In the longer run, the choice for DfID is whether it sees Progressio as an organisation it wishes to fund on an optional basis or whether, if it values the partnership, it is committed to keeping it on this much more stable footing.

### **4.3 SUMMARY OF PROBLEMS AND ISSUES ENCOUNTERED**

The IPR team found almost no difficulty in conducting its work. Both in London and at country level, the evaluators received full cooperation from Progressio, which showed itself open to constructive discussion, even on issues where the IPR team made critical observations. These were met with proactive reflection on possible solutions rather than defensiveness. In field work, the main problem related to difficulties in tracing with absolute precision, given the ongoing challenge of aligning all project cycle paperwork with realities on the ground, the exact baselines and indicators for project progress. This meant that in tracking the very clear relationship between programmes and their contribution to the PPA logframe, and manifest evidence of progress towards achieving objectives in practice, it was not possible to use specific yardsticks whose total accuracy could be guaranteed. Efforts to tie down such realities would not have been appropriate in view of the need to build confidence with interviewees and would have been a distraction from exploring actual results. Nor would space have existed for such painstaking work due to budget and time limits for field research.

### **4.4 OVERALL IMPACT AND VALUE FOR MONEY OF PPA FUNDED ACTIVITIES**

The IPR team believes Progressio runs a lean but effective organisation and that it has worked hard to boost economy and efficiency, with many cost-cutting and economy-of-scale measures put in place under recent reorientation from a strong focus on Latin America towards Africa and the Middle East and organisational restructuring as a result of a smaller PPA in this round. Even under tighter circumstances, Progressio seeks to ensure that economy and efficiency are the servants of effectiveness and not its masters, but the situation does place strains on its capacity to safeguard the strengths of its current work and to further its ambitions. These need further investment. All the same, the organisation often achieves results impressive for its size and resources. If the Dominican Republic government upholds its pledge to increase educating spending, for example, PPA investment in the plausible contribution of Progressio will have yielded a handsome return. Apparent progress in securing the commitment of a government to mobilise its own resources behind development goals is of relevance to debates on the challenge of sustainable development finance beyond aid.

Overall, it is clear Progressio does have systems and procedures to promote value for money in daily practice. At the same time, there is an opportunity for Progressio to sharpen and pull together its tools, and develop new ones, as part of a more integrated strategy on value for money. For example, Progressio's work to develop a more flexible range of models for development workers, or the IPR suggestion that it could develop a typology of interventions according to the level/nature of different partners and beneficiaries, could involve productive value-for-money analysis of work options.

## 5 UTILITY

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The report will be available within Progressio as well as a public document including:

- Supporting Progressio in reviewing their strategies in using PPA funds in the second half of the fund period;
- Supporting Progressio and DFID in strategies of working together on demand driven capacity building and international advocacy
- Contributing to a broader discussion among PPA holders; and
- Contributing to DFID's understanding of grant holders, in particular increasing DFID's contribution civil society.

The following steps were taken to ensure that the report will be useful:

- The IPR team has met upon several occasions with Progressio;
- Debrief sessions have occurred to ensure transparent discussions with each country office; and
- Workshops were held with senior staff members of Progressio to ensure consensus on Progressio strategies.

## 6 LESSONS LEARNT

### 6.1 POLICY LEVEL

There is considerable potential for Progressio to further step up its lesson-learning on policy work, particularly in view of its considerable experience not only in boosting civil society demand for accountability but also creating the conditions for positive civil society-state interaction. It is positive that incipient efforts are being made to share relevant lessons with other programmes and internationally through possible publishing.

#### ***Promoting civil society-state interaction***

An emerging lesson from Timor Leste, for example, is that while Progressio has achieved some success in training and supporting civil society monitors of public works and services projects and engaging positively with district level officials. A wider range of issues and actors may need to be taken into account in such accountability work. For instance, in this case, Progressio-supported civil society work would appear to have generated a fair degree of receptiveness on the part of district officials, but this has not necessarily fed through to the infrastructure companies contracted to implement the work. This suggests that in an era of public-private partnerships, accountability monitoring needs to be triangular rather than focused exclusively on the state-civil society relationship. In Timor Leste, there would also appear to be a bigger debate about spending priorities in terms of the balance between social services central to improvement in people's lives and wider national development projects such as infrastructure.

One important lesson on the society-state policy work observed in field research is the Dominican Republic and Haiti would appear to be importance of identifying where and how it can be productive to support civil society actors to work with the political grain rather than against it, as civil society demand, even if critical, needs to be matched by a policy-maker response for public interest gains benefiting poor people's lives to be achieved. As observed earlier, it would appear that, even if tensions have not surprisingly arisen in this work, Progressio, on account of its very strong contextual knowledge, has had the foresight in the Dominican Republic to develop partnerships with strategically important leaders of different political complexions.

#### ***Research, advocacy and policy change***

The case study (See Annexe G1) provided of Progressio's plausible contribution to progress in civil society campaigning for increased primary and secondary education is interesting in that it highlights the very significant impact that capacity-building support for evidence-based policy research can have on policy developments. But it would appear that, in order to achieve this impact, such policy research needs to be disseminated, promoted and communicated in a range of accessible formats, and also connected with the targeting of a strategic range of audiences. These include those in charge of policy, those in a political position to influence it and, of course, the diverse range of civil society groups (whether NGO, community-based or grouped in a united, single-issue coalition) in pressing for change. In turn, compounding the value of efforts to influence parliamentarians, political leaders and – importantly, their key advisers and technical policy teams – effective engagement of leading journalists and media

can shape public opinion and indirectly create a climate in which policy-makers feel the need to respond.

## **6.2 SECTOR LEVEL**

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This report has noted Progressio's current and potentially even greater strength, both in capacity-building and in international policy work, in promoting voice and dialogue. This is also enhanced by its open, respectful and pluralistic approach to partnership, which means that it provides a platform for exploring views in promoting change rather than aligning selected voices behind a pre-established policy narrative.

### ***Faith and development and HIV and AIDS***

This has been particularly important in the organisation's PPA-supported work on faith and development – a sphere too often the focus of polarised debates pitting different faiths, theological perspectives and secular views against each other – which it has integrated well into work on HIV and AIDS. With some success, Progressio, as in Somaliland and Yemen, for example, has sought to generate spaces where faith and development leaders and actors can think, discuss, move forward and create new ground as part of a values-based process. This has meant country-level awareness-raising and advocacy geared to providing food for thought and debate rather than being teleologically aimed at changing theological doctrines and practices. This would appear to have created openness rather than defensiveness as a result of faith actors feeling their beliefs are under threatening attack. Palpable shifts in knowledge and attitudes on HIV and AIDS and in moral views of vulnerable groups living with HIV and AIDS have been achieved through this approach.

### ***Sustainable agricultural practices and food security***

A possible lesson on Progressio's support for sustainable agricultural practices and food security, derived from exploration of this topic with partners and the Progressio's development professionals involved in supporting the coordination of bi-national development efforts in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, is the need to consider the contextual impact of how national and regional markets are operating.

Such analysis is especially important in a context such as this where food security policies have been neglected or undermined in both countries under recent government and donor approaches, yet major imbalances remain in the productive and marketing capacity of producers in each country. As Progressio supports partner organisations working with farmers on both sides of the border increasingly to access markets, it might take into account as a wider contextual factor the need for a coordinated solution to market problems. These could have an unintended negative bearing on the achievements witnessed in its work. Work may need to be coordinated more as a whole rather than as the sum of advances on each side of the border.

## **6.3 PPA FUND LEVEL**

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DfID might explore with Progressio – and other interested PPA-supported NGOs – the recommendations and lessons possibly emanating from the overall IPR

process on the key issues being raised. The IPR team would also suggest that the following issues should also be looked at.

#### ***Lessons on capacity-building and development change***

DfID, on the basis of insights from Progressio and from other PPA agencies, might consider engaging in discussion with NGOs across the PPA and with the wider donor community the value of effective capacity-building. As raised with the IPR team during field research, the value of donor investment in projects and institutions can be reduced or even squandered without the promotion and establishment of the adequate levels of technical capacity and stakeholder commitment needed to realise the potential for immediate impact and longer-term sustainability.

In this regard, DfID, based on overall IPR insights, might like to explore how it sees, and what results it expects, from the relationship between capacity-building with partners and development change benefiting social groups. DfID, while rightly concerned that capacity-building should be a means to an end and not an end in itself, might, for example, take into strong consideration the achievement of 'building blocks' for development, as the change process often occurs over a longer period than three years and in different stages. Without proper fundraising or planning, monitoring and evaluation capacity, for example, it may not be possible for a civil society partner organisation to run programmes as immediately and as effectively as it would like, so work on such areas might need to an important starting point. Gains therefore might occur at the level of organisational performance rather than in immediately direct benefits for poor people, highly desirable though such a connection may be.

For this reason, this report has suggested that Progressio needs to do much more to strengthen its examination of such organisational gains (and where this ideally occurs, the catalytic connection of enhanced partner performance with changes benefiting people). But this will mean that donors may need to be appreciative of capacity-building gains as a good in their own right. Some of the results currently being nurtured or achieved by Progressio might be seen in this light. Rather than seen as modest, they may actually be significant steps forward for organisations and people that can be given strategic projection. Exploration of such issues merits discussion in the overall PPA review.

#### ***Framing and assessing the impact of advocacy***

Another interesting avenue for PPA-wide exploration might relate to different forms and levels of advocacy and how they should be assessed in terms of their achievement of results, outcomes and impact, as well their legitimacy and rootedness in Southern civil society. At a national level, Progressio does not conduct advocacy itself, but works to build the influencing capacity of partners themselves. This rootedness, and the quality of Progressio's partnership generally, informs the organisation's international advocacy, which, though operating at a greater distance and with Northern and international target audiences in mind, can be upheld as being very relevant to poor people and the civil society organisations supporting them. In both cases, however, issues are raised about the speed and depth with which change can be promoted, mirroring from a different perspective the observation above in relation to capacity-building.

Progressio's experience, though examined over a relatively short time period in this IPR, suggests the results might be better considered – and recognised – as landmarks in a very difficult and complex journey rather than from the viewpoint of guaranteed arrival at over-ambitious policy destinations. In this case, the organisation shows genuine commitment to tracking progress through use of its Participation, Accountability and Transparency Tool (PATT), developed from a framework devised by the official Catholic development agency, Cafod. Even so, the policy success challenges at each stage of the PATT hierarchy are significant and complex. PPA-wide lesson-learning as a result of the IPRs would be very beneficial.

#### ***Donor funding mechanisms and diverse NGO needs***

DfID may wish to engage in stronger dialogue with its international donor partners on the advantages and disadvantages of different funding mechanisms, highlighting in particular the benefits of DfID's PPA approach for relatively smaller NGOs such as Progressio. As shown in this report, PPA funding, particularly its availability for flexible use both in support of specific project outcomes and as investment in further improvements in the organisational infrastructure and support systems required to achieve them, has been of incalculable value to Progressio. But if anecdotal impressions gained during this IPR are correct, there is a trend within parts of the donor community to restrict financing to the essentials of project activities, overlooking the serious needs of organisations to run and support them and optimise their value. DfID, through examination of the PPA-wide findings from the IPRs, might wish to look into the varying funding needs and pressures facing NGOs, given the wide variation in their size, financial resources, public brand and profile, access to unrestricted income, and civil society base.

An important issue raised by some informants during this IPR is what capacity DfID has to engage in such dialogues, though the research team did not have the time to explore this issue with the Department. Whatever the case, valued positively by the grantee was the experience under the previous Latin America regional PPA of sustained interactive dialogue with DfID on development challenges facing civil society in the region, which provided solid opportunities both to share and discuss mutual analysis with DfID and capitalise on each other's contributions.

### **6.4 ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL – MANAGEMENT, DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION**

This PPA review may also be useful from the point of view of considering the future evolution of NGOs and civil society organisations and their strategic management of this process.

#### ***PPA and planning the future***

This may be a better space, therefore, to consider the possible implications of the PPA for Progressio's planning of its organisational future. Indeed, this IPR has indirectly raised many centralisation-decentralisation issues for debate within Progressio in the context of its strategic planning under this PPA and as uncertainties continue to swirl around the future existence or shape of this DfID civil society funding mechanism.

In keeping with its clear commitment to Southern-led partnership and empowerment, Progressio has traditionally taken a bottom-up approach to its global operation. An example of this is the fact that, as early as the early 1990s, nationals rather than ex-patriats came to assume country director positions.

In some ways the current situation can be characterised, given the pivotal role of the PPA in Progressio's finances, as a process of centralised decentralisation. In other words, as PPA funding has fallen, the organisation has had to cut not only several programmes in Latin America (following donor de-prioritisation of this region and DfID's own operational withdrawal) but also country/regional desk staff that had provided strong glue between country programmes and London's programme management, finance, fundraising and policy and communications functions. This has meant that greater programme functions (such as providing material for reporting, project support design and M&E support) have had to be taken on by country offices. Despite the loss, important aspects of such moves have been positive such as the role of decentralised programme funding staff able on the spot to gather detailed project information for local as well as international donor applications. And, as noted elsewhere, country directors and programme support staff, as well as development workers and partners, are being encouraged and equipped to take greater ownership of M&E and results-focused reporting.

But the process raises major questions. One is the residual capacity – in terms of numbers and time, not knowledge or skills – of Progressio's depleted support staff to give the full support that such a process of decentralisation requires and to manage effective information and communication flows with country-level staff. This de facto interaction gap, along with the restricted travel budget facing London staff involved in international advocacy, is also a barrier to the IPR suggestion made earlier that Progressio should nurture stronger synergies between its capacity-building and policy work, for example to promote lesson-learning and develop initiatives focused on voice and dialogue. And in taking on more of London's functions, country office managers and staff are often also often too over-stretched, in addition to the existing pressures of work with partners and development workers, to engage with London's programme and policy staff as much as both sides would like. In such a context, the challenge of facilitating further positive innovations such as nurturing country-to-country lesson learning, regional exchange and international lessons promotion becomes great. It is country staff, rather than London staff, that tend to hold detailed knowledge of programme work. In short, London's support capacity, reduced as a result of lower PPA, is smaller when it probably needs to be greater to enhance programme support and synergies.

Based on new programme ideas, proposals and approaches, an immediate challenge at this time is to protect the organisation's financial security. Alongside and with the help of the PPA, the organisation is working and planning hard to diversify its funding base. But unless a wider range of funding sources are found enabling comparable flexibility for the effective pursuit of its strategic objectives and protection of the essential organisational infrastructure required to deliver them, Progressio will find it harder than it ideally should do to sustain the momentum of its valuable work.

## 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

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For PROGRESSIO

### PPA reporting

- Progressio, following exchanges on its first annual progress report covering 2011/12, should continue dialogue with DfID to clarify reporting strengths and weaknesses as perceived by both parties. There seems to be implicit confusion as to what kinds of information Progressio thinks it needs to provide and what types and levels of information DfID expects, can digest and will use.
- Progressio might invest in skills to adopt a more analytical approach to reporting, synthesising how and why programme implementation is achieving progress to objectives and drawing out clearly implications and lessons. With stronger signposting, this would bridge the gap between narrative and quantitative and qualitative information in its monitoring and evaluation system.
- Progressio, building on steps underway, could strengthen the tracking of linkages between its PPA logframe and its wider planning, monitoring and evaluation systems so that managers and staff are fully aware of the role that DfID's essential contribution plays.

### Data collection and analysis and assessment of progress towards results

- Progressio, in further strengthening what has the makings of a robust system to track rigorously work progress and results, should boost the coherence of RICA's data capture and processing, tackling the inevitable challenges of sustaining its ongoing alignment with accurate documentation outlining project objectives, results and intended beneficiary numbers.
- Progressio, as it embeds RICA across the organisation and further strengthens information quality and accuracy, should step up frequency of data verification, aligning it with quarterly reviews and six-monthly reporting. Support and training should be provided as necessary in M&E and project support visits, and investment in user-friendly data storage and information management systems, ideally open to both London and country-level staff, might be considered.
- Pre-placement project assessments should be used as an important source of external insight that can be productively combined with, and help provide a framework for, the data collected by development workers at the start of their assignments.
- In meeting the legitimate information needs of donors, Progressio, as it develops tools to complement and enhance the RICA system, could capitalise on opportunities to boost partners' capacity in this area, whilst ensuring information collection concentrates first and foremost on optimal benefits for partner organisations' work.

### **Beneficiaries, capturing the value of capacity-building and promoting its recognition**

- Progressio, alongside RICA's strengths in tracking changes benefiting social groups, should do more to capture and articulate the value of Progressio's capacity-building as a good in its own right and as a recognised prerequisite for progress. Progressio is not a direct implementer of operational programmes. It facilitates change through enhancement of partners' own *organisational* capacity. It needs to pinpoint distinctly achievements at this level as well as their potentially catalytic contribution to gains for people.
- Progressio, as part of welcome moves to sharpen its definition of beneficiaries (in relation to an IPR-suggested typology of interventions, partners and work levels), might engage its civil society partners in dialogue on handling this challenge well, given its commitment to partner leadership and profile rather than its own. Progressio should say more about its plausible contribution to change without giving the insensitive impression it is unduly appropriating credit from partners.

### **Maximising impact and the sustainability of gains for poor people**

- Progressio should keep under constant review the best impact-chain options for maximising poor people's empowerment in the light of the diverse range of partners it works with at grassroots, intermediary and policy levels and the typology of interventions proposed above. Positive results at a micro or macro level may not be sustainable if strategic connections are not properly made.

### **Lessons promotion and synergies between capacity-building and international policy work**

- Progressio should do more to promote the lessons of its rich programme experience, drawing on the strengths of its governance work promoting civil society-state interaction. Investment in analytical and editorial skills may be required.
- A strategic framework is needed to enhance synergies between capacity-building and policy work, with voice and dialogue providing a possible synergistic link in international lessons promotion, advocacy initiatives and donor proposals. This will require teamwork between M&E, learning and policy and communication staff at a country level and in London.
- Progressio might consider this issue as key discussion point as it plans to review and strengthen its theory of change in the light of the findings and issues raised in this report.

### **Enhancing the PPA's value added and promoting value for money**

- Complementing the value of the PPA, Progressio should strengthen its approaches to cost recovery in donor applications, particularly where country programmes and London staff are less familiar with the tools and approaches required. Stronger discussion may be needed on how to articulate the value of Progressio's capacity-building and policy work and how best to cover the essential organisational infrastructure needed to support it and enhance its value.

- Progressio, drawing on the effective systems and procedures it already has to promote value for money in daily practice, should sharpen and pull together its tools, and develop new ones, as part of a more integrated strategy to be embedded globally on value for money.
- Progressio, for example, could build stronger value-for-money approaches into plans to develop a flexible range of models for development workers, ongoing pre-placement project assessments (when different options for interventions are best considered, according to partner type and level/areas of work) and as an essential feature in the design project plans and country strategies.

For the DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### **Progressio's PPA reporting and assessment of results**

- DfID could help future grantee reporting, and possibly that of the wider NGO community, by providing greater clarity on the types of information it requires (and in what format), what purposes it will use it for, and what capacity it has to digest material.
- DfID might provide orientation on the balance of quantitative and qualitative analysis required as the importance of providing evidence of development results is stressed. The IPR team understands from the grantee that the perceived emphasis of PPA assessment was on numerical data, while DfID feedback on the first annual report suggests thirst for qualitative analysis and reflection.
- DfID might consider events to strengthen debate and lesson-learning with the NGO community on interpretation of important concepts being debated and employed during the current PPA such as results-based management, additionality and value for money, taking advantage of the existing PPA learning partnerships.
- DfID, based on general familiarity with Progressio's assessment of results through its RICA system, might use dialogue with the grantee as part of its interest in efforts within the UK development community to boost shared learning and joint approaches on planning, monitoring and evaluation.

#### **Lesson-learning and potential insights from Progressio**

- DfID might consider using insights from Progressio on the value of effective capacity-building in its discussions with the wider donor community. According to IPR informants, the value of donor investment in projects and institutions can be reduced or squandered if it is not matched by support to promote adequate levels of technical capacity and stakeholder commitment needed to realise the potential for immediate impact and longer-term sustainability. This is precisely the kind of support that Progressio seeks to provide and plans to consolidate and expand.
- DfID might consider how to capitalise on knowledge emanating from Progressio's capacity-building work to strengthen civil society demand for

responsive policies and practices and to promote productive civil society interaction with state, given DfID's and UK concern with transparent and accountable governance and futures beyond aid.

- DfID, given the rich diversity and depth of Progressio's relations with different types of civil society organisations committed to poor people's empowerment in countries of strategic concern to the Department, should, if it is not already doing so, exploit the relationship with Progressio as a source of rooted social insight on the opportunities and challenges of development change.
- DfID, given the recognised contribution that the grantee has made on faith and development, might discuss with Progressio – and other interested PPA-supported NGOs – the recommendations and lessons possibly emanating from the overall IPR process on this issue.

#### **Value added and future of the PPA**

- As the advantages and disadvantages of different funding mechanisms are debated, DfID may wish to discuss internally and explore with donor partners how best to tailor funding to the needs and capacity of different NGO and other civil society partners, given the large variations in their size, financial resources, public profile and access to unrestricted income. A relatively small NGO such as Progressio is always likely to struggle to secure the level of flexible income it needs to sustain and support its operations effectively.
- DfID, if it is not already planning to do so, should discuss as early and as clearly possible the likely future of its relationship with Progressio. A lack of clarity or prolonged delays in providing clarity could impair the organisation's planning capacity and future stability, jeopardising the value of DfID's past, current and future investment.

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**Annex A: PPA IPR terms of reference**

# PROGRESSIO

Progressio has been leading the way on practical international development issues for more than forty years. Whether through placing development workers overseas, or in our policy and advocacy achievements, Progressio has a track record of making a difference. We work with people of all faiths and none.

## **DFID - Progressio Programme Partnership Arrangement Independent Progress Review Terms of Reference**

### **1. Background**

Progressio seeks sustainable development and lasting improvements in the lives of those who are poor and marginalised. Progressio places Development Workers to build the capacity of local partners and undertake advocacy at national and international levels. Progressio's radical/ progressive Catholic heritage is combined with development thinking to offer a distinctive analysis of power and need from the perspective of people who are poor. Progressio seeks to tackle the causes of poverty. As a membership organisation, we promote awareness of issues and encourage supporters to actively engage on issues through campaigns and local groups. We are independent of Catholic church structures and work with people of all faiths and none.

The Department for International Development (DFID) provides significant funding to civil society organisations (CSOs) annually in line with its overall strategy to alleviate poverty and promote peace, stability and good governance. The Programme Partnership Arrangements (PPAs) will provide approximately £360 million to CSOs between 2011 and 2013.

The PPAs are strategic level agreements based around mutually agreed outcomes and individual performance frameworks against which the CSOs report on an annual basis. The PPA provides CSOs, subject to performance, with flexible funding to use in relation to organisational objectives. This enables CSOs to better plan and deliver programmes.

PPAs are aimed at CSOs with a global reach and leaders in their field who can add value to DFID's portfolio, support realisation of its objectives, achieve real results in terms of poverty reduction and provide good value for money. The current political climate and results-based agenda demand a rigorous assessment of the effectiveness of funds disbursed to ensure that they are managed to provide value for money.

In 2011 Progressio received a PPA for three years (April 2011 to March 2014), with a provisional annual allocation of £2,025,015. The allocations to all PPA grantees are subject to change following an assessment of performance at 18 months. The Independent Progress Review<sup>7</sup> is one of the key tools in the performance assessments of each organisation and will feed into both the grantee and fund-level evaluation of the PPA.

Progressio is looking for an independent evaluation consultant(s) to undertake the mid-term Independent Progress Review of Progressio's PPA according to these Terms of Reference (ToR)

<sup>7</sup> In DFID documentation this is called the IPR.

and the guidelines set out in the PPA Evaluation Strategy. It is possible that the successful consultants will be asked also to undertake the end of grant evaluation for April 2014 if they are available.

## 2. Evaluation of the PPA

*Coffey International Development* is the Evaluation Manager for the PPAs and part of their role is to assess the performance of the grantees. The assessment will be based on evidence from organisations' annual reports, Independent Progress Reviews and case studies. In addition to assessing grantee performance, the evaluation will assess the effectiveness of the PPA mechanism as a whole.

The Evaluation Manager will make an assessment of the performance of the grantees, first after 18 months of funding and then after 36 months of funding. Outcomes of the mid-term evaluation will inform future decisions concerning the PPA allocation of funding to grantees.

The Evaluation Strategy, issued by the Evaluation Manager, details the approach and methodology of the evaluation of the PPA. The evaluation will draw on evidence from grantees and independent evaluations, assessing performance at both the individual grantee level as well as the portfolio or fund level and will assess the extent to which each of the funds achieves its objectives and desired overall impact. The Evaluation Strategy needs to be read in preparation for the Independent Progress Review, in particular, *Annex 8* which provides guidelines for the Independent Progress Review.

Progressio's performance will be assessed by the Evaluation Manager based on Progressio's annual review and the Independent Progress Review.

Progressio submitted its first year annual review to the PPA Evaluation Manager in **May 2012**. This provides progress towards targets within Progressio's PPA logframe and addresses the evaluation criteria outlined in Appendix 8 of the Evaluation Strategy. As part of its annual review, Progressio provided an 'additionality report' and case studies on 'how interventions have changed lives'.

The Independent Progress Review will provide an assessment of Progressio's progress and verify the results relayed in Progressio's annual review. The Independent Progress Review report must be submitted to DFID together with a management response by Progressio by **mid-October 2012**.

## 3. Purpose of the Independent Progress Review (more details in the Evaluation Strategy)

The Evaluation Manager has prepared draft terms of reference for the Independent Progress Review - stated in Appendix 8 and in the template for the Independent Progress Review - and these provide a detailed overview of the Independent Progress Review process, outlining the key roles and responsibilities. The documents state that the purpose of the Independent Progress Review is threefold:

1. To assess the extent to which comments provided as part of the Annual Review Process (ARP) i.e. Progressio's annual review plus DFID's response, have been acted upon by grantees;
2. To verify, and supplement where necessary, grantees' reporting through the ARP, changing lives case study, the additionality report; and
3. To independently evaluate the impact that DFID funding has had on organisations and projects and to assess the value for money of the funding. The Independent Progress Review should answer the questions: *What has happened because of DFID funding that*

*wouldn't have otherwise happened? And to what extent does the use of funding represent good value for money?*

Progressio wants the Independent Progress Review to be used as a learning tool to inform the remaining period of the PPA in order to strengthen programmes, approaches and the organisation as a whole.

#### 4. Assessment of Progressio's Annual Review Process Actions

The Independent Progress Review will have an important role in assessing the extent to which comments provided by the Evaluation Manager during the ARP have been acted upon by Progressio.

Grantees are accountable to DFID for their use of the grants. The ARP is the process by which DFID holds grantees to account and ensures that they are working towards their stated objectives. The feedback (expected at the end of June) provided during the ARP is DFID's principle management tool, and as such, it is extremely important that this feedback be acted upon by grantees. The Independent Progress Review will provide an independent assessment on the extent to which feedback has been acted upon.

#### 5. Verification of Grantees' Reporting

Progressio will be assessed by the Evaluation Manager according to the criteria defined in Appendix 8.1.1 of the Evaluation Strategy. The Independent Progress Review will contribute to this assessment by:

- Verifying grantee reporting related to the evaluation criteria; and
- Providing an independent assessment of the organisation or project in relation to the evaluation criteria.

Some relevant assessment questions are detailed in the Evaluation Strategy - these questions are guidelines only. The Independent Evaluator should use their discretion in obtaining the information relevant to the assessment criteria.

##### 5.1 Relevance

- Representativeness: Do the planned interventions and outcomes (as expressed in Progressio's Logframe) reflect the needs of the target population?
- Targeting: To what degree do the planned interventions and outcomes reach the poorest and most marginalised? To what degree do these interventions maximise the impact on the poor and marginalised? Is the balance between these two targeting principles appropriate to the situation? (Note: in cases where the organisation or programme is not working directly with beneficiaries an assessment should be made of the implicit or explicit results chain that link the outcomes to changes for the beneficiary population.)
- Do the planned interventions, outcomes and targeting continue to be relevant to the needs of the target population? Does the targeting strategy continue to be appropriate?

##### 5.2 Efficiency

- To what extent is Progressio able to evidence their cost effectiveness and as such demonstrate an understanding of their costs, the factors that drive them, the linkages to their performance and an ability to achieve efficiency gains?

### 5.3 Effectiveness

- **Distinctive offering:** What is the distinctive offering of Progressio and how does it complement or add value to DFID's portfolio? Examples here might include:
  - Progressio has distinctive expertise in a particular area of work;
  - Progressio provides support and advice in this area and /or builds the capacity of DFID and others;
  - The project or programme fills a gap in DFID's portfolio, complementing existing work in country programmes, or offering a channel to provide support where DFID has no presence;
  - Linking together different levels of operation; and
  - Networking and bringing together other actors.
- **Learning and innovation:**
  - How has organisational culture promoted or impeded learning and innovation?
  - Assess the extent to which the organisation has learned from its work and has incorporated the lessons into improved performance. Examples and case studies should be provided. A distinction should be made between two types of learning. Firstly, learning that improves the organisation's capacity (eg improved capacity to monitor and evaluate). This learning is essentially organisational development for the grantee. Assess the degree to which this learning has demonstrably improved programming, in the intervention from which it arose and beyond. Secondly, learning that provides contextual knowledge, for example learning about the situation of a target population. This learning is largely specific to a particular context and will have little generalisability. Assess the degree to which this learning has demonstrably improved programming, in the intervention from which it arose.
  - Assess the extent to which the organisation has produced generalisable learning that has been incorporated into its own practice and shared with others. Assess the degree to which this learning has demonstrably improved programming. Describe the strategy for communicating the learning and assess the extent to which others took up the learning in changed policy and practice. Examples and case studies should be provided. This type of learning overlaps with innovation.
  - Innovation is a special type of learning. It is distinguished from learning in general by novelty. Assess the extent to which grantees develop, test, and achieve the adoption by others of new knowledge, such as in techniques, approaches, and design of interventions. Describe the organisation's strategy for communicating the innovation and the extent to which it was taken up by others. If it has not yet been taken up by others, provide evidence indicating the potential for replication and scale-up. Two levels of innovation should be distinguished. Firstly, incremental innovation. This is innovation that applies or develops existing knowledge in new ways. For example, it might involve the application of an existing method to a new context, or it might involve elaboration and improvement of an existing method. Secondly, radical innovation. This is innovation that produces entirely new

knowledge. For example, it might involve the development and testing of a new method for vulnerability mapping.

- Monitoring and evaluation. Assess the organisation's monitoring and evaluation capacity, and in particular its ability to measure results (focusing on the quality of reported results and lessons learned rather than an assessment of M&E systems themselves). Indicate with clear examples of the trajectory of change. Identify and assess any impact assessment studies and clarify what part they play in the organisation's M&E system.

#### 5.4 Sustainability

Assess the extent to which interventions or results are likely to be sustainable. This should include an examination of the outcome of the uptake of learning and innovation by others. It should also include the nature of partnerships built with civil society, governmental and international organisations and their impact on sustainability. Elements of sustainability might include leveraging funds for continuation, securing policy adoption of an intervention or approach, or building capacity of southern actors to deliver a service or to monitor service delivery.

#### 5.5 Results

- Performance against the Logframe: To what extent is Progressio achieving (or progressing towards) the intended outcomes?
- Changes in lives: Assess the information about what changes these outcomes are making in people's lives and how many people are affected.
- Changes in civil society: To what extent are citizens doing things for themselves (for example community organisations managing and delivering services)? To what extent is civil society enabled to hold government to account?
- Assess what conditions led to success and failure – external, internal combination of interventions.
- To what extent does DFID funding achieve additionality, ie enable CSOs to achieve things they would have otherwise not been able to achieve? Assessment of additionality will be covered during the impact assessment as described below.

### 6. Impact Assessment of DFID Funding

The Evaluation Guidelines set out the proposed approach to the assessment of the additional impacts achieved by grantees as a result of DFID's funding. It explains the fundamental principles that underpin the assessment of impact and the type of techniques that are typically used to undertake quantitative analysis. The purpose is not to prescribe that all grantees should apply these and only these quantitative techniques but to provide an overview of a robust approach that should be considered if appropriate, cost-effective and proportionate to do so. The guidelines stress the importance of a mixed-methods approach to the impact assessment that uses

qualitative research to provide an explanation of *why* and *how* the programme is affecting the type and scale of changes that are quantitatively assessed.

Depending on the level of expenditure and evaluability of the type of investment or intervention, the expectation is that the additionality and impacts of DFID's funding should be quantitatively assessed as far as possible. It should be noted that this approach is not exclusive to qualitative methodologies, which are required to ensure that any evaluation of impact is firmly grounded in the context of a grantee's activities. Crucially, a mixed-method approach provides a qualitative explanation of *why* and *how* the programme is affecting the type and scale of change assessed through quantitative research.

The Evaluation Strategy concludes by providing guidance on contribution analysis, which adopts a theory of change approach to evaluation. This approach is informed by a wide range of evidence sources and perspectives brought together to produce a plausible assessment of the contribution of grantees to higher level outcomes and impacts.

## 7. Independent Progress Review Methods

The methods to be used in the Independent Progress Review include:

### 7.1 Document review

- Progressio PPA application
- DFID's business case for funding
- Progressio's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with DFID for funding
- Updated version of PPA logframe
- Progressio's annual review report and comments provided by DFID
- Changing Lives case studies submitted
- Additionality report.

The review should also consider other relevant organisational documents such as:

- Progressio mission statement and strategy
- Progressio financial information/ information on resources spent
- Information on synergies/ collaboration with DFID country programmes, other actors etc
- Published material (eg to demonstrate sharing of learning with others)
- Impact studies/ Evaluations undertaken
- Statement of experience
- Additional documents as required and appropriate (eg information to assess changes in lives/ changes in civil society).

### 7.2 Interviews and workshops with key stakeholders:

- Interviews and workshops with Progressio Management Team to determine how funding is allocated and used
- Beneficiary interviews
- Interviews with staff at Progressio involved in strategic aspects / delivery of work

- Interviews with partners looking at uptake of learning and innovation, partnerships built with civil society, governmental and international organisations, building capacity of southern actors, etc
- Additional interlocutors as appropriate.

The consultant(s) commissioned to carry out the Independent Progress Review and Progressio are jointly responsible for choosing the methods that are the most appropriate for the purpose of this evaluation. The consultant(s) is/are also required to present a detailed statement of evaluation methods including the description of data collection instruments and procedures, information sources and procedures for analysing the data.

## 8. Quality Assurance

It is imperative that the evidence collected as part of the Independent Progress Review be robust and reliable. Where high quality data is not available, the limitations of the data and any conclusions drawn from it must be clearly stated. The Evaluation Manager will also undertake a quality assurance exercise of the Independent Progress Review report and will provide comments in an *Evaluation Manager Report* (see Evaluation Strategy Appendix 8.1).

## 9. Utility

The Evaluation Manager will analyse the information generated by the Independent Progress Review process at individual grantee level and in aggregate format at meta/ fund level. The analysis of the information from the Independent Progress Review process will represent one source on which Coffey will base the performance assessment at both grantee and fund level.

According to transparency guidelines, Progressio is asked to publish the Independent Progress Review report together with the Evaluation Manager Report, which contains comments on the quality of the evaluation.

## 10. Tendering and selection process

### 10.1 Consultant specification

The Independent Progress Review shall be carried out by a suitably-qualified and experienced consultant(s). The consultant profile should include:

- A strong track record in undertaking evaluations at organisational level and of multi-country/multi-themed programmes, ideally for DFID-funded programmes.
- Proven knowledge and analysis in relation to rights-based approach and women's rights.
- Experience of working in partnership with local organisations in the field of international development (experience of evaluating partnerships is desirable).
- Experience in organisational development and strategic planning.
- Experience of results-based monitoring and evaluation with knowledge of using theory of change and mixed-methods approaches to assessing impact, including participatory research methodologies.
- Experience of assessing efficiency, cost-benefit analysis, and value for money.
- Familiarity in working with DFID's current policies and approaches, particularly with respect to evaluation and impact measurement.
- Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal.

Independent Progress Review consultants must not have a conflict of interest with the on-going activities of Progressio.

### 10.2 Expression of interest

The successful consultant(s) is/are expected to provide a proposal interpreting the terms of reference and detailing the approach to be taken for reviewing the progress of Progressio's PPA programme, with a budget and timeline for implementation.

The proposed methodology is expected to be participatory, engaging different stakeholders in meaningful and appropriate ways. As such, the Independent Progress Review is expected to include at least two visits to country programmes. The proposed methodology should combine both qualitative and quantitative collection methods as feasible and appropriate given the focus and approach of Progressio's PPA portfolio, and available resources. Please note that the methodology for the Independent Progress Review will be approved by Progressio before the commencement of the review.

The consultant(s) will manage and undertake the review process and produce the final report. This will involve reviewing documentation and grant documents (see point 7 above); reviewing Progressio's PPA activities and travelling to two countries (countries to be discussed) to conduct local review activities and discussions with partners and people involved in projects. It is expected that the PPA will take approximately 40 days and will be carried out between July/ August and September, but the specific time frames will be negotiated with the consultant(s), partner organisations and Progressio (see tentative schedule below).

Interested consultants are advised to refer to the terms of reference for Independent Progress Reviews<sup>8</sup> and the full PPA evaluation strategy and annexes which can be downloaded from Progressio webpage: [www.progressio.org.uk](http://www.progressio.org.uk) or requested from [sarahs@progressio.org.uk](mailto:sarahs@progressio.org.uk).

Applicants need to submit the following **application documents**:

- a) Expression of interest covering relevant experience and motivation for undertaking this assignment;
- b) CV(s) of consultant(s);
- c) Proposal interpreting the terms of reference, describing the approach and methodology for undertaking the evaluation with a proposed work plan including a timeline and the expected allocation of time to tasks;
- d) A statement outlining the availability of the consultant(s) during the required period;
- e) Contactable references of past credible INGO organisational and programme evaluations and reviews;
- f) Proposed budget with appropriate breakdown according to activity.

In relation to the resources for the consultancy, please note the following:

- Travel and accommodation expenses will be reimbursed (economy class airfares, mid-class hotel) but need to be budgeted in the proposal.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/funding/Template-Independent-Progress-Review.doc>.

- Travel to the field in the two countries will be arranged with the partners in country and paid for by Progressio, including an interpreter if needed. Neither Progressio nor their partners are expected to cover other in-country expenses so if you are expecting any other expenses to be met by Progressio, they need to be included in the budget (eg visa).

### 10.3 Summary Timeline

A tentative schedule and days allocated are outlined in the table below.

The successful bidder will be expected to produce an initial draft report for discussion with Progressio **no later than 16 September 2012** and a final report agreed with Progressio by **5 October 2012**.

#### Tentative schedule

7 June 2012	Publication of ToR
18 June 2012 (by 17.00 UK time)	Closing date for tenders
27 June 2012	Notification to winning bidder
July	Briefing at Progressio (1 day) Document review, draft methodology submitted for comment; evaluation questions and field visits decided (approximately 4 days)
Between second week of July/ end August 2012	Field work and additional research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interviews with Progressio staff (3 days)</li> <li>- Interviews with Progressio stakeholders in the UK (1/2 days)</li> <li>- Review activities in country 1, including two days of travel (approximately 8 days)</li> <li>- Review activities in country 2, including two days of travel (approximately 8 days)</li> <li>- Report writing (10 days)</li> </ul>
16 September 2012	First draft submitted
20 September 2012	Draft findings presented to key Progressio staff (1 day)
28 September 2012	Progressio returns comments on first draft
5 October 2012	Final review submitted, incorporating comments (3 days)
Mid-October 2012	Submission of Independent Progress Review Report to Evaluation Manager

### 11. Selection Process

The Independent Progress Review consultant(s) will be selected by the Progressio PPA Steering Group led by the Head of Programmes. Expressions of Interest will be reviewed and scored according to the criteria in section 10.1; understanding of the assignment, demonstrated through the submitted proposal; and the overall cost of the Independent Progress Review. Assessment will determine which bid best offers 'value for money' by balancing bid quality against proposed cost. The deadline for applying is

**18 June 2012 (by 17.00 UK time).** Progressio will notify the winning consultant(s) on the **28 June 2012**.

If you wish to be considered please email your expression of interest to: [Ricardo@progressio.org.uk](mailto:Ricardo@progressio.org.uk). Please specify '**Independent Progress Review**' in the subject line.

## **12. Management arrangements**

The recruitment and initial briefing to the Independent Progress Review consultant(s) will be led by the Head of Programmes. The Head of Programmes will be the point of contact within Progressio for the duration of the Independent Progress Review process. Progressio will provide logistical and technical support, including supply of relevant information and the organisation of meetings and interviews.

- / -

Progressio is the working name of the Catholic Institute for International Relations.

Charity reg. no. 294329

June 2012

**Annex B: Evaluation research schedule and timescales**

	July					August				September				October	
Week (Monday)	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	1	8
Briefing at Progressio		1													
Document review, draft methodology, evaluation questions & field visits coordination				6	2										
Progressio interviews					4										
UK stakeholders interview					1										
Country visit 1						4	4								
Country visits 2 (includes debriefing)															
Report writing						2	2	2	2	2	2	3			
Draft report															
Discussion with Progressio												2			
Final report														3	

Division of labour		
JB	JT	RP
1	1	
3	4	
2	2	
0.5	0.5	
8		
7	7	1
1	1	0.5
2		0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>15.5</b>
		<b>2.0</b>

Availability

Josephine Tsui (JT)															
Jon Barnes (JB)															
Rachel Percy (RP)															

## Annex C: Data collection tools

The approach to the IPR focuses on the application of the OECD and extended DFID criteria for the PPA review and evaluation using one framework for the global and national levels to ensure consistency in the final review product.

The global review focused on desk-based research, covering PPA relevant, organisational and strategic documents within Progressio as well as key informal semi-structured interviews. National office reviews were planned with reference to global indicators, including interviews with Progressio's staff, key external partners, stakeholders, donors, beneficiary groups, and relevant government and non-state actors.

The following is a framework

Area of interest/ evaluation question
<b>Name of Interviewee (es):</b>
<b>Position:</b>
<b>Date:</b>
<b>Location:</b>
How did you get the PPA funding? (what is the back-story to them obtaining it)
Describe your overall country programme and situation PPA within this for us, how big is it, what is its relevance, does it sit squarely with things you were going to do anyway or is it separate?
What does PPA funding allow you to do that is unique?
What (if any) staff have been hired due to the PPA funds? In what roles?
Results and Evidence of change (50%)
As a first step go through the log frame and quantitative indicators (milestones and results) then seek supplementary evidence beyond indicators (quant and qual) to assess performance / Explore log frame and annual review .
Are the milestones over or under ambitious
Are you on track to achieve all intended outcomes by the end of the PPA funding? If no what are the challenges?
What are the challenges to the project countries you work in and implementing this programme within them?
How plausible are the links between outputs and the results at outcome and impact level?
What has been the largest most significant impact to date and why have you identified this example?
Where there are other actors undertaking the same work e.g. advocacy of Government, how do you evidence Progressio's contribution? How do you measure attribution of results to PPA funding ?
To what extent have results led to impact on the target population?
How do we know this change has occurred?
How do you plan to collect quantitative measurements? E.g. around institutional or policy change
How do you ensure the work you are doing is more than a sum of its parts

Is the program being implemented in your country having an impact at regional or global level?
What are the opportunities for the programme to increase its impact
<b>Additionality</b>
To what extent does DFID funding achieve additionality ? e.g. to what extent did PPA funding enable Progressio to achieve things they would have otherwise not been able to?
Would specific activities would you not have done without PPA funding? (attribution of achievements to DFID funding)
What does DFID in particular bring to Progressio compared to other funding partners?
What are the benefits of PPA funding over other funding streams?
Has PPA funding enabled you to leverage further funding? Yes/ No. If yes from who? (list)
If you have leveraged further funds what has this enabled?
Has support from Progressio improved since PPA funding began? In what way
Can you help make the case for DFID why unrestricted funding has been absolutely necessary
<b>DW Questions</b>
How are country programmes and work in each region relevant to Progressio's overall international strategy?
How is country strategy developed to ensure relevance to civil society organisations' efforts to empower the poor and marginalised?
How have skill gaps and opportunities been identified? How do you know these are relevant to the country, civil society strengthening and poor people?
What tools do you use to ensure such relevance?
What tools to ensure match between DWs, partner needs and community needs, within project and across country programme?
How do you decide which/what type of partners to work with in order to maximise potential for community empowerment and policy influence?
Why and how are Progressio's priority work sectors/themes relevant? How were they chosen?
Do you have a sectoral/thematic strategy in each country/internationally?
Tell us about the strategies, for example, in the DR/Haiti, Yemen, Somaliland, Zimbabwe
How does your work in each country relate/complement the work of other INGOs? Why and how is it distinct and necessary?
How does your work fit in with DfID's global theory of change and how is it relevant to DfID's country strategy?
Organisation key: focus on poorest?
Targeting and project portfolio balance: results chain, given mix of partner types/levels of work and impact
Explain the shifts in approach in DR/H: from many projects with smaller number of partners to key projects with larger number of partners (diversity-focus/dispersal-concentration/scope-depth of impact)
Impact maximisation strategy
Gender
Fragile states focus: how is Progressio adapting?
<b>Efficiency - at the right cost - (30%)</b>
Please describe the management, financial arrangements of the PPA programme in your country? How efficient are these? (efficiency of dispersment of funds and management, m+e of funds)
What % of PPA funds are given to partners?
What % of PPA funds are spend on salary costs?
What are your reporting systems? What is the burden compared to other funding agreements?
Has there been under spend in some projects?

How are local partners involved in the management of the programme, please state the areas in which they were involved?
How do you support local partners in data collection and research? What are the challenges to this?
Is there aspects of PPA that makes it more difficult to get the right people, are the ways the problem could be mitigated (link to staff turnover which is an issue) Are their gaps in staffing- are their particular areas that are tricky to fill?
Has PPA funding led to challenges in monitoring programmes (e.g. Due to opening up in a new area).
Does Progressio involve partners and Communities in identifying which activities and outcomes have greatest value?
Can you show how resources were spent in order to demonstrate change
How are assessment of efficiency made when supporting international debate/ policy
<b>Effectiveness - doing the right things in the right way (15%)</b>
To what extent are the achieved outputs contributing to the achievement of the expected outcomes? Conversion of outputs to outcomes
Added value: Does Progressio build capacity of other in the sector, and DFID? How does Progressio add value to DFIDs portfolio? What is the distinctive offering of Progressio?
Does Progressio show evidence of distinctive competence or added value compared to others who work on CS in FCAS/Climate Change/Gender/Election monitoring? How does Progressio add value to DFIDs portfolio? If you compare yourself to other NGO's what is it you are doing differently?
Have you been particularly innovative because of the PPA? In which areas?
How are links developed between different levels of Progressio's operations?
How is Progressio monitoring and systematically collecting data to inform management and evidence based decisions?
What is the system for reporting analysis from local level data? And where does this go?
Has the partner relationship with Progressio helped improve your own learning?
Does the M and E system provide the right framework to measure results and support learning?
What strategy is in place for communicating lessons learnt?
Specific examples of learning improving organisational capacity?
How do Progressio plans to share its own experience of managing and using strategic funding with others in the sector.
What cross-communication exists between you and other PPA partners?
How have others learnt from your work? (taken up in policy and practice?)
Is the work you are doing at the PPA country level being evidenced at the regional or global level? Y/N
Has there been any learning taken from the PPA to non PPA programmes?
Are you part of learning and cluster/ working groups? What is the benefit, what do you contribute?
Do you have evidence your work or approaches are being replicated by others? Y/ N
Has PPA funded facilitated new relationships or improved existing ones? Yes/ No. If yes with who? (list)
Has having the PPA funding in your country office changed your relationship with DIFD? Y/N. If you answered yes please describe how?

What type of local partners do you work with? Is there opportunity to work with a wider community?

Has the PPA generate broader learning on how to work in FCAS

<b>Sustainability</b>
To what extent is Progressio able to generate, share and mainstream their learning?
To what extent is Progressio setting up strategies that will ensure the sustainability of the respective outcomes post DFID funding? Please describe your exit strategy
What are the challenges to sustainability both in terms of accessing future funds and the country context? How are risks to the programme been identified and managed?
To what extent is Progressio benefiting the sector as a whole? If yes, how? If not what could be improved?
What are the prospects for the benefits of the programme being sustained after the funding stops? Did this match the intentions?
Have local partners, committees of government taken on, or are they planned to take on aspects of the programme/ project / policy?
Will the programme enable further leveraging of funding, what is the strategy for t
Have communities been given the skills, experience and knowledge and networks to undertake activities that increase resilience (relevance)
To what extent are you involved in multi actor forums or working clusters?
<b>Relevance –doing the right thing? (5%)</b>
Are the chosen interventions designed to reach the poorest and most vulnerable? How?
How do you build on and reflect on the context of the countries in which you operate?
Is the theory of change underpinning the PPA valid? Please explain?
Has PPA funding enabled you to shift strategy and efforts to new areas of strategic importance?
Does the PPA align with DFID's causal and business theories of change?
What are the benefits to Progressio's unrestricted funding
Is PPA amplifying existing strategy either sectorally or by country of choice, or is it opening up a new country or sectoral area and if so what (link to additionality)?
Does Progressio's choice of country align with DFID's?
How do you track changes in national indicators overtime that inform the PPA?
Is there any major inconsistencies between what the PPA is supporting and what you do strategically at the global and country level?
How has the PPA been mainstreamed within the organisation and other organisational projects?
Was there local demand for intervention in a particular area?
Are there any downsides to having PPA as part of your country programme
<b>Broad Based Overarching Questions</b>
Head office and versus field office perception of the relative value of the PPA
Orientation of PPA and service delivery as a whole (service delivery or advocacy and which gives the most impact for the money), does this align with what DFID thinks and Oxfam thinks

To what extent does PPA monies allow them to do more of the same or something new?
What three things would you change and why?
<b>VfM</b>
What are Progressio's main costs and how are these rationalised with PPA? (General)
How do you monitor and track VfM? What are the management practices? (General)
Has PPA allowed any new VfM processes? (General)
How does Progressio document evidence of organisational practice and efficiency around vfm? (General)
What kinds of analytical skills and instruments does Progressio deploy to ensure at organisational level a capacity to constantly review costs relative to impact? (General)
How is VfM understood? (General)
Are more expensive outputs justified by there greater value? Efficiency
Is there additional value construed from accessing the most poor and vulnerable? How would you demonstrate this? Equity
Are the benefits of programming are shared amongst all sections of the community, specifically reaching the most vulnerable. Equity
Does cost per unit match comparators ? Efficiency
Are outputs produced efficiently compared to units used (how well are they converted?) Efficiency
Are you meeting targets with the budget? Efficiency /Are country offices on track with allocated spending? If no why (General)
How do you monitor risks around achieving VfM and ensure outputs are delivered? Efficiency
Are there areas you have reduced your unit cost or overall cost? (Economy)
Are there other ways you could have done this work for less money? (Economy)
How do you perform in VfM against any benchmarks in the sector? (Economy)
Do you have any information on cost per beneficiary? (Economy)
Has PPA expenditure enabled you to leverage further funds? (Economy)
Is VfM in terms of PPA different to VfM in other funding streams, how?

**Annex D: List of people consulted****Independent Progress Review (Progressio) – individuals and organisations consulted**

<b>DOMINICAN REPUBLIC and HAITI – field research (19-25 August) and London interviews (Aug-Sept)</b>	
<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>PERSON</b>
<b>Progressio</b>	<p><b>Santo Domingo</b> Nicoló Schiaparelli, sub-regional director Gloria Amézquita, programmes officer Angela Naletilic, programme funding officer Janina Acosta, administrator</p> <p><b>London</b> Lizzette Robleto González, policy and advocacy officer</p>
<b>Christian Aid</b>	<p><b>Santo Domingo</b> Nousta Diendome, <b>acting country manager</b> Frankelly Martínez, funding officer for the Caribbean</p> <p><b>London</b> Gaby Drinkwater, senior policy and advocacy officer (Latin America and Caribbean) Andrew Croggon, regional manager (Latin America and Caribbean)</p>
<b>British Embassy</b>	His Excellency, Steven Fisher, UK ambassador to the Dominican Republic
<b>Solidaridad Fronteriza</b>  (Border Solidarity, Dajabón, Dominican Republic)	<p>Regino Martínez, director Luis Félix, project coordinator Rosa Martínez, gender and food security coordinator José Luis Fernández, communications officer</p> <p><i>Progressio</i> Bernardo López, development worker (agro-ecology and agro-forestry specialist)</p>
<b>Solidarité Fwontalye</b>  (Ouanaminthe, Haiti)	<p>Jean Max Joazile, director Michel Edouard Alcimé, coordinator of social transformation</p> <p><i>Progressio</i> Sandra Dupuy, development worker (institutional strengthening specialist) Gabriel Petit-Homme, development worker (food security and agro-forestry specialist)</p>
<b>Town Hall of El Comendador</b>  (Elías Piña province, Dominican Republic)	<p>Luis Minier, mayor Luis Ernesto Adames, assistant to mayor</p> <p><i>Progressio</i> Diana Torres, development worker (local development and planning specialist) attached to mayor's office</p>
<b>Inter-Municipal Technical Office of Elías Piña, OTIMEP</b>	<p>Rosanna Guerrero, OTIMEP coordinator Isaac Encarnación, representative from Bánica and Pedro Santana municipalities Lilian Ogando, oficial for El Llano y Comendador</p>

	José Vallejo, former culture director Miguelina Ferrera, administrative assistant Yuridia Encarnación, data base officer
<b>Mayor of Belladère</b>  (Belladère, Haiti)	Ehan Lejean, mayor Emile Lacnev, former mayor Officials and civil society representatives
<b>Federación Dominicana de Municipios</b>  (Dominican Federation of Municipalities, FEDOMU)	Francis Jorge García, coordinator of FEDOMU's participatory budget initiatives  <i>Progressio</i> Bolívar Sánchez, development worker (specialist on local participatory development)
<b>Fundación Solidaridad</b>  (Transparency civil society organisation based in Santiago de los Caballeros)	Juan Castillo, director Alfredo Matías, project officer  <i>Progressio</i> Percy Álvarez, development worker (local development specialist), now supporting UNFPA-UNDP-ART-Gold (Governance and Local Development) project
<b>Centro Bonó</b>  (Santo Domingo)	Mario Serrano, director  <i>Progressio</i> Mariana Barrenese, development worker (expert on public finances) Juan Carlos González Díaz, development worker (media and communication specialist)
<b>Coalición Educación Digna</b>  (Dignified Education Coalition), Santo Domingo	Magda Pepen, member of the board
<b>United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)</b>	Sonia Vásquez, UNFPA assistant representative, former Progressio country representative
<b>All-Party Parliamentary Group on Haiti</b>	Lord Griffiths of Burry Port, chair of APPG on Haiti
<b>British Expertise</b>	Nigel Peters, director of British Expertise and the UKTI Aid-Funded Business Service
<b>Embassy of the Dominican Republic, London</b>	His Excellency, Federico Cuello Camilo, ambassador of the Dominican Republic in the UK

**FAITH and DEVELOPMENT**

<b>FAITH and DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>PERSON</b>
<b>Lambeth Palace</b>	Helen Stawski , Archbishop of Canterbury's deputy secretary for international development

**INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY**

<b>INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY</b>	
<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>PERSON</b>
<b>Foreign Commonwealth Office</b>	Annie McGee, Deputy Head of the Zimbabwe Unit
	Wayne Ives, Head of the Zimbabwe Unit

**YEMEN PROGRAMME**

<b>YEMEN PROGRAMME</b>	
<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>PERSON</b>
<b>Progressio</b>	Abeer Al-Absi, Yemen's Country representative for Progressio
	Derek Hyun Kim, DW Water Sana'a
	Wondimu Guyassa, HIV and AIDS DW, Sana'a with Interaction Development Foundation
<b>Alwedyan Association – Aden</b>	Tameem Alnamery, Head of Alwedyan Association Aden
	Mohammed Faddaq, Local Governance Adviser
<b>Interaction Development Foundation</b>	Khaled Al-Dubaai, Head

## PROGRESSIO LONDON

PROGRESSIO LONDON	
ORGANISATION	PERSON
Progressio	James Collins, Director of Finance and Administration, acting chief executive officer
	Osvaldo Vásquez, Head of Programmes
	Isabel Gammie, Programmes Officer
	Belisario Nieto, Learning Manager
	Gabriela Quevedo, Programmes Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
	Tim Aldred, Head of Policy and Communications
	Steve Kibble, policy and advocacy officer
	<b>Lizzette Robleto González, policy and advocacy officer</b>
	Sarah Sandon, Head of Fundraising
	Ricardo Tomas, Head of Recruitment and Selection

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## Annex E: List of data sources

Progressio's data sources on targeted and direct beneficiaries

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## Annex F: Bibliography

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## Annex G: Sub-reports of country visits, case studies, and the PPA logframe.

This section is used to house sub-reports. These include IPR field research, country and thematic case studies, and a review of the NGO's PPA reporting and planning, monitoring and evaluation systems supporting assessment of development results. This material provides detailed analysis to illustrate and back up findings covered in the main sections of the main report.

The sub-reports include:

1. IPR field research and case studies on Progressio's country-level capacity building
  - Progressio's capacity-building in the Dominican Republic and Haiti
    - Promoting sustainable environment and food security at a bi-national level in the north
    - Promoting responsive local planning and development in the central border areas
    - Innovation and applying tools: from participatory budgeting in the Dominican Republic to bi-national work promoting accountable municipal development plans in the border areas
    - Catalysing change through support for research, policy and communication: supporting the success of the 4% education spending campaign
  - Case study: capacity-building in Somaliland on HIV and AIDS
  - Case study: capacity-building to promote effective civil society monitoring of local development projects in Timor Leste
    -
2. Progressio's international advocacy
  - Case study: advocacy with the Zimbabwe European Network
  - Case study: international advocacy at the Rio +20 summit
  - Case study: international advocacy on illegal logging
  - Case study: advocacy on faith and development: DfID additionality
  - Case study: UK and EU advocacy on Haiti's post-earthquake reconstruction and development and Dominican-Haitian relations
3. PPA reporting and Progressio's planning, monitoring and evaluation systems: strengths, weaknesses and recommendations
4. Progressio's PPA logframe

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## Annex G1: IPR field research and case studies on Progressio's country-level capacity building

### Progressio's capacity-building in the Dominican Republic and Haiti

#### Background: Progressio's capacity-building programme in the Dominican Republic and Haiti

To gain direct insights into the actual/potential results of Progressio's capacity-building work, a member of the evaluation team made field visits to sites linked with Progressio's three overall projects currently underway in the Dominican Republic and Haiti as part of its so-called Hispaniola programme. This programme relies on PPA funding for around half its budget, so findings are highly indicative of the ways in which DfID money is being used and with what results. Straddling Progressio's traditional strength in Latin America and its growing focus on

fragile and conflict-affected states and transferring lessons internationally, this case has relevance to the UK in view of the government's growing humanitarian interest in Haiti.

The IPR evaluator had chance to visit development workers (DWs) and partners linked to its current three projects. They are:

- Sustainable environment and mitigating the effects of climate change in order to guarantee food security with a cross-border and bi-national focus
- Strengthening citizens' participation in order to promote local democracy on the Dominican-Haitian border and the design of inclusive public policies
- Towards the building of an inclusive, democratic political system in Haiti

Many of the individual interviews and group meetings conducted with DWs, partners and beneficiaries during the field research (see detailed itinerary in Appendix B) took place in the Dajabón and Elías Piña provinces in the north-west and central-west regions of the Dominican Republic from where border crossings were made to meet Haitian stakeholders in the towns of Ouanaminthe and Belladère (see map). Other field visit interviews were held in Santiago de los Caballeros in the north and Santo Domingo. These provided contextual insights into the achievements of Progressio's work in the Dominican Republic to promote participatory municipal budgeting (including a gender focus) over the last decade and the extent to which its lessons are of continued value as the organisation shifts its attention to wider aspects of municipal planning focused on support for border areas where greater poverty is located and the development needs and challenges are greater.

Over the last decade, Progressio has been somewhat of a leader in supporting partners such as the Santiago-based transparency NGO, Fundación Solidaridad (Solidarity Foundation), a member of the International Budget Project, to promote participatory municipal budgeting in the Dominican Republic. It is now seeking to apply the knowledge and tools gained from this experience as it seeks to replicate gains in the context of the new geographical focus of its work on the Dominican-Haitian border. The new phase of work, organised on both sides of the border from three strategic locations in the Dominican Republic, marks a new departure in Progressio's programming on participatory governance in that it now focuses on wider aspects of local planning and development such as a concern with livelihoods as well as service provision. In the Dominican Republic this will include efforts to work with local authorities and civil society groups to revitalise economic and social councils as a planning consultation mechanism.



The border areas are now the main location of Progreso's work on the island, which, at the time of the visit, comprised eight development workers in the Dominican Republic and three in Haiti, supported and coordinated from Progreso's office in Santo Domingo, the Dominican capital, in the south. Despite some success in securing income from a range of UN, EU and other donors, Progreso's programme in the Dominican Republic and Haiti relies on core income from Progreso for half of its budget, the majority PPA funds. PPA money plays an essential role in the programme. It matches the contributions of other donors (without such investment, it might not be possible for the projects to be launched and implemented) and also covers the essential support provided by Progreso's office and support staff, including M&E, partner relations, programme development, DW coordination meetings, networking and policy/stakeholder engagement. Almost all DWs are funded in part and supported and coordinated with PPA money.

Progreso's work, in line with the organisation's growing focus on Fragile and Conflict-Affected States, has undergone a dramatic re-orientation as a result of the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, with Progreso's impressive contribution to the emergency response from the Dominican Republic leading the organisation since to centre its capacity-building programme on the border areas, shifting away from a more diversified presence across the Dominican Republic. Though the challenges are greater, this geographical focus is affording opportunities for Progreso to play a very productive role. Indeed, despite continued tensions in Dominican-Haitian relations, and the glacial pace of progress in an official bi-national commission centred on national capital discussions, awareness seems to be emerging among local actors, in the wake of the emergency response to the Haiti earthquake and the traditional neglect of border-related development by central governments, of the potential benefits of cross-border collaboration.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> As part of its participation in a project run by the UNDP's ART GOLD (Governance and Local Development) programme, for example, in July 2011 Progreso supported the organisation and facilitation of the first bi-national

Nevertheless, Progressio retains strategic partners in Santo Domingo who are both relevant to work in the borders and enable the organisation to keep a foothold in national issues of crucial relevance to both the Dominican Republic and Haiti. This includes capacity-building support for a key partner involved in research and policy where it would appear that DWs have made a catalytic contribution to this partner's success in facilitating successful civil society campaigning to demand that Dominican government promises of higher social spending on primary and secondary education are kept.

The following section, drawing on examples observed and gathered by a member of the evaluation team during visits straddling aspects of the three projects, will focus its examination of progress in achieving results on work promoting sustainable environment and food security, on the one hand, and citizen's participation in planning and public policies, on the other.

### **Progressio's work at the grassroots level: promoting sustainable environment and food security at a bi-national level in the north**

Impressive insights into Progressio's efforts to help promote sustainable agricultural practices and improved food security and nutrition were gained through IPR evaluator visits to DWs and partners on both sides of the Dominican-Haitian border, in Dajabón and Ounaminthe respectively, where the organisation is supporting Jesuit partner organisations, Solidaridad Fronteriza (SF) and Solidarité Fwontalye (SFw), to strengthen their work in this area. Both organisations are committed to the promotion of sustainable agriculture as part of an approach that not only protects the environment, generates income and improves access to nutritious food, but also has the non-material benefits of binding family members and communities together (younger and older people, men and women) in efforts to promote a solidarity-based local economy. Such wider dimensions of community cohesion are crucial in the face of rural-urban migration, particularly by youth, as official support for local food production is neglected, and as livelihood difficulties increase the strains on families, exacerbating problems such as gender-based violence.

As well as seeking to boost sustainable agricultural production and food security with communities on each side of the border, both organisations are involved in efforts to strengthen cross-border solidarity and development, with two Progressio DWs working with SF in Dajabón collaborating with a Haitian DW counterpart in Ouanaminthe to transfer sustainable agriculture and food security techniques as part of SFw's work with communities in Lamine and Gens de Nantes.

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cross-border meeting of local governments and civil society organisations from municipalities across the north east of Haiti and the north west of the Dominican Republic. Held in Dajabón, the event brought together some 180 representatives, who jointly analysed the challenges and opportunities facing these border regions in terms of livelihoods, production and trade, the environment, gender, political institutions and multicultural relations. According to a bilingual report circulated in Spanish and Creole, the meeting, as well as providing a vital space to explore bi-national perceptions and foster mutual trust, generated information and ideas for joint development plans and led to a proposal to create a permanent official inter-municipal cross-border committee with civil society participation to take such planning forward.

Impetus on the Dominican side for the holding of such a bi-national event had been provided by Progressio's support for the earlier formation of a multi-stakeholder committee in Dajabón, bringing together 24 local authority, civil society, producer association and religious bodies. A Progressio development worker from Peru, Percy Alvarez, has been conducting an exercise to map civil society organisations in Dajabón working with a bi-national perspective on governance and gender issues. To further bi-national relations, he is also planning training events to equip Haitian and Dominican representatives as the inter-municipal cross-border committee is launched.

*Progress in agricultural production and food security in Dajabón province*

In Dajabón, the support of Progressio DWs for the sustainable agriculture work of Solidaridad Fronteriza, would appear to be showing major signs of rapid progress that could lead to rising benefits for a growing number of communities across this Dominican province. In sessions also involving SF leaders and workers, a Colombian DW, Bernardo López, an agro-ecology and agro-forestry specialist, explained how he had been raising awareness and providing advice and technical support to promote a shift away from production involving monoculture and forest clearance towards sustainable methods to boost productivity and address deforestation. Significant production gains would appear to have been made over a short period of time in his work with members of the Unión de Asociaciones de Productores de Bosques de Restauración (UNAPROBOSQUE, Union of Producer Associations from Forests of Restauración) grouping 13 producer groups and 400 active members in communities surrounding the Restauración municipality.

Since the inception of the work almost three years ago, model farms with agro-forestry plots have been set up in eight communities and are producing a diverse range of crops. Farmers, comparing plots using old and new methods, have observed how yields have increased through the use of organic fertilisers, which has reduced the use of pesticides. In order to sustain and further replicate such advances in production and environmental protection, the DW had recently trained UNAPROBOSQUE members as promoters of improved agro-forestry management, with 52 of the 60 targeted individuals completing the course and in a position to better support work brigades. With the 120 families involved, he is also supporting and overseeing the development of plans to optimise resource use and production on the agro-forestry farms and plots. In some communities of the Restauración area, nurseries have also been set up to produce seedlings.

Over the next two years, plans are being made to scale up production as part of a strategy of promoting sustainable agricultural systems based on a diversified range of crops such as banana, mango, avocado, corn, cassava, beans and coffee, with the aim of achieving sufficient volume and quality to step up marketing and gain fair trade certification. The immediate challenge, however, is to consolidate the organisational structures of the producer associations. Indeed, though production has already been zooming ahead since the initiative started, solid organisations are needed to sustain such gains over time.

*Progress in promoting nutrition and health in Dajabón*

In this session, a health and nutrition promoter benefiting as an individual counterpart from support provided by another Progressio DW attached to SF, Karina Cuba, a Peruvian food security expert, explained to the evaluator how the sustainable production and potential income gains described above were also being combined with initiatives to boost food security, nutrition and health through stronger production and consumption at household and community levels. Important progress would appear to be being made. She reported that 108 household gardens had been set up in communities around the municipalities of Loma de Cabrera, Partido, Restauración and Dajabón, with predominantly women producing a wide variety of vegetables for household consumption, and that some 70 henhouses had been built to increase egg production. With the DW's support, ten workshops had been held to train 70 people (67 women and three men) as promoters, linking increased production with improvements in diet and health. A monitoring form is being used to identify undernourished families and groups and to track progress in new food consumption habits and health practices being taken up. Continued work is needed to ensure the achievement of this aim, but the work shows evidence that the foundations for doing so are being laid effectively.

Other innovations supported by the two DWs, in place thanks to a combination of Christian Aid investment and PPA funds, were reported to be offering similarly tangible benefits for people. For example, the introduction of waist-height stoves requiring less firewood is aimed not only at addressing deforestation but also reducing smoke inhalation and joint and back problems affecting women particularly as traditional food preparers. Family violence and violence against women is a major problem in the Dominican Republic and Karina Cuba has taken advantage of Progressio's separate involvement in a UNFPA-backed project with Dominican border municipalities on gender-based violence to incorporate awareness-raising on this problem in Progressio's sustainable agriculture and food security work with SF. As a result of their rising role in vegetable and poultry production described above, the potential is being created for women beneficiaries to achieve greater economic independence and boost their standing in the home and the community.

*Promoting and sharing agricultural gains in northern Haiti*

In a meeting held in Ouanaminthe on the other side of the border, Gabriel Petit-Homme, a Progressio DW from Haiti working since October 2010 with SF's sister organisation, Solidarité Fwontalye, explained how the approaches described above, through sharing with his DW colleagues across the border, have also been replicated in Haiti, including use of organic fertilisers, the setting up of family gardens and plant nurseries, and introduction of the waist-height stoves (the latter even more relevant in view of the deforestation so seriously afflicting Haiti). His work is part of an EU-financed project, coordinated by an Italian NGO with SFw, the peasant network Mouvman Peyizan Papay, to strengthen food security in Haiti's central plateau department as well as the north east, with Progressio also contributing core funds, including PPA investment, to provide its contribution to the matching funds in the initiative, as required by the EU. SFw is working with producer networks to reach some 250 grassroots groups.

As the initiative has been underway for less time, advances in boosting community-based production, despite gains, would appear to be slower in the communities that the DW is supporting in north-east Haiti than in the Dominican Republic. Nevertheless, progress has been made in promoting the introduction of sustainable agriculture techniques needed as a foundation in the Lamine and Gens de Nantes communities near Ouanaminthe and Capotille where the DW has been concentrating his efforts.

With the DW's support, workshops had been held in the second year of the project to train a further 50 people (29 women and 21 men) to become monitors/promoters of sustainable agricultural practices in the communities. To promote wider replication and sustainability, each monitor/promoter, as in the first year (when 33 women and 17 men were trained), will lead a brigade of 12-15 people to work with families and communities in a cascade approach, equipped not just with greater knowledge and skills but also a set of implements and seeds to take seedling and crop production forward in practice. In the first year, several thousand seedlings were produced in each community, barrier walls built to overcome water shortages and soil erosion, and livestock distributed, with new goat offspring produced and shared as demonstrable examples for the communities of the value of improved rearing techniques. A cassava production plant had also been set up, offering the potential for increased income generation and employment creation.

An interesting aspect of Gabriel Petit-Homme's work is his efforts to capitalise on *konbite*, a Haitian tradition of reciprocally offering free labour and working together to till friends' and neighbours' fields as well as one's own, as part of supporting the brigades' promotion work. This, he said, helps to widen the effect of the knowledge and skills shared. Another important

innovation, one that his individual counterpart in SFw, Michel Edouard Alciné, coordinator of the organisation's social transformation team, considered to be very important during an evaluator interview, has been his use and promotion of visual tools in organisational training with targeted beneficiaries. This had not only aided the effectiveness of SFw workshops, he said, but was also a practice that the organisation would continue to use on the DW's departure.

During his meeting with the evaluator, the DW shared copies of manuals he had helped to produce in Creole on agricultural production techniques veterinary best practices for livestock, as well as a manual for brigade trainers, each of which are being used to sustain project momentum. He also provided copies of contracts and forms to register receipt of project inputs such as animals, seedlings and medicines or to monitor progress in activities such as plant grafting. As with the reported use of monitoring forms seen in nutrition and health promotion work in Dajabón, such tools, if representative of wider practices within the organisation, suggest that Progressio DWs take seriously the tracking of their engagement with beneficiaries. It was also apparent in interviews that DWs and partners are open to receiving ideas on strengthening M&E. For example, a suggestion that, as well as the impressions provided by visual observation, data might be formally gathered to compare the difference in yields as a result of traditional and new agricultural methods – thus substantiating 'before-and-after' evidence of change for outside observers – was welcomed in the evaluator's session with SF in Dajabón.

#### *Progressio support for institutional strengthening*

Another DW attached to Solidarité Fwontalye interviewed by the evaluator was Sandra Dupuy, a French professional specialising in institutional strengthening, who has been helping the SFw to develop and introduce planning systems and tools for many areas of the organisation's operation, including planning, monitoring and evaluation, human resources systems, information and database management, and finance and administration. Despite a good reputation for effective work with its beneficiaries, the organisation would appear to have faced significant institutional difficulties in these areas, due to the major resource shortages affecting Haiti, the relative lack of qualified professionals prepared to work in a remote and impoverished location such as Ouanaminthe, as well as the acute pressures facing an NGO striving to get on top of internal matters as it responds to the multiple external priorities presented by a complex and challenging development environment.

From interviews with the DW and the partner organisation, and based on a review of her presentations and reports, however, it would appear that the DW has been achieving some measure of progress in strengthening institutional systems, gains that should not be underestimated in the context of institutional fragilities. One focus in her work has been support to strengthen project development and management, given SFw's fundraising needs and the importance of the organisation being able to produce higher-quality applications and reports for donors. Since she started, a project unit has been set up and SFw – hitherto somewhat dependent on support from its Dominican sister organisation, SF in Dajabón – is now in a better position to produce its own project proposals and reports, with the DW indicating that such documents now have much stronger Haitian content and style, and were thus more likely to meet the needs of donors in view of their enhanced local detail. With her support, a wide range of project proposals had been produced and presented to donors on key themes of

concern to the partner organisation, including on human rights and migration and health, as well as bi-national work on local development, climate change and food security.<sup>10</sup>

In the DW's view, however, much still remained to be done, for example to further support SFW planners and organisers to bolster the quality of project objectives and change indicators in work with partners and beneficiaries. Some of the organisational system changes also require shifts in work culture, so even small, but vitally important gains – such as the organisation now having and adhering to a timetable for donor report submissions – can take time to be fully adopted, and care is required to make sure they are appropriate in themselves. Some within SFW were open and keen to take up use of tools and were actively doing so; others were more resistant, less confident or needed more support and encouragement.

The SFW's director and its coordinator of social transformation told the evaluator that the training workshops on planning, monitoring and evaluation run by Sandra Dupuy for SFW personnel, along with the extensive range of planning and management templates she had introduced, following a comprehensive review of available tools, would help the organisation to improve its procedures. One of the problems, however, was that a staff member specifically recruited to sustain the expertise introduced by the DW had had to leave the organisation for health reasons, though a replacement had now been found. The DW was herself due to complete her Progressio contract in September, so this recruitment may go some way to ensuring continuity. SFW's coordinator for social transformation with whom Sandra Dupuy has been closely working expressed confidence that the value of Progressio's input would remain as he and the new director would also take forward the embedding of the various tools.

Whatever the apparent progress or setbacks from the point of view of this initiative producing bi-national results, this DW's contribution is also interesting in that it illustrates the question as to whether Progressio's impact assessment systems, as highlighted in section 3.1.1, capture effectively the proper value of its capacity-building, particularly in instances such as this where the explicit focus is on strengthening institutional systems and structures and where the beneficiaries, even more indirectly, are organisations rather than communities. Any positive impact at this level surely has a value in its own right, but it might not be reflected in systems ostensibly more geared to counting beneficiaries at the final social level, in line with possibly overly-mechanistic donor expectations prioritising quick arrival at development destinations rather than the wherewithal required to make what can be a long and difficult journey.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Sandra Dupuy's work is formally part of Progressio's project to promote an inclusive political system in Haiti rather than that on sustainable environment and food security. However, as elaborated elsewhere, one of Progressio's strengths is that its DWs also lend expertise to other projects and undertake teamwork where they have a common partner and work in the same geographical location. Sandra Dupuy, therefore, as well working closely with Progressio's two other DWs based in Port-au-Prince in the Haiti project (who support respectively partners working on research and advocacy around reconstruction aid and also programmes for disaster preparedness), has made support for Progressio's food security work with SF and SFW a strand of her wider institutional strengthening work with her particular partner organisation.

<sup>11</sup> It would be stretching the plausibility of the impact chain too far to claim that specific numbers of people will benefit from an organisation's greater fundraising capacity, for example, and in turn its ability to set up and run effective development programmes. But it surely must be a gain for development progress, and recognised as such, if an organisation can fund itself effectively and run its affairs well. Perhaps other factors, rather than the achievement of direct benefits for people and communities, need to be properly weighted, valued and recognised such as an organisation's track record, values, relevance and commitment to poor people. If there is evidence of this, it may be reasonable to assume that an organisation's target constituency will benefit and thus be legitimate to expect donors to recognise the value of capacity-building, even if the number of ultimate social beneficiaries cannot be specified because of the different nature and level of the work.

The evaluator would need to conduct much lengthier research to make a definitive assessment of how well the DW-partner relationship has worked in this case, but it is quite possible that the slower levels of 'progress' recorded by this DW in her March 2012 report and shared with the evaluator in interview is not necessarily a reflection of her performance or that of her partner but of the extremely difficult development circumstances and challenges they jointly face in Haiti. Importantly, as noted earlier, Progressio rightly sees its M&E system as a management tool indicating trends for analytical reflection and interpretation, not as a mechanism guaranteed automatically to provide accurate measurement or a definitive verdict on results.

**Combining work at the grassroots, intermediary and policy levels: Progressio's work on participation, local governance and inclusive public policies**

***Promoting responsive local planning and development in the central border areas of the Dominican Republic and Haiti***

To gain an insight into the new geographical emphasis of Progressio's support for inclusive governance on the border areas in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, an IPR evaluator held a meeting with the mayor of El Comendador, the principal town of Elías Piña province, and members of the team working to strengthen the local development functions of the Oficina Técnica Inter-Municipal de Elías Piña (Inter-Municipal Technical Office of Elías Piña, OTIMEP). A Progressio DW from Colombia, local development and planning specialist Diana Torres, is now attached to the mayor's office but has been involved in efforts to strengthen OTIMEP's capacity to develop and coordinate plans and projects across the province in a participatory way.

With Progressio's advice and support, one result is that EU funding has been won by the mayor's office for OTIMEP's future institutional development and work, with PPA money used to contribute to the DW's support costs in helping develop and now coordinate the new initiative which began in February 2012. OTIMEP's role is of potentially considerable significance in the Dominican Republic as it is seen as a leading attempt to adopt a province-wide approach to local development rather than one based on the interests of separate municipalities and individual mayors.

The focus of Progressio's involvement over the last year, in addition to helping win donor support, has been to nurture the institutional capacity of OTIMEP as a prerequisite for the external role the body is expected to play in joint planning across the province. For example, one key aim is to develop and launch plans to promote tourism and handicraft production and marketing in what is one of the Dominican Republic's poorest provinces, as well as initiatives to enable agricultural producers currently receiving poor prices from intermediaries to boost their organisational clout and marketing. Another aim is for OTIMEP to promote shared cross-border development with local authorities in Haiti's central plateau region, with the mayor of El Comendador also in charge of the Comité Inter-Municipal Transfronterizo (Cross-Border Inter-Municipal Committee, CIT) created in 2008. A strong driver of his interest in cross-border development, focused in the immediate term on neighbouring Belladère, has been to stem migration flows exacerbated by crises in Haiti. CIT organised deliveries of emergency supplies to Port-au-Prince after the earthquake, which saw the mass displacement of people to border areas.

Though gains have been achieved in El Comendador with international donor support since 2007,<sup>12</sup> the mayor said at the meeting that he sees locally owned planning structures such as OTIMEP – and the setting up of an equivalent body over the border in Haiti – as a much more sustainable basis for longer-term development. He argued that, rather than responding to individual donor projects, stronger local planning capacity is required to ensure the coherence of donor investment, avoid duplication and maximise impact. A key point made at the meeting, in terms of the potential value of Progressio's contribution, was that, without investment in the development of proper technical capacity, and in the information and skills needed for informed participation and oversight by citizens, local institutions would not be able to make the most of donor aid and would fail to work effectively and accountably.

At the time of the IPR visit, the newly approved EU project, whose coordination has been entrusted by the mayor to Progressio's DW, was in its infancy. Nevertheless, as shared at the meeting with OTIMEP and covered in the DW's 2011/12 progress report, the last year has seen interim steps forward in the body's development. Progress had been made in strengthening project development and management skills (hence the EU's approval of the new project), aspects of project monitoring had improved with the introduction of templates, and practices had been introduced to strengthen the content of – or even submit – reports on progress to donors and mayors in the Elías Piña province. As a result of Progressio's support, team practices, such as the taking and circulating of minutes, had been introduced and OTIMEP had now produced its first annual operating plan.

Now the EU-backed project is underway, equivalent progress is pending in Haiti where the level of need is greater still. Though a similar technical office has been set up, with three employees, in Belladère, a participant in the meeting held by the IPR evaluator with officials and civil society in the town, noting the need for basic inputs such as equipment, support materials and staff training, said that those involved in the initiative felt like 'a baby taking first steps'. Even in these more challenging circumstances, however, it would seem that some benefits of Progressio's work with local authorities in the border areas have been felt. Asked about the value of the organisation's work, one female Haitian civil society participant said a Progressio awareness-raising workshop held in the Dominican Republic on state duties and citizen's rights to a say in decision-making (under the 2007 Law 176-07 institutionalising participatory municipal budgeting nationally) had provided her with insights and tools that could be adapted and promoted in the Haitian context as part of a sustained training course. Another participant at the meeting, attended by the outgoing and incoming mayors of Belladère, valued Progressio's continued accompaniment – 'For me, Progressio is not a foreign organisation, it's kept working with us over the years' – and recalled the organisation's earthquake response work in the area involving support for the running of soup kitchens.<sup>13</sup> Progressio's continued presence in the new EU project developed with OTIMEP, providing the potential for more balanced achievement of results on both sides of the border, was welcomed.

An important feature of Progressio's efforts in Elías Piña province is that it forms part of a wider body of work on municipal decision-making with other donors, partners and DWs in key

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<sup>12</sup> They have included the setting up of a municipal credit scheme and the rehabilitation of the town's market and slaughter house.

<sup>13</sup> Progressio played a very significant role in coordinating key aspects of the Dominican Republic's response to Haiti's 2010 earthquake. The then Dominican country representative was in charge of the project committee of the Ayuda a Haiti (Help Haiti) platform, deciding how donations should be matched with project priorities, and a Progressio DW, a Spanish media and communications expert, provided strategic support for efforts to provide news and channel information on the emergency response via the platform's website (<http://plataforma-ayuda-haiti.blogspot.co.uk/>).

locations across the northern, central and southern border areas, and also replicates tools and approaches used in the organisation's apparent success in promoting participatory municipal budgeting – including recognition of gender issues – with partners elsewhere in the Dominican Republic over the last decade.

As well as her current involvement in supporting the mayor, building on her work in strengthening the role of OTIMEP, Diana Torres has supported awareness-raising on municipal participation across the central Elías Piña province as part of a Progressio project with the UNDP's ART GOLD (governance and local development) programme, which also operates in the northern border area with local Dominican and Haitian partners. Meanwhile, another DW, Bolívar Sánchez, a Guatemalan specialist on local participatory development, who has worked with both Dominican and Haitian partners in the south (including on participation issues affecting women and youth), is now involved in a new project in the southern Enriquillo area, *Construyendo Ciudadanía* (Building Citizenship). This was launched in February 2012 by Progressio's partner, the Federación Dominicana de Municipios (Dominican Federation of Municipalities, FEDOMU).

This association with FEDOMU, as a nation-wide body, offers the potential for Progressio results to be further scaled up. According to Francis Jorge García, coordinator of FEDOMU's participatory budget initiatives, an important result of Progressio's past support from an official point of view is that it has helped bridge the gap between the state and civil society by raising the latter's understanding of official laws and policies and how official bodies work. At the heart of the change has been Progressio's support in developing intensive training courses for civil society involving award of a diploma to those who successfully complete the sessions (see 3.3.2). FEDOMU has made the diploma approach a key part of its *Construyendo Ciudadanía* project.

#### *Innovation and applying learning*

A key innovation in this area of Progressio's work is that it has not sought to enhance civil society demand for transparency and responsiveness in traditional isolation but also to nurture civil society capacity to engage in dialogue with the state, laying the basis for more constructive, if at the same critical, interaction. This has meant engaging positively with the state where strategic opportunities have existed and also working with civil society players to ensure they are properly informed and equipped to become involved in dialogue. With its detailed knowledge of the national and local context, Progressio had the nous to spot the opportunity for launching work with such an approach a decade ago by targeting engagement of a forward-looking local political leader as a potential avenue for longer-term change. This spawned a series of pilot initiatives in key municipalities, with pressure for new approaches culminating in the 2007 approval of Law 176-07 institutionalising nationally the principle of participatory budgeting and recognising the need for gender equity in budget decisions. Currently, it remains to be seen what turn events will take in Elías Piña province, but the partnership now being struck with the local mayor in El Comendador, regarded as a politician providing new thinking (including within his own conservative party) and potentially breaking the mould, can be seen as the next step in this Progressio tradition.

Worth noting is the development of particular methodological tools that have endured during this process, with several Progressio DWs becoming very skilled in their use and also involved in their continued refinement with civil society and state partners. A key tool, for example, has been a rigorous diploma system in which civil society representatives, selected through a facilitated process of dialogue and awareness-raising with their organisations and communities, undergo an intense process of training on municipal laws and the rights and responsibilities of

the state and the citizen over several months and are awarded a diploma on completion of the course. For members of disadvantaged groups, the award represents an important measure of public recognition and sustains the motivation of the recipients. Equipped with the information, knowledge and organisational skills needed, the trained participants – typically a gender-balanced group – are in a stronger position to engage in practice with the authorities and are also supported to replicate the knowledge and expertise among their organisations and communities. Progressio has undertaken a process of continual improvement of the system with partners, conducting research, deepening the level of training and awareness-raising and strengthening lobbying, advocacy and networking skills. University recognition and replication has also been achieved, and former DWs are contributing to books on municipal participation.

Such Progressio entrepreneurship in the country now involves efforts to scale up replication and impact through bodies such as the FEDOMU local government network, which has recognised the value of the Progressio approach. Progressio has been placed in charge of the civil society component of FEDOMU's EU-funded Construyendo Ciudadanía project that will work with mayors both in the Enriquillo area of the southern Independencia province and with its Haitian counterparts across the border and also support the continued development of cross-border multi-stakeholder stakeholder committees.

#### ***Catalysing change through support for research, policy and communication***

In addition to working with/through intermediary organisations and networks in an effort to scale up impact, another important facet of Progressio's capacity-building work in its country programmes is its frequent support for partners involved in policy research, advocacy and communications. During his visit to the Dominican Republic and Haiti, an IPR evaluator found evidence that Progressio's involvement in this area can in certain instances achieve results of potentially major significance for policy decisions and people's lives.

On assuming power in August 2012, the new president of the Dominican Republic, Danilo Medina, pointedly used his inauguration speech to declare that his administration would make good a longstanding official pledge to devote 4 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) to spending on primary and secondary education. Whether/how this announcement, seen as a breakthrough on account of its high profile, leads to implementation in practice remains to be seen. But it does provide an invitingly significant lever for continued public pressure to ensure that promises are kept.

It is difficult to assert that this development – a major example of development results and value for money on calculation of the potential direct and indirect benefits for children and young people – can be attributed individually and directly to Progressio. A wide range of NGOs and other civil society actors has been involved in supporting and running the four-per-cent-for-education campaign. But it is plausible to claim that Progressio, through highly effective support for the role played by its partner, the Centro Bonó, a Jesuit-run social justice and development organisation,<sup>14</sup> has made a catalytic contribution to the campaign's apparent success.

An important role has been played by the Progressio DW, Mariana Barrenese, an expert on public finance and fiscal policies with experience of official institutions from Argentina, whose work with Progressio is funded by the PPA and a grant from Christian Aid. On behalf of the Centro Bonó, she provided analytical advice and support for a team that produced a ground-breaking position paper for the Coalición Educación Digna (Dignified Education Coalition)

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<sup>14</sup> See <http://bono.org.do/>

campaign.<sup>15</sup> The strength of this document,<sup>16</sup> in arguing the case of increased education spending to target 2011 budget planning, was that it involved critical examination of other spending priorities and provided evidence-based proposals for how the 4 per cent commitment could be met. Follow-up policy briefings analysed the costs for successful social policies of the lack of public investment in education.

This research provided a technical foundation for campaigning at public and political levels at the time and as the Dominican Republic entered an election year in 2012, with the Centro Bonó producing an accessible range of public education materials such as pamphlets using cartoons, to popularise the key issues and messages so that they could be taken up by others, particularly at a grassroots level. This work involved another PPA- and Christian Aid-supported Progressio DW attached to the Centro Bonó, Venezuelan media and communication specialist Juan Carlos González Díaz, who also supported the production of short documentary video clips on the issues at stake. One, he said, providing comment on a parliamentary session held, generated several thousand hits on You Tube, which in turn sparked mainstream media coverage.

According to Magda Pepen, a board member from the Coalición Educación Digna, Mariana Barrenese's advice on technical issues was important for the coalition's sharpening of policy messages in lobbying policy-makers and becoming a reference point for media interest and coverage, which in turn added to public awareness and pressure. She told the evaluation team that her own grasp of budgetary issues had been strengthened through contact with the DW and that this had given her greater confidence and ammunition in contact with decision-makers. The coalition had also valued the DW's running of workshops to explain and raise members' understanding of the budget cycle and the issues at stake affecting education. Similar events have been run with university students.

Adding to the momentum for change, following the coalition's success in securing the signature of 130 representatives of trade unions, employers, universities and NGOs in support of the education pledge, in late 2011 ten presidential candidates signed a pact to meet the 4 per cent promise. This provided a further peg for the campaign, as the coalition, with technical advice from the DW, held discussions with the various presidential technical teams and briefed leading journalists before an unprecedented television debate on education with six of the candidates.

Now President Medina has declared the new government's intention to uphold the education pledge, the challenge will be to monitor whether and how it will be introduced. It would appear that the Progressio DW has helped to put groups such as the Coalición Educación Digna in a stronger position to hold the government to account for progress. Her work has also enabled the Centro Bonó to become recognised as a reference point on tax policies, following her advisory work with economists from the Foro Ciudadano (Citizens Forum) network (grouping hundreds of civil society organisations and to which the Centro Bonó belongs) on the development and promotion of a fiscal pact. The forum's Consejo Consultivo de Economistas (consultative council of economists) has also been the focus of her capacity-building support on public finance issues.

The director of the Centro Bonó, Mario Serrano, told a member of the IPR team that raising local levels of domestic finance is crucial for the longer-term sustainability and accountability of

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<sup>15</sup> See <http://educaciondigna.com/>

<sup>16</sup> *Lineamientos políticos y técnicos de la Coalición Educación Digna 2011* ([http://issuu.com/educaciondignard/docs/propuesta\\_documento\\_posici\\_n\\_julio\\_2011/1](http://issuu.com/educaciondignard/docs/propuesta_documento_posici_n_julio_2011/1))

development efforts, and that progress in this direction could help the country reduce dependence on international aid.

With the support of the British embassy in Santo Domingo, Progressio is also involved in supporting the Centro Bonó to raise awareness of bi-national Dominican-Haitian relations, including through the communication and advocacy support work of development worker, Juan Carlos González Díaz.<sup>17</sup>

### **Progressio's capacity-building in in Somaliland on HIV and AIDS**

In Somaliland Progressio is working with the Hargeisa Group Hospital and Talowadaag (which translates to "Coalition") a Progressio partner, on the establishment of an Integrated Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support Centre (IPTCS) for people living with HIV and AIDS and for the prevention of HIV and AIDS. With the support of Medical Expert Dr Abdirahman Mohamed (a Somalian Ethiopian) and HIV Integrated Services Supervisor Edward Musinguzi (Ugandan), both established the IPTCS centres which has had an important impact on the provision of Anti-retroviral Therapy (ART) and psychosocial treatment for people living with HIV and also led to an on-going programme to prevent transmission of HIV and AIDS to others.

The IPTCS centres focus in particular on mother to child transmission (MTCT). The number of pregnant women tested in 2011 increased from 321 in the previous year to 1,112 due to improved services provided by the IPTCS centres. This indicates the increased uptake of services, enabling people living with HIV to learn of their HIV status earlier and adopt safer practices so that they can prevent further transmission of the virus.

The capacity of IPTCS centres has been built and strengthened due to technical support provided by the two Progressio DWs, who provide on-the-job training to staff. They offer coaching, mentoring and supervision to counsellors working with people living with HIV and AIDS to encourage adherence to and management of Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) for adults and children. The two Progressio development workers also support staff to clearly monitor and evaluate the services offered. They are also training staff on Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT). In addition, the centres have established and mobilised a support group for people living with HIV to give moral support to newly tested patients. On a quarterly basis, Talowadaag (which won the 2010 International Service Human Rights Work Award for the Defence of the Right to Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare) provides nutritional food supplements to 220 clients receiving ART healthcare. The results of this work, among others, have meant that:

- Some 548 patients enrolled in the IPTCS scheme as ART clients receive medication regularly with highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) medicines.
- Public understanding about the importance of counselling and voluntary testing has increased; in 2011, 641 clients accessed testing services in order to get an early indicator of their status.
- The psychosocial support and counselling the centres provide is changing lives. There is an increase in the number of people living with HIV adopting a 'living positively' attitude and leading healthy and positive lifestyles.

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<sup>17</sup> By mutual consent, originally planned project activities are being readjusted in view of changes in political circumstances relating to the mixed bi-national commission set up by the Dominican and Haitian governments, so an account of their results is not possible at this stage. For a separate example of this DW's work on bi-national issues with the Centro Bonó, see the *Reconoci.do* micro-site he has been supporting on recognition of Dominican citizens of Haitian descent: <http://reconoci.do/>

- The spread of the HIV and AIDS epidemic is contained and minimised due to Progressio's partner's wider public awareness raising, the availability of blood safety, condom distribution, improved testing services and advocacy for behaviour change.
- A wider public understanding of the purpose of IPTCS centres, the importance of adherence to ART, and the adoption of safer practices for people living with HIV.
- 149 staff working in the IPTCS centres and health facilities have been trained and are motivated.
- ARV drugs have been made available to people living with HIV and AIDS.
- More people are coming to the centres for voluntary testing.
- Support groups for people living with HIV have been established.
- Food supplements are provided for 220 PLHIV on a quarterly basis, these are people who cannot usually afford nutritious food.
- People living with HIV were mobilised to volunteer at the IPTCS centres to promote adherence to ART and the importance of living positively among newly diagnosed patients.
- The capacity of health care staff at Hargeisa Hospital has been built up, with support provided to help co-ordinate the rehabilitation of the hospital laboratory, several wards, the pharmacy and the blood-testing centre.

### **Capacity-building to promote effective civil society monitoring of local development projects in Timor Leste**

In Timor Leste, DW Armstrong Asiimire Nkahabita from Uganda, specialist in Decentralisation and Citizen engagement working with FONGTIL (The NGO Forum for Timor Leste) and LIDER (Lian District Ermera) a consortium of member organisations in Ermera District that are members of FONGTIL in a project supporting inclusive local governance in Timor Leste. His work was conducted from May 2010 – May 2012.

This project seeks to strengthen Civil Society Organisations and their capacity to engage with local government institutions and develop sustainable democratic practices. We have found that enhancing the abilities of Civil Society Organisations' (CSOs) to hold decision-makers to account and effectively engage with the government is pivotal to meeting the needs of poor and marginalised communities.

Progressio's strategic objective met by this project is that of 'increased downward accountability and responsiveness of local and national authorities towards the needs of the poor and vulnerable.'

The project works at two levels: firstly, through establishing and strengthening primary national organisations, which perform an umbrella or network function by monitoring and analysing national and local development processes. Then, together, these organisations advocate and lobby for more public participation in local and national government decision-making.

The main achievements of our work has been:

- Three Progressio development workers have provided district-based organisational development support on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). This has successfully and substantially increased the capacity of the FONGTIL network to engage in government pilot programmes on decentralization.

District Liaison Officers and Coordinators are now trained in the use of M&E methods and tools. Specialised training has allowed the LIDER network (made up of FONGTIL members in Ermera District) to elaborate a comprehensive work plan, which is now incorporating M&E of government projects at district and local levels.

- Progressio's expertise in M&E and capacity building is directly serving communities in Timor-Leste. With support from Progressio development workers, a pilot-project was developed to monitor a total of 14 public works in Ermera using consultation and feedback methodology. Among the public services monitored were health posts, community centres, a cemetery, and village water points. The pilot-project provided invaluable experience of practical approaches to civil society monitoring of government commissioned construction works. The pilot-project also provided opportunities for actual field research, thus allowing Progressio's partners to put into practice the skills and tools they had acquired in training.
- Where previously the working relationship between the Ministry of State and NGOs was not very functional, FONGTIL has now established clear mechanisms of involvement in government processes. This is in part thanks to the support of Progressio's development workers. FONGTIL has been able to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding with the government agreeing on a monitoring system for the government's decentralization projects. (This MoU is in the process of being officially signed by the Ministry of State.)
- Ultimately, FONGTIL has been able to open up effective communication channels between government and Civil Society. This is a key step towards an increasingly transparent relationship between government and civil society and provides an effective mechanism for influencing government decision-making.

Some of the key achievements of this work are as follows:

- Through training, 35 FONGTIL staff members (including 7 Board Members) and 13 district coordinators clearly understand the concept of decentralization and how citizens can actually participate in this process.
- Training on governance initiated by Progressio development workers and with a special focus on decentralization and M&E, is now being rolled out to the 6 districts. This constitutes a significant multiplier effect, reaching approximately 200 people, including 71 women.
- Overall, this means that approximately 450 local, national and international NGOs who are part of the FONGTIL consortium will benefit from this capacity building process. This groundwork will prove to be crucial in the coming months as it is possible that a law on decentralization will be passed by Parliament.
- Member organizations are now able to design monitoring tools to be used for the government's local and district development projects. The aim is to collect data, analyse it, prepare reports, and disseminate information to different stakeholders. This has been the first training of its kinds since the establishment of the network.
- At national level, the government is now more open in terms of transparency. A Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed between the Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management (MSATM) and FONGTIL. This is extremely positive and promising, as it shows that the government fully recognises CSOs as legitimate counterparts in the monitoring of government projects. And, through this Memorandum of Understanding, CSOs are given a concrete way to intervene in the

implementation of policies and a way to provide their feedback to the government when necessary.

- At the local level, civil society members are now actively involved in local development processes in order to ensure accountability and transparency.

The capacity of Timorese civil society organisations to represent the communities they serve has substantially increased through improving organisational and programmatic management at FONGTIL. As the government implements the decentralisation process, it is fundamental that relationships between Timorese CSOs, local government and local communities are strong in order to ensure that initiatives truly address the needs of the poorest and most marginalised people and encourage their participation in the process. This can be achieved through involving the poorest and most marginalised in consultations and working groups.

## Annex G2: Progressio's work in International Advocacy

### International advocacy with Zimbabwe European Network (ZEN)

While Progressio is a small organisation, it has been able to punch above its weight in terms of international advocacy. Traditionally, Progressio's reputation has been known for international advocacy. This can be seen through their interactions with multiple ministries of the government including DEFRA, and the FCO.

Progressio is part of the Zimbabwe European Network that strives for a coherent EU policy towards Zimbabwe across all institutions of the EU as well as member states. There is a strong probability that Progressio is influencing the United Kingdom's Foreign Commonwealth Office's sanction strategy with the government of Zimbabwe in a small way.

Progressio is proud of its involvement in the Zimbabwe European Network. It is one of the founders of the organisation and remains heavily involved. The Zimbabwe European Network was launched to ensure the EU and its member states stay engaged on Zimbabwe and the perspective that Zimbabwean civil society shapes its future policy decisions. The organisation is comprised of 33 different organisations from 10 different European countries. The network regularly meets with Zimbabwe civil society organisations. This is one of the largest trans-European lobby groups that focuses on a country.

ZEN's task is to negotiate and to educate their respective foreign office, and to offer a wider public debate about the ethical use of sanctions. This is done through evidence-based research and indicators assessing progress in existing EU benchmarks linked to special measures underpinning EU-Zimbabwean policy. Thus ZEN is able to provide information on EU policy to Zimbabwean civil society and use them as feedback to their policy recommendations.

Steve Kibble, who became the 2<sup>nd</sup> chair of ZEN in 2011, has a strong relationship with the Zimbabwe Unit in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. When speaking to the FCO, the Zimbabwe Unit remarks that ZEN has been very helpful in the role of EU discussions. They are one of the few civil society groups that engage with the EU in a productive manner. FCO have found ZEN useful in two areas. First, ZEN as a whole has access to Brussels and many of the governments and foreign missions, not just the UK's FCO. As a result, their lobbying efforts have an impact to influence multiple countries. Second, Progressio is extremely well connected and has brought about thoughtful perspective at the quarterly round table. They are quick to send supportive statements which gives feedback to the FCO's offices which has been helpful.

Progressio's reputation with Zimbabwe has caught the attention of others including Lambeth Palace. Through this work, they prepared the Archbishop of Canterbury's visit to Zimbabwe in 2012 which included meeting President Mugabe.

### International Advocacy at Rio + 20

Progressio had attended the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio +20. Progressio has brought their signature value added of bringing the voices of rural men and women to the conference. Prior to the conference, Progressio development workers held some small focus group discussions with their partners addressing questions and issues specifically around sustainable development. Based on the feedback, Progressio was able to refine their policy message. The policy message and stories were included in publications like the Outreach magazine collated by stakeholders which was distributed at the conference. Progressio used the conference as a method to raise awareness about civil society and local opinions about

sustainable development. They were able to do so through the media including blogs and interviews such as an article for the Final Prep Communications in New York and three articles during Rio + 20. Overall the conference provided exposure of Progressio to other networks and approaches.

However most impressively, Progressio worked in close dialogue with DEFRA the UK policy lead, during the run up to the conference and had active constructive engagement and written dialogue with the Secretary of State at the time Caroline Spelman, and the Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg who led the UK delegation. Further Progressio contributed to the affirmation at Rio +20 and in DEFRA's own policy messaging about the importance of water resource management in relation to sustainable development goals. Further, in the follow up to Rio + 20, the work is now developing into an informed and constructive input into the post-2015 planning at the international scale.

### **International advocacy on Illegal Logging**

Progressio's campaigns work on illegal logging has been clearly reviewed by Catherine Sexton in December 2011 as possibly one of the most successful international advocacy programme. Progressio was able to make a clear contribution to the passing of legislation and the inclusion of several key aspects of the legislation. Their advocacy was rooted in evidence of social impact of illegal logging on the lives of partners and beneficiaries.

### **Advocacy on faith and development**

Progressio's efforts to encourage the development community to recognise the importance of considering the crucial bearing that faith-based actors can have on positive or negative development outcomes has been a longstanding feature of the NGO's work,<sup>18</sup> given its strong partnerships with organisations. Progressio works with people of all faiths and none. This has put the organisation in a strong position to nurture and contribute to the growing interest in exploring and clarifying the policy and practice implications of this issue, as reflected by DfID's own recent decision to hold the Faith Partnership Principles consultation. Following the June 2012 launch of the official paper at Lambeth Palace, at which Progressio was selected to chair a question and answer session with the Archbishop of Canterbury and Andrew Mitchell, the head of DfID's civil society department contacted Progressio to thank the organisation for its 'excellent contribution' to the process and its role was also noted in an unrelated communication by the former secretary of state for international development.

Progressio's involvement in this area, supported by PPA funds, is mentioned here as an example of DfID additionality, even if it may be premature at this stage to identify immediate results of such UK-based work for oppressed and disadvantaged people, despite its international relevance and longer-term application (perhaps for this reason, faith and development work does not feature explicitly in Progressio's PPA logframe). Indeed, insofar as it continues to be a focus of Progressio's efforts, DfID's own Faith Partnership Principles paper, having provided a conceptual reference point, needs to be followed up in practice if it is to become a foundation for development gains. The point, rather, is that this NGO is productively contributing its experience within the UK's development community to efforts to create such a building block for international development support. Progressio's Head of Policy and Communications, for example, as well as providing the organisation's own comments on the Faith Partnership Principles paper, also coordinated input on behalf of the UK Consortium on HIV and AIDS as a member of its faith working group. Outside the DfID process, he has also

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<sup>18</sup> See examples at <http://www.progressio.org.uk/content/hiv-and-faith>, including its April 2011 publication, *Prayer alone is not enough: people's stories of HIV and faith*.

worked closely to explore the issues with other faith-related organisations such as Islamic Relief, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, the official Catholic development agency CAFOD and the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, for example, chairing sessions of a Lambeth Palace seminar convened by the Church of England. DFID HIV team has seen Progressio's paper titled "Prayer alone is not enough: people's stories of HIV and faith." and have asked Progressio to share their work with DFID.

A significant benefit of Progressio's work in this as in other areas (as highlighted in the example of Haiti-related international advocacy above) stems from the effective role the organisation plays in providing information and advice and informing the thinking of others. The value of its very approach to such influencing is worth stressing here, as IPR feedback from partners indicates that Progressio does so in a spirit of dialogue and mutual respect rather than in attempt to promote or impose recognition of its 'own' policy agenda unilaterally, or with its own institutional profile in mind. According to one informant, such constructive engagement differentiates Progressio from other NGOs in promoting the voice of Southern partners, as it works with the grain of existing views in promoting change rather than aligning selected voices behind a pre-established policy narrative.

Such an approach is particularly appropriate in the faith and development sphere, given the danger of polarised debates pitting different faiths, theological perspectives and secular views against each other, hindering the prospects of positive development shifts regardless of whether such battles are 'won' or 'lost'. For Progressio, it would seem a crucial aim is to generate spaces where faith and development actors can think, discuss, move forward and create new ground as part of a values-based process, with advocacy geared to providing food for thought and debate rather than being teleologically aimed at changing theological doctrines and practices. Moreover, Progressio's pluralistic identity – as an organisation rooted in but independent of the official Catholic church, and which works with people of all faiths and none – puts it in a strong position to engage partners and target audiences in the faith and development arena, acting as an 'honest broker'.

These impressions were upheld in an IPR interview with a representative of Lambeth Palace working on international development, who also spoke positively about Progressio's capacity to distil and reflect different viewpoints. She said that such qualities enable Progressio to act as an effective facilitator and catalyst of change by bridging different positions on faith and development, and that Lambeth Palace had benefited greatly from Progressio's sharp political analysis on other major international issues such as the future of the Millennium Development Goals, food and hunger, and democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe. She found Progressio's verbal and written briefings very useful and had drawn on these regularly for Lambeth Palace's own role in briefing church leaders in the House of Lords, engaging with parliamentary groups and working with ambassadors. The potentially important indirect effects of Progressio's information provision should therefore not be under-estimated, though it is difficult – and may not always be appropriate – to try and measure or assess their definitive impact. Indeed, a body such as Lambeth Palace, while having considerable influence through the moral authority of its voice, would not see itself as an explicit policy advocate, let alone an extension of an NGO's policy messages. But this, in her view, is one of Progressio's considerable strengths: that of providing quality information, advice and analysis without strings attached, respecting the autonomy of partners and target audiences.

Beyond achieving longer-term results through work on faith and development at an international level, it is important to highlight the progress that Progressio has been making through its faith and development approach in country programmes working to reduce the

stigma and promote the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS. Progressio has sought to support a positive faith-based response to HIV and AIDS since the 1990s in Yemen and Somaliland, later expanding its work to Southern Africa and Latin America. As is apparent from testimonies, there is strong evidence that Progressio's work has achieved impressive instances of success in nurturing changes in the views of faith leaders, with such shifts in turn creating the potential to transform the lives of those facing the isolation, fear, violence and discrimination of HIV and AIDS stigma. Work with different partners, for example in Yemen, has targeted/involved religious leaders, training them on highly sensitive issues normally deemed taboo such as the impact of HIV and AIDS on sex workers and men who have sex with men.<sup>19</sup> The training involves educating religious leaders about the transmission of HIV and AIDS and the prevention. It has resulted in faith leaders changing their sermons to be more supportive. According to one testimony, about 60% of Yemen's imamas are now reached with correct messaging about HIV.

Progressio has had profound impact with their publication "Prayer Alone is Not Enough" which was circulated to all Catholic Bishops in the UK. Several Bishops have responded positively, noting they would commend the report to the reading of parish priests. The report was also presented to the Church of England training session. Progressio has also engaged with the Vatican on HIV following comments made by Pope Benedict.

#### **International advocacy on Haiti and Dominican-Haitian relations**

To assess the results achieved in this PPA-supported work, the evaluation team reviewed advocacy plans, progress reports and the May 2012 PATT review covering work conducted during the year of PPA reporting, and discussed these with the relevant Progressio advocacy and policy officer. To further elucidate and validate emerging impressions and opinions on whether/what results are being achieved, a member of the IPR team also interviewed a small, but representative range of external informants from the NGO, business, diplomatic and parliamentary communities familiar with Progressio's work.

Plans for advocacy on Haiti and the Dominican Republic were still being reviewed by Progressio London and its Santo Domingo office at the time of the IPR, following the intensity of the organisation's in-country response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake and, in the aftermath, the need to assess changing circumstances on the shared island of Hispaniola, with changes of government taking place in both countries.<sup>20</sup> Progressio London has in the interim worked against provisional objectives, which have centred on promoting the stronger and effective participation of Haitian civil society in decision-making by the Haitian government and international donors on reconstruction and supporting improved bi-national relations relating to trade, development and migration, with 2013 originally set as a target date for results.

At first sight, such aims might appear ambitious, with impetus ostensibly more likely to be generated by/with locally-based actors rather than an external NGO actor working at a distance. Yet significant advances would appear to have been achieved. These mainly relate to the international aspects of the challenge, in line with the RICA progress indicators on boosting

<sup>19</sup> See *Prayer alone is not enough*, op. cit, for example the insightful testimonies from Yemen, pp. 21-33.

<sup>20</sup> Even so, despite country programme work coordinated from Santo Domingo being overstretched by the pressures of the earthquake and staff changes at the time, it would appear that Progressio London and Progressio in Santo Domingo did find joint space to raise awareness of the need for civil society voices to be heard in emergency response and reconstruction efforts, in the context of the challenge of decentralisation and opportunities for an improvement in bi-national relations. See Progressio's 2010 publication, *Haiti after the Earthquake: civil society perspectives on Haitian reconstruction and Dominican-Haitian bi-national relations* ([http://www.progressio.org.uk/sites/default/files/Haiti-after-the-earthquake\\_low-res.pdf](http://www.progressio.org.uk/sites/default/files/Haiti-after-the-earthquake_low-res.pdf)).

the accountability and responsiveness of the EU, EU member states and multilateral actors. But, from interviews, it is noteworthy that apparent gains at the international level may even be helping to nurture indications of palpable shifts within Haiti itself in terms of openness to civil society participation. This is somewhat of an achievement in relation to the time and resources that Progressio has had at its disposal and would appear to be indicative of the quality of the work carried out.

A crucial UK development in mid-2012 was the British government's decision to open an embassy in Haiti, followed by a reciprocal announcement by new Haitian Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe, making an official visit to the UK at the time of the London Olympics, that Haiti would open a diplomatic mission in London. Such decisions, though having a manifest humanitarian dimension, clearly need to be understood in the context of commercial, diplomatic, geopolitical and security factors. But the possibility should not be discounted that state awareness of wider UK concern with Haiti's reconstruction and development may have been an element in at least part of some official thinking.

Whether or not a link can be drawn, the impression gained through interviews is that Progressio played an important role in any case in boosting efforts, over the 2011/12 period, to create a supportive environment in the UK for official responsiveness to the challenges facing Haiti. As well as playing an important role in re-launching the Haiti Advocacy Platform Ireland-UK (HAPI-UK) network of NGOs in March 2011 (drafting the network's annual work plan and managing available funds for work on Haiti-Dominican activities), it also helped lay the foundations for that October's reestablishment of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Haiti chaired by Lord Griffiths and now helps to run its secretariat. Links were also made with the APPG on the Dominican Republic chaired by Lord Foulkes. This momentum led to initiatives such as the UK parliamentary delegation to the Dominican Republic and Haiti in November-December 2011, when a simultaneous trade scoping delegation also took place, led by the director of British Expertise and the UKTI Aid-Funded Business Service<sup>21</sup> with whom Progressio also formed good links, helping to facilitate the organisation of a meeting for business with the Haitian prime minister at the time of his July 2012 UK visit.

Working closely with other HAPI-UK members, Progressio has also supported the consolidation of a multi-stakeholder Round Table on Haiti and the Dominican Republic, also chaired by Lord Griffiths, which has become recognised as a bi-annual forum bringing together NGOs, parliamentarians, diplomats, churches, academics and business leaders, as well as FCO and DfID representatives. Progressio has prepared briefings for the Round Table, which could have the potential to become a more formal working group coordinating efforts in support of Haiti and bi-national development.

As the focal point for HAPI-UK's interaction with the FCO, it was Progressio that made arrangements for UK development NGOs to hold a meeting with the new Haitian prime minister during his recent official UK visit. By all accounts, this meeting involved a positive exchange that managed to overcome the traditional tensions of civil society criticism and official defensiveness and thus create a degree of trust. According to one source, there is now greater official openness to civil society participation in bodies such as the mixed bilateral commission recently revived by the Haitian and Dominican governments to resolve bi-national

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<sup>21</sup> British Expertise is a trade association that promotes UK consultancy and professional services companies. On behalf of others, it also manages the UKTI Aid-Funded Business Service, which advises UK companies on winning development and humanitarian aid contracts.

tensions, with feedback on the quality of exchanges with stakeholders in the UK encouraging this opening.

The degree to which such positive developments can be attributed directly or exclusively to Progressio is difficult to determine. For some, making such an explicit link may be inappropriate, given the multiple actors involved in work on Haiti and Haitian-Dominican relations as well as Progressio's own preferred style of often working behind the scenes and collaborating with others. All the same, several of those interviewed referred to Progressio's work as having been 'second to none' and in some instances asserted that some of the building blocks put in place for progress in results 'would not have been possible without Progressio'.

What can be said with some certainty is that outside stakeholders value the quality of Progressio's interaction with them and the role that the organisation plays as a bridge-builder and facilitator of dialogue with different constituencies. The Dominican ambassador to the UK, for example, welcomed what he saw as Progressio's role in shifting the terms of debate with NGOs on Dominican-Haitian relations onto a more constructive terrain, given the need to do so in view of what he considered the new opportunities for bi-national collaboration in the light of changing circumstances in both countries. He also appreciated Progressio's role in sharing briefings, circulating the minutes of stakeholder meetings and proactively following up possible action points with the embassy. A measure of his trust was that, during the July 2012 visit of the Dominican foreign minister to the UK, Progressio had chaired a question and answer session with British NGOs.

The value of Progressio's bridging role for policy change, though focused on the UK in the APR reporting period, also has the potential to be extended to work targeting the EU. From feedback and correspondence examined, it would seem the facilitation of EU contacts by Progressio's relevant advocacy and policy officer proved extremely useful for the efforts of the respective chairs of the APPGs for Haiti and the Dominican Republic to lobby for better EU support for Haiti during a 2012 visit to Brussels, including through diplomatic support for stronger links between British, Haitian and European parliamentarians. For its own part, Progressio has represented the HAPI-UK NGO network in meetings of its EU-wider counterpart, the Coordination Europe-Haiti (CoEH).

The value of Progressio's development of stronger links with the business community should also be noted, given the potentially crucial role of supportive trade and investment in Haiti's reconstruction and development. As well as the links with British Expertise (which, at the time of writing, was planning a follow-up trade mission to Haiti), Progressio has also forged a relationship with the Caribbean Council, also a member of the multi-stakeholder Round Table. Evaluator contact with British Expertise indicated that the organisation had greatly valued Progressio's role in providing information and advice on reconstruction and development in Haiti, particularly in view of DfID's relatively weak presence in Hispaniola.

### **Annex G3: PPA reporting and Progressio's planning, monitoring and evaluation systems: strengths, weaknesses and recommendations**

#### **Progressio's PPA logframe and the relationship with its RICA system**

Progressio's PPA logframe for 2011/14 is based on the organisation's route map setting out how the goals and objectives of its 2010/15 strategic plan will be achieved, with progress in route map outcomes and impact assessed under Progressio's Regular Impact and Capacity Assessment (RICA) system for monitoring and evaluation. Whereas the RICA framework underpinning the organisational route map reflects pursuit of three overall goals and their respective sub-objectives, listed under Progressio's three key themes – Participation and Effective Governance, Sustainable Environment, and HIV and AIDS – the PPA logframe has aggregated the organisation's work under two overarching outcomes (backed by four specific outputs).

Outcome 1 of the PPA logframe, reflecting Progressio's concern with participation and governance (whether as a significant area of work on its own right or as a cross-cutting issue in relation to its other key themes), refers to the pursuit of changes in national and international policies and practices that will ultimately benefit poor people as a result of civil society participation and empowerment. The number of targeted beneficiaries under this outcome – almost 2.6 million people, according to the revised logframe submitted in the light of the 2011/12 annual progress review – is based on the premise that wider structural changes will maximise benefits for people as they have a greater say in decision-making. Outcome 1 comprises both the results of Progressio's capacity-building support for partners' own pursuit of policy change nationally (Progressio does not undertake UK based advocacy itself in its country programmes) and of international advocacy initiatives coordinated by Progressio's global office in London. Outcome 2, meanwhile, aimed at benefiting almost 555,000 people, refers to the intended achievements of Progressio's capacity-building at a grassroots level whereby the boosted performance of partners leads to practical gains for the communities they work with (eg environmentally sustainable farming practices).

The PPA logframe has the merit of synthesising Progressio's objectives and measuring the outputs expected of its different types of interventions (eg the number of DWs or projects in place to strengthen civil society in the country programmes, or the number of policy interventions made/advanced in international advocacy). But in several respects the RICA-based route map provides a much clearer depiction both of the thematic composition of Progressio's work and of the results it is aimed at achieving, with specific objectives (under each institutional theme) outlined in narrative terms and supported by change indicators with numerical targets. The PPA logframe in effect describes a sub-set of the overall RICA framework.

A key strength of the RICA framework is its results-oriented nature. Indeed, as borne out by a paper trail examination of Progressio's project cycle in the case of the country programme for Dominican Republic and Haiti, specific objectives and change indicators of the RICA framework are linked integrally with country strategies and project plans, with DWs and partners making them the reference point of partnership agreements, individual work plans, project reporting and beneficiary surveys. In this sense, RICA has considerable advantages in that it combines the provision of a coherent global framework for project design and implementation with 'bottom-up' opportunities for individual project initiatives to feed their respective contributions into Progressio's overall strategy.

Moreover, in terms of detailed impact assessment, RICA's various M&E tools – such as the Participation and Transparency Tool (PATT) and the various questionnaires/surveys covering water, food security, knowledge/attitudes/practices/behaviour on HIV and AIDS or the impact of international advocacy – are enabling the organisation to gather a major pool of information on progress/setbacks in achieving success, with recorded changes analysed against the findings of earlier baseline studies conducted at the start of projects. It is the findings of these RICA surveys, submitted as part of progress reports from DWs in country programmes and Progressio staff handling international advocacy, which underpin the RICA M&E system, with scores also informing measurement of particular PPA milestones. Such reports and surveys were included in the RICA spreadsheet eventually submitted by Progressio to DfID as part of 2011/12 annual progress review reporting.

DfID's requirement of its own separate PPA logframe as a major Progressio donor means that the grantee, so as to avoid the potential confusion and costs of managing parallel systems and in the interests of information consistency, will need to ensure that it tracks effectively the relationship between the PPA logframe and RICA, including the numerical targets in each framework and the role of the RICA M&E system in providing accurate information to report against the PPA grant. Evaluator discussions with Progressio indicate strong awareness of the importance of this task. Indeed, steps have already been taken to include PPA indicators alongside RICA indicators in project and DW tracking tables, and to ensure that country representatives and programme officers are familiar with the links and able to track them. Progressio's template for tracking international advocacy looks at the link with the PPA.

***Recommendation:*** This PPA-RICA linking may need to be strengthened across all planning systems and documents so that managers and staff, whether they are involved in in-country capacity-building or in international advocacy, are fully acquainted. This should aid the ease and strength of PPA reporting.

#### **Progress against the logframe and quality of data**

Given the extensive range of RICA data being pulled in to gather evidence on progress, and on the basis of findings generated by a field visit and interviews, the evaluators are confident that the scores provided by Progressio in its first APR report covering progress against the PPA logframe are generally valid. Seen on their own terms, Progressio's efforts to achieve the targets set out in the PPA logframe appear to be very much on track, even if at this early stage of the PPA (the first of a three-year agreement) the emphasis is understandably on outputs rather than more ambitious development outcomes and eventual impact. At the same time, some qualifications are in order, arising from doubts and uncertainties caused by the real difficulties of gathering and sustaining accurate numerical information on beneficiary numbers and changes in their lives.

It may be important for Progressio to be clearer about numbers of people reached by different types of work and the extent to which they will benefit during the PPA. For example, according to milestone 1 under output indicator 3.3, the total number of stated beneficiaries for 2011/12 already stands at 3,140,920 people (as against the planned target of 1.9 million and just below the eventual 2014 target of 3,145,000).<sup>22</sup> This near-equivalence in beneficiary numbers at milestone 1 and milestone 3 may simply reflect the fact that programme and policy activities are already reaching targeted beneficiary groups to some degree and that people will benefit more fully by the end of the PPA. If so, some way of making the distinction between targeting

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<sup>22</sup> The numbers stated above are Progressio's targeted beneficiaries. This has been rectified and a new logframe has been sent to DFID as of the first week of October 2012.

(potential beneficiaries) and benefiting (actual beneficiaries) may be necessary. But even if this is a cumulative process, the question arises as to whether all people will benefit to the same degree. Reaching people is not the same as achieving changes in their lives.

**Recommendation: It may be important for Progressio to be clearer about numbers of people reached by different types of work and the extent to which they will benefit during the PPA.**

It should also be noted that particular types of work, such as recent support for civil society networks in Zimbabwe or efforts to promote the inclusion of youth and women in forthcoming local elections in Somaliland, significantly drive up beneficiary figures. This is not to doubt the legitimacy of including numbers from such initiatives – the emergence of networks or potentially securing the right to vote are very positive developments – but to warn against the risk of crudely over-estimating the extent to which people will ultimately benefit from such developments. Equally, there may be a risk of being overcautious and possibly under-counting likely beneficiaries, a view that the IPR evaluators would hold in the light of a field visit to Progressio’s work with partners in Santo Domingo and the border areas of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, where support for policy research and advocacy on public spending, alternative agricultural practices and promotion of civil society participation in local development plans is likely to surpass considerably the total beneficiaries quoted in the PPA logframe (24,440).

The purpose of these observations is not to question pedantically individual beneficiary target numbers<sup>23</sup> or to find structural fault with Progressio’s RICA system. As covered in Progressio’s annual progress report, the organisation – with investment from DfID under the PPA – has undertaken a major effort to put in place and mainstream a system to capture much more rigorously the results of its work. These efforts should be welcomed and encouraged. Rather, the point is that considerable efforts are still required to further refine and embed RICA within the organisation and to strengthen the quality and accuracy of its M&E information.

To its credit, the organisation is far from defensive about this observation and is proactively taking steps to identify and address the problems and challenges of information gaps and inconsistencies, including continued work on the improvement of data collection templates. During the last year Progressio has reviewed more stringently the estimated beneficiary figures each programme provides in its project plans, proactively engaging staff on perceived over-estimates and under-estimates. However, this process, currently conducted annually, requires close consultation with partners and DWs on the ground, which means that revised figures are not necessarily available quickly and automatically. The IPR evaluators would recommend that the regularity of such verification should be stepped up as part of a more continuous process, building on management-staff reviews of country/project plans, project support visits incorporating a stronger M&E focus, and the ongoing 6-month DW/international advocacy reports and RICA surveys examining how beneficiaries are gaining from P’s work and being affected by external factors.

**Recomendation: Considerable efforts are still required to further refine and embed RICA within the organisation and to strengthen the quality and accuracy of its M&E information.**

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<sup>23</sup> In the case of Progressio’s capacity-building programme, beneficiary numbers are drawn from development worker (DW) work plans based on placement agreements and project plans drawn up with partners, as well as 6-monthly DW progress reports in which DWs specify/record the numbers of direct and indirect beneficiaries (to be) reached as a result of their activities. These figures are submitted by country programmes and aggregated centrally in London through excel spreadsheets and table charts as part of RICA.

**The IPR evaluators would recommend that the regularity of such verification should be stepped up as part of a more continuous process.**

Another opportunity for further improvements in M&E data collection and quality might also arise from the continuation of Progressio's welcome efforts to strengthen baseline information. Under RICA, collection of baseline data has been made a mandatory task for DWs in the first six months of their placements with partner organisations. This is a very positive part of the system in that it allows Progressio to verify and update the findings of any preparatory situation analysis and technical project assessment with partners and beneficiaries, laying a strong foundation for a work agenda to be shared and owned by all stakeholders. However, for various reasons, it would appear that this earlier stage of pre-placement planning, traditionally a hallmark of Progressio's commitment to participation and thorough analysis of capacity-building needs, is not being applied universally. In the case of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, for example, possibly because of longstanding relationships with given civil society organisations, the gathering of baseline data currently appears to rely on the initial stage of DW placements. The situation in other country programmes would need to be established, but the IPR evaluators would recommend that the strength of pre-placement assessment needs to be maintained/reintroduced, given its vital role in analysing and distilling project options.

A related challenge is turning the systematisation of baseline findings into robust yardsticks for project initiatives, one that Progressio's programme managers seem very aware of in that they review and provide feedback on the quality of the baseline (and other RICA) surveys. Indeed, some informants, while committed to RICA, noted that DW skills, interest and commitment to baseline M&E surveys can vary considerably, and that risks of partial information and subjectivity may need to be considered. Wisely, Progressio programme managers, as witnessed in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, appear to be exploiting to the full DW expertise in M&E where it exists, and M&E officers in Progressio London hold further rounds of in-country training workshops with DWs and partners to boost familiarity with the RICA system and how it can be best used, strengthened and owned. In the Dominican Republic and Haiti, the main site of detailed IPR research, there was unanimity in feedback from Progressio staff, partners and DWs that further efforts to strengthen M&E systems, while needing to meet the legitimate information requirements and accountability expectations of donors, must be centred on the needs, interests and capacity levels of civil society organisations and beneficiaries.

### **Intervention levels, types of partners and beneficiaries and the need to capture the value of capacity-building**

A significant part of the challenge facing Progressio in gathering, analysing and strengthening M&E data on beneficiaries and changes in their lives stems from the multi-levelled nature of the organisation's in-country capacity-building work aimed at different types of partners and civil society groups. DWs may indeed often be working directly with communities and bringing benefits to people through skill-sharing and exchange, but equally so their capacity-building efforts involve working with/through *organisations*, for example helping key individuals or teams to boost their own performance and effectiveness, supporting institutional development strategies, or supporting the efforts of organisations to become more representative and influential as intermediaries between state and civil society or to form and strengthen networks. Defining who beneficiaries are – and what kinds of beneficiaries they are – becomes a complex task, in turn posing challenges for systems to measure/assess changes.

A concern for the IPR evaluators in this regard, shared with Progressio, is not just whether the organisation is avoiding confusion, in terms of beneficiary numbers, between the results of its

specific intervention and the wider groups of people reached more generally by the partner organisation (it would seem explicit efforts are being made to address any such distortions), but whether Progressio is actually capturing successfully the value of its distinct contribution to change as it assesses and reports progress against the PPA logframe and wider RICA framework. Donors rightly stress the need for capacity-building to be a means to an end (not an end in itself), and it is possibly with this in mind that Progressio's M&E reporting frameworks focus on results in terms of their ultimate benefits for people. But there is a danger that Progressio, if it concentrates on this more ambitious level in isolation, could lose sight of the vital importance of assessing more clearly its role as a catalyst and also run the risk of not having this contribution properly appreciated and recognised by outsiders.<sup>24</sup> It needs to focus more on analysing the direct and indirect impacts of its work at the very points of contact with the partner organisations and track their wider reverberations at community, civil society and policy levels. Attribution may always be a tricky and sensitive challenge for Progressio, particularly as the firmly grounded ethos of its managers, staff and DWs is, laudably, to work to partners' agendas, not to enhance the institution's own recognition and profile. All the same, Progressio should be able to say much more about its own plausible contribution to changes without appropriating credit from its partners, whose rich work could also be highlighted. Further dialogue is needed to handle this challenge well, in keeping with the organisation's undoubted major strengths in quality of partnership.

None of this is to suggest that the PPA logframe or the wider RICA framework is inappropriate but that they need to be complemented, in terms of data collection, by tools that will capture the full value of Progressio's capacity-building at the level at which they take place. The IPR evaluators have suggested an action plan is needed, one starting point of which might involve, in conceptual terms, looking at beneficiary impact chains according to a typology of partners, interventions, work areas and thematic issues, based on a systematisation of representative experiences. Progressio has welcomed this idea in discussions and is itself embarking on an exercise to pinpoint more precisely its conception and definition of beneficiaries, including through use of a more general DFID Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF) paper on this issue. This discussion and clarification of Progressio's beneficiaries, likely to lead to a more clearly defined set of categories in the DW reporting template, should help the organisation considerably with its planning and measurement of impact, with gains for future reporting on the PPA logframe.

#### Recommendations:

- Progressio needs to focus more on identifying the direct and indirect impacts of its capacity-building contribution at the very points of contact with the partner organisations and track their wider reverberations at community, civil society and policy levels.
- An action plan is needed, one starting point of which might involve, in conceptual terms, looking at beneficiary impact chains according to a typology of partners, interventions, work areas and thematic issues, based on a systematisation of representative experiences.
- Progressio should say much more about its own plausible contribution to changes without appropriating credit from its partners.

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<sup>24</sup> An illustrative example of this problem is Progressio's recent work to systematise the lessons of its successful role (as backed during IPR stakeholder interviews) in helping to promote participatory municipal budgeting in the Dominican Republic over the last decade. A draft analysis is full of fascinating insights on the challenges and process of change. Yet, though written by DWs and planned for Progressio publication, it lacks explanation of what Progressio specifically did itself and how its interventions successfully contributed to changes benefiting people. A very informative summary of this experience, albeit with the same gaps, was submitted to DfID as one of the case studies belonging to the 2011/12 APR.

### Strengthening baseline information for progress in capacity-building

There may also be additional implications for the ways, and what types of, information is gathered in baseline and follow-up monitoring surveys. These are rightly geared to looking at the situation and changes in beneficiaries at the ultimate level of communities and people, but if Progressio is keen to strengthen precise measurement of its own distinctive contribution, it will need to gather findings on circumstances before and after its role as a catalyst of change: as mentioned above, this may or may not occur at a direct community level but in terms of advances in the skills, aptitudes and cultural approach of individuals and teams within partner organisations and in organisational structures and strategies.

Progressio's Capacity Assessment of Partners (CAP) tool, an additional survey template belonging to RICA, may be relevant here in terms of offering an inventory of potentially relevant issues for consideration, though this tool is currently used to examine the overall organisational capacity situation of partners rather than the circumstances surrounding a DW's point of entry and engagement. Meanwhile, column 3 of RICA's Participation, Accountability and Transparency tool (PATT) does relate specifically to organisational development, but as is the case with the other development progress arenas in the other PATT columns (eg involvement in government processes, corporate structures, international institutions, community/constituency-building), underlying each level of achievement on the 1-5 measurement scale is a complex layer of organisational challenges that need to be addressed. PATT, furthermore, seems more geared to measuring progress in achieving voice and policy influence than capturing advances in organisational performance associated with Progressio's in-country capacity-building work with partners, particularly where this is not advocacy-related.<sup>25</sup>

The evaluators would suggest that another task to strengthen results assessment might involve examining how the specific objectives of partnership agreements/MoUs can be better linked with the RICA-based objectives of project plans that DWs refer to and report against as a benchmark in the six-monthly DW reporting template. It would appear at present that greater importance may be attached, for the purposes of global RICA data collection, to tracking the results and beneficiary target numbers stated in wider project plans (encompassing several DWs and partners) rather than tracking achievement of the specific objectives outlined in MoUs. Though DWs are required to (and do indeed) report on MoU activities and record changes against MoU objectives forming an integral part of the template, the evaluators understand that the results of these shifts are not fed into RICA, which relies instead on the PATT, food, water and HIV and AIDS surveys. This seems a loss, as the shifts that are in fact recorded in the DW reporting template provide important insights on project progress that is reliant on addressing the challenges lying at the heart of the Progressio-partner relationship.

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<sup>25</sup> It should be of course be recognised that as much of Progressio's in-country work is concerned with participation and effective governance, PATT does provide a useful overall framework for conceptualising the various stages of progress that Progressio's capacity-building support for partners' advocacy and networking can achieve in the external environment. But it does not necessarily capture the organisational steps that partners typically need to take in practical terms (with Progressio's support) in order to pursue changes in policies and practices effectively, for example, their ability to target journalists, their ability to use the web/social media, lobby policy-makers, produce evidence-based research, identify and grade target audiences, ensure networks are representative, develop advocacy strategies and so on. In contrast, PATT lends itself very comfortably to the conceptualisation and assessment of Progressio's international advocacy, with well-structured templates for advocacy project plans/quarterly monitoring reports and annual PATT reviews enabling the organisation to synthesise its work, capture insightful detail on perceptions of progress, and record supporting evidence such as media interest and coverage, signs of increased political will.

**Recommendation:** The evaluators would suggest that another task to strengthen results assessment might involve examining how the specific objectives of partnership agreements/MoUs can be better linked with the RICA-based objectives of project plans that DWs refer to and report against as a benchmark in the six-monthly DW reporting template.

Examination of anticipated changes at this level are important for Progressio's planning and M&E, as the MoU objectives reflect a complex layer of theory-of-change challenges that in themselves might need further consideration and elaboration, both from the point of view of the individual DW-partner work plan and its relationship with the wider Progressio project of which they and several DWs and partners often form part. On examining DW-partner MoUs, DW reports, RICA surveys and project plans for the Dominican Republic and Haiti country programme, the IPR evaluation team found in some cases numerous variations and inconsistencies between descriptions of objectives/results/indicators and beneficiary numbers. This problem means that, while the anticipated changes are generally stated clearly, it is difficult to tie down with entire accuracy what the specific objectives and targets are at different levels. Clarity is further complicated when several DWs are working with the same partner organisation, within the same thematic project, or contributing relevant expertise from other projects, given the positive trend within Progressio towards more systematic exchange and lesson-learning between projects in country programmes rather than extraction from strictly siloed DW-partner relationships.

At the same time, it should be stressed that these ambiguities do not necessarily reflect structural problems, as it may be a question of the difficulty of planning, monitoring and evaluation paperwork keeping pace with actual and changing plans on the ground. Indeed, the overall impression of projects visited in the Dominican Republic and Haiti was one of very effective initiatives that are extremely well structured, supported and coordinated, both in terms of the DW partner relationship and in terms of the teamwork occurring between DWs and partners within the Progressio projects they belong to. All the same, given that it is in-country project plans and local DW reports and surveys that feed the global RICA system, it will be important for Progressio, if it is to boost further the overall accuracy of its results-based reporting to DfID and other donors, to ensure that paperwork and daily programming are systematically aligned.

This could be achieved through the greater frequency of RICA's beneficiary verification exercises suggested earlier drawing on in-country management reviews and M&E project support visits. At the same time, such a process could be used to examine the coherence of individual DW-partner work plans with project plans, so as to ensure optimal benefits from project planning, synergies and teamwork. In turn, Progressio, rather than relying on implicit aggregation, may wish to consider the need for project plans to include/be accompanied by explicitly joint work plans drawing on the respective contributions of DWs and the relevant inputs of Progressio's MoUs with partners and DWs. This would formalise/clarify the understanding that each DW has of his or her role in the project and how s/he is contributing specifically to project results tied to the global RICA objectives for each institutional theme. Care would be needed to take into account the implications of any adjustments made to MoUs/workplans stemming from the conclusions of Progressio-DW-partner discussion of DW reports.

**Recommendation:** Progressio, rather than relying on implicit aggregation, may wish to consider the need for project plans to include/be accompanied by explicitly joint work plans drawing on the respective contributions of DWs and the relevant inputs of Progressio's MoUs with partners and DWs.

There is also a potential role for IT, including investment in user-friendly data storage and project information management systems whose maintenance and use could also be decentralised to country offices and bring benefits to both DWs and partners alike, as well as boost global analysis and internal learning. Progressio is looking at options for systems that would take both individual and organisational beneficiaries as key data units. This would help Progressio to locate and share information more easily on the nature, scope and impact of its work.

### **From numbers to boosting the value of RICA as an effective management tool and a source for analytical interpretation and reflection**

In concluding this section on the quality of data in reporting on the logframe, it should be strongly noted that while, with additional efforts it should be possible to iron out many inconsistencies, the collection of numerical data on development results and beneficiaries is not a precise science. This is certainly the case with Progressio, which faces highly complex operating environments in its country programmes and works over multiples levels, deliberately combining different partner organisation and beneficiary types. What is important is that the organisation is making a significant effort to build up and maintain a defensibly robust stock of quantitative information to complement the more qualitative analysis it tends to conduct, thus bolstering evidence of its contribution to development results and changes.

In considering the targets in the PPA logframe and the RICA-based scores provided in the APR report to assess progress, another vital observation is that considerable caution should be exercised in terms of the temptation automatically to equate higher/lower beneficiary numbers and higher/lower M&E scores under RICA with stronger/weaker organisational performance and development impact. Such fluctuations may reflect the disruptive impact of the external environment, necessary shifts in programme direction and rhythms, or the tough complexity of the development challenges themselves. Both in the case of the RICA surveys within country programmes and in those assessing the achievements of international advocacy, an averaging of RICA scores (for example, in the case of the PATT tool's 1-5 scalar system) can lead to a possibly misleading picture, as the average does not capture the varying results of individual work components.<sup>26</sup>

Once again, however, a narrow obsession with numerical assessment risks missing the point. For Progressio, much of the value of the RICA system is not that it can or should guarantee total accuracy in all settings, but that it is becoming a very useful management tool that allows it to identify noteworthy developments in its country programmes or international advocacy and provides the basis for follow-up action. The system is encouraging Progressio to examine and reflect on the programme or policy realities lying behind the numbers, revealing insights that can potentially help organisation reach effective conclusions on the realistic, pace, depth and sustainability of changes planned or being achieved. For all the problems, challenges and qualifications highlighted above, the evaluators believe that the significant M&E enterprise being undertaken by Progressio should be welcomed and encouraged, and that continued improvement and refinement of the RICA system will enable more effective reporting of performance against the PPA logframe.

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<sup>26</sup> For example, a middling score on Zimbabwe-related policy change efforts may obscure the difficulty of making progress nationally in comparison with the higher score for UK- and EU-based international advocacy where the engagement of policy-makers is seen to be more productive.

### Issues raised in APR exchanges to address DfID feedback

In its communication of 27 July 2012 to DfID's comments of 4 July, Progressio has responded in some detail to the observations provided by the Civil Society Department for DFID on the 2011/12 APR report. The response addresses many of the individual points raised by DFID on specific aspects of Progressio's account of its work and, in instances where very particular information may still be outstanding, it will be more productive for Progressio itself to address these gaps in proper detail in the next round of reporting rather than through the wider remit of the IPR. Rather than review each item of the Progressio-DFID exchange, therefore, this section will concentrate instead on examining the wider implications of the more fundamental issues it has raised.

One fundamental observation made by DFID Civil Society Department in its original comments of 4 July was: 'Generally, the presentation of progress is reasonable, and the report contains clear narrative in the sections on learning and value for money (VfM). However, there is a general lack of evidence to support the narrative and presentation of corroborating evidence could be used to greatly strengthen the report.' Although, at the time of writing, bilateral communication on the APR report seemed to have been completed, the evaluators believe that it would be in the interests of both parties to resume contact in order to clarify whether DFID's original view still holds or has changed. Indeed, in submitting its revised PPA logframe in the wake of DFID feedback, Progressio also attached RICA spreadsheets providing links to the evidence and tools originally used to back up the narrative, recognising that it would have been more helpful for understanding and discussion of the report if such supporting information had been sent in the first place.

Given the need for continued dialogue, it may be premature for the IPR evaluation to offer a more definitive view of the extent to which DfID feedback has been addressed. Formally speaking, it is first for DfID to clarify its view as to whether Progressio's provision of this complementary information has overcome its original main concern. A conclusion needs to be reached, as any verdict could have major implications both for perceptions of the 2011/12 APR and for preparations for the next annual report. Nevertheless, without wishing to prejudge the outcome, the IPR evaluation team is prepared to comment on the more general issues at stake in information provision/receipt and bilateral communication over reporting. Underlying the exchange there appears to be implicit confusion as to what information Progressio thinks it needs to provide and what types and levels of information DfID is requesting and expects.

In submitting its original report, Progressio would appear to have assumed clear donor understanding of its RICA-based system (recording beneficiary figures and scoring possible movement in policy changes and people's lives), having explained in some depth to PPA assessors the underlying components of its PPA logframe and the detailed workings of the RICA system in monitoring and evaluating progress against it. Perhaps for this reason, as well as time constraints in assembling what is a complex pool of information for its first report, Progressio did not share the full set of information contained in the RICA spreadsheets finally sent to DfID and assumed that DfID would be able to interpret the significance of the references in its report to programme numbers and scores. All the same, now DfID has received the fuller set of information that Progressio has provided as evidence for its APR narrative, the question remains as to how useful DfID has found – and is prepared to receive, use and share – material presented in this form.

The evaluators have no doubt that the RICA-based information used to report against the PPA logframe is highly relevant to DfID's interest in knowing more about the progress made by Progressio in pursuing and achieving development results and change. In their view, it is also

clear that Progressio has made an honest attempt to produce and share findings that it thought would serve its needs, including in response to the perceived emphasis during the PPA application and assessment process on rigorous quantitative measurement (rather than just qualitative assessment) of results. The evaluators are unaware of how familiar DfID is with the RICA system following Progressio's explanation of it to PPA assessors, so continued dialogue on how its various tools function might help to overcome the fact that use of the RICA information requires considerable acquaintance with the system, given the wide range and depth of information it is pulling in. At the same time, the evaluators suspect that it may be highly unrealistic to expect DfID to delve down itself into the RICA information in order to make proper sense of the key points being made in Progressio's reporting narrative. As well as familiarity, there is the problem of time and it is likely that DfID's Civil Society Department needs a much more user-friendly and accessible reporting approach if it is to grasp the key findings and issues itself and be in a stronger position to consult others within the Department about them.

A key aspect of DfID's feedback would seem to be a plea for a more analytical narrative rather than coverage built round scores and figures, explaining how and why programme and project implementation is achieving progress towards objectives and drawing out more clearly the implications of Progressio's work, both in terms of wider lesson-learning and the immediate practical recommendations for adjustment of its interventions. The evaluators concur with this observation, which runs across the whole set of DfID's comments. Too often Progressio makes interesting observations or significant observations but then fails fully to illustrate them.

The evaluators would suggest that, in needing to shift from a descriptive to analytical editorial style, Progressio, while covering the main developments in its country programmes and international advocacy, might also select particular highlights of progress and achievements for deeper, but brief, analysis in order to illustrate clearly for DfID the difference that is being made. Along with strengthened provision of attached case studies – the evaluators agree with DfID's suggestion that the analytical focus of their content and the strategic purpose of their selection need to be clearer – these highlights could help bridge the current gap between the report's narrative and the considerable pool of quantitative and qualitative information lying in the RICA system. This would mean that the RICA spreadsheet (assuming it continues to be sent to DfID as an attachment to the narrative report) would become an optional reference source to which interested parties could turn/be referred for additional information and insights, rather than *the* tool that must be used for an outside reader to comprehend the significance of the narrative and find supporting evidence. Progressio could also strengthen 'signposting' the availability of such additional information in RICA as part of its report, providing an incentive for reader interest.

Taking up these recommendations should be of considerable interest to Progressio, given its own expressed keenness to reflect on, and makes sense of, the deeper issues underlying findings generated by RICA, seen as an information management tool providing programme insights rather than a system guaranteeing complete accuracy of results measurement and assessment. But this will mean that Progressio will need to invest in the skills and capacity needed, not just to adopt a more analytical reporting style and produce summaries in London but also to put country programme managers and key programme support staff involved in M&E in a stronger position to work productively with DWs and partners to analyse and draw out the key implications of programme developments for internal and external audiences. This challenge could be made part of the plans for further RICA workshops referred to in the previous section, which should involve discussion of reporting and survey formats and how those overseeing/completing them can consider a wider range of user needs.

Time and resources will of course need to be found for all of the above suggestions to take place, but it should be recognised that the costs could be outweighed by wider gains in institutional communication such as publishing, member information, advocacy and fundraising, as well as strengthened donor reporting. As far as donor reporting is concerned, it should be pointed out that a failure to invest in the analytical and editorial approaches needed may involve losses for Progressio in that it may not be articulating as effectively as it should the real quality and value of its work. For example, without proper presentation, ostensibly modest but crucially important developments in programme work or international advocacy – such as the launch of an official multi-stakeholder policy forum, indicating increased political will to engage with civil society – can come across more as mere activities than the steps towards development outcomes that they really are.

In aiming these comments at Progressio, which the organisation has already received constructively in discussion of this report, the evaluators are simultaneously of the view that DfID can itself do more to help the grantee by being much clearer in the future about the types of information it needs and expects and for what purposes. This clarity is vital in a context in which major uncertainties surround expectations of this PPA, not to mention the future of the PPA mechanism itself, with important debates taking place to tighten definition and understanding of important concepts (such as additionality and value for money) informing its management and review. Progressio has to some extent interpreted the current climate as one demanding numerical information on results, hence its reliance on referral to detailed information lying in the RICA system, yet DfID – if the evaluators interpretation of its comments is correct – would appear to desire summarised information providing a much more reflexive and analytical approach ‘rather than just figures’.

Progressio, in the view of the evaluators, certainly needs to strengthen its ability to synthesise complex information in a more accessible way, but it is also important for DfID to indicate clearly what levels of information it is prepared, or has the capacity, to digest, use and share internally. Following DFID’s original assertion of a lack of evidence to back up the APR narrative, Progressio sought to submit a CD with case studies, along with the RICA spreadsheet. DfID, however, declined the offer of the CD material, indicating that it would have insufficient time to read it, and was also initially unable to take receipt of the RICA information on account of the security features of its IT systems. It should be possible for DfID and Progressio to resolve the misunderstandings and practical problems outlined above, and the evaluators would suggest that they do so as quickly as possible so that more time is available for both parties to adjust their approach in the run up to the next reporting period.

It is also worth noting that DfID, in requesting evidence, may, in its own interests, need to be more proactive itself in seeking information and capitalising on the strengths of Progressio. For example, Progressio has built up a reputation as a recognised leader in civil society and state capacity-building in Somaliland. Though Progressio may need to do more to promote awareness of its work (a task that is not always straightforward in sensitive political settings) and also provide evidence of coordination with DfID and its partners, it is just as feasible for DfID in Somalia to take the initiative to approach Progressio and provide the means to put interested parties in touch, given the department’s statement of interest in the organisation’s work.

Other key aspects of DfID’s comments are dealt with elsewhere in this report. The request for information on the progress and benefits of Progressio’s M&E system has been dealt with in the previous section on progress against the PPA logframe, with observations also made on

DfID's interest in receiving further evidence of beneficiary numbers and the role of international advocacy in maximising impact. This latter point is explored in the main report, as is Progressio's contribution to faith and development work. Finally, the evaluators believe that Progressio provided a very informative account on DfID additionality as a formal attachment with its APR report, and issues pertinent for both the donor and the grantee.

**Recommendations:**

- Progressio, following exchanges on its first annual progress report covering 2011/12, should continue dialogue with DfID to clarify reporting strengths and weaknesses as perceived by both parties. There seems to be implicit confusion as to what kinds of information Progressio thinks it needs to provide and what types and levels of information DfID expects, can digest and will use.
- Progressio might invest in skills to adopt a more analytical approach to reporting, synthesising how and why programme implementation is achieving progress to objectives and drawing out clearly implications and lessons. With stronger signposting, this would bridge the gap between narrative and quantitative and qualitative information in its monitoring and evaluation system.
- DFID could help future grantee reporting, and possibly that of the wider NGO community, by providing greater clarity about the types of information it requires (and in what format), what purposes it will use it for, and what capacity it has to digest material.

#### **Annex G4: Advocacy on faith and development**

Progressio's efforts to encourage the development community to recognise the importance of faith-based actors has been a longstanding feature of the NGO's work. This has put the organisation in a strong position to nurture and contribute to the growing interest in exploring and clarifying the policy and practice implications of this issue, as reflected by DfID's own recent decision to hold the Faith Partnership Principles consultation. In June 2012 at Lambeth Palace, Progressio was selected to chair a question and answer session with the Archbishop of Canterbury and Andrew Mitchell, the head of DfID's civil society department contacted Progressio to thank the organisation for its 'excellent contribution' to the process and its role was also noted in an unrelated communication by the former secretary of state for international development.

Positive impressions were upheld in an IPR interview with a representative of Lambeth Place working on international development, who also spoke positively about Progressio's capacity to distil and reflect different viewpoints. She said that such qualities enable Progressio to act as an effective facilitator and catalyst of change by bridging different positions on faith and development, and that Lambeth Palace had benefited greatly from Progressio's sharp political analysis on other major international issues such as the future of the Millennium Development Goals, food and hunger, and democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe. She found Progressio's verbal and written briefings very useful and had drawn on these regularly for Lambeth Palace's own role in briefing church leaders in the House of Lords, engaging with parliamentary groups and working with ambassadors. The potentially important indirect effects of Progressio's information provision should therefore not be under-estimated, though it is difficult – and may not always be appropriate – to try and measure or assess their definitive impact. Indeed, a body such as Lambeth Palace, while having considerable influence through the moral authority of its voice, would not see itself as an explicit policy advocate, let alone an extension of an NGO's policy messages. But this, in her view, is one of Progressio's considerable strengths: that of providing quality information, advice and analysis without strings attached, respecting the autonomy of partners and target audiences.

Beyond achieving longer-term results through work on faith and development at an international level, it is important to highlight the progress that Progressio has been making through its faith and development approach in country programmes working to reduce the stigma and promote the rights of people living with HIV AND AIDS. Progressio has sought to support a positive faith-based response to HIV AND AIDS since the 1990s in Yemen and Somaliland, later expanding its work to Southern Africa and Latin America. As is apparent from testimonies, there is strong evidence that Progressio's work has achieved impressive instances of success in nurturing changes in the views of faith leaders, with such shifts in turn creating the potential to transform the lives of those facing the isolation, fear, violence and discrimination of HIV and AIDS stigma. Work with different partners, for example in Yemen, has targeted/involved religious leaders, training them on highly sensitive issues normally deemed taboo such as the impact of HIV and AIDS on sex workers and men who have sex with men.

Progressio has had profound impact with their publication "Prayer is Not Enough" which was circulated to all Catholic Bishops in the UK. Several Bishops have responded positively, noting they would commend the report to the reading of parish priests. The report continues to receive attention and appears to have made an important contribution. The report was also presented to the Church of England training session. Progressio has also engaged with the Vatican on HIV following comments made by Pope Benedict.

## Annex G5: Logframe

# PROGRESSIO

## DFID LOGFRAME MILESTONE 1

PROJECT NAME	Progressio – People Powered Development						
<b>IMPACT</b>	<b>Impact Indicator 1</b>		<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Milestone 1</b>	<b>Milestone 2</b>	<b>Target 2014</b>	
People empowered to reduce poverty and benefit from greater transparency, accountability and responsiveness of local and national governments in all PPA countries	Country level poverty index	Planned	(Average: 0.49) Timor Leste (0.491) Zimbabwe (0.364) Yemen (0.460) Somaliland (-) Dominican Republic (0.686) Haiti (0.449)	(Average: 0.50) Timor Leste (0.495) Zimbabwe (0.376) Yemen (0.462) Somaliland (-) Dominican Republic (0.689) Haiti (0.454)	0.51	0.52	
		Achieved			0.49		
			Source				
			2011 figures HDI value from UNDP's HDR for target countries (value of 0 to 1)				
Contributing to MDG 1, 3, 6, 7 and 8	Country level Effectiveness index	Planned	(Average:13.01) Timor Leste (11) Zimbabwe (2.87) Yemen (12.4) Somaliland (-) Dominican Republic (35.4) Haiti (3.82)	(Average:12) Timor Leste (10.04) Zimbabwe (3.82) Yemen (14.3) Somaliland (-) Dominican Republic (31.6) Haiti (2.87)	12.6	13	
		Achieved			12.52		
			Source				
			2010 World Bank Indicators for target countries				
	Country level Voice & Accountability index	Planned	(Average:30.65) Timor Leste (51.20) Zimbabwe (7.58) Yemen (12.32) Somaliland (-) Dominican Republic (52.13) Haiti (29.85)	(Average:27) Timor Leste (49.28) Zimbabwe (7.58) Yemen (11.8) Somaliland (-) Dominican Republic (51.8) Haiti (29.71)	31	32	
		Achieved			30.2		
			Source				
			2010 World Bank Indicators for target countries				

OUTCOME 1	Outcome Indicator 1.1	Baseline	Milestone 1	Milestone 2	Target 2014	Assumption	
<p>Poor and marginalised communities in target areas are empowered and equipped to demand greater transparency, accountability and responsiveness from local and national governments.</p> <p>Policies and practices are introduced that allow poor and marginalised communities, especially in fragile states, to have secure, sustainable and equitable access to natural resources in a context of climate change and resource scarcity.</p> <p>Progressio estimates this will affect <b>2,586,000 people</b> approximately</p> <p>Contributing to MDG 1, 3, 6, 7 and 8</p>	<b>Civil Society Organisations' level of involvement in government processes</b>	Planned	(Average: 1.35)	1.85	2.50	2.80	1. No substantial reduction in space for civil society organisations to operate. 2. Donor community continues to prioritise gender and decentralisation programming with governments and civil society. 3. Competition for resources between CSOs does not undermine coalition working and possible replication. 4. Institutional framework of the state allows it to respond to voices of citizens.
		Achieved		2.20			
		Source					
		Participation and Transparency Tool (column a) (value of 0-5) substantiated by Progressio's Portfolio of Evidence tool					
	<b>Level of Community and/or Constituency building</b>	Planned	(Average: 2.07)	2.45	2.60	2.75	
		Achieved		2.48			
		Source					
		Participation and Transparency Tool (column d) (value of 0-5)					
	<b>Level of policy response and positive engagement from government corporate or multilateral bodies (Improved Participation and Governance)</b>	Planned	(Average: 2.9)	3.2	3.9	4.2	
		Achieved		3.2			
		Source					
		Participation and Transparency Tool (column e) (value of 0-5) substantiated by Progressio's Portfolio of Evidence tool & Advocacy Monitoring Report					
	<b>Level of policy response and positive engagement from government corporate or multilateral bodies (Improved Environmental sustainability)</b>	Planned	(Average: 3.1)	3.3	4.1	4.5	
		Achieved		3.7			
Source							
Participation and Transparency Tool (column a, b or e) (value of 0-5) substantiated by Progressio's Portfolio of Evidence tool & Advocacy Monitoring reports							
<b>INPUTS (£)</b>		Govt (£)	Other (£)	Total (£)	DFID SHARE (%)		
<b>INPUTS (HR)</b>	DFID (FTEs)						
	Milestone 1 averages breakdown by country:	<b>Outcome Indicator 1.1</b> Hispaniola (2.0) Yemen (-) Somaliland (2.4) Zimbabwe (2.0) Timor Leste (2.4)	<b>Outcome Indicator 1.2</b> Hispaniola (1.0) Yemen (-) Somaliland (2.95) Zimbabwe (2.0) Timor Leste (3.9)	<b>Outcome Indicator 1.3</b> Zimbabwe (3.0) Somaliland (3.0) Haiti (3.5)	<b>Outcome Indicator 1.4</b> Illegal logging (4.5) Virtual Water (3.0) Water & Climate Change (3.5)		

OUTCOME 2	Outcome indicator 2.1	Baseline	Milestone 1	Milestone 2	Target 2014	Assumptions	
Targeted communities will have greater sustainable benefits through piloting appropriate approaches in sustainable farming and natural resource management and improved levels of Knowledge, Attitude, Practice & Behaviour for people living with HIV & AIDS, especially women. Progressio estimates this will affect 554,920 people approximately Contributing to MDG 1, 6 and 7	Level of improvement in benefits from farming, water and forest resources reported by poor and marginalised people	Planned	(Average: 48.25)	50.25	51.25	52.25	1. Governments and donors remain committed to supporting the agricultural/environmental sector  2. People living with HIV and Aids will participate in the implementation of the projects and in responding to surveys
		Achieved		39.93			
		Source					
		Progressio Income & Food Security Survey (value of 0-100) or Progressio Water Benefits Survey (value of 0-100) or Progressio Forest Benefits Survey (value of 0-100)					
	Outcome Indicator 2.2 Level of Knowledge and Attitude of PLWHV	Planned	(Average: 51.38)	53.50	62.20	65.00	
		Achieved		61.36			
		Source					
		Progressio KAPB survey (value of 0-100)					
	Outcome Indicator 2.3 Level of Practice and Behaviour of PLWHV	Planned	(Average: 48.44)	51.90	59.20	61.20	
		Achieved		57.73			
		Source					
		Progressio KAPB survey (value of 0-100)					
INPUTS (€)	DFID (€)	Govt (€)	Other (€)	Total (€)	DFID SHARE (%)		
INPUTS (HR)	DFID (FTEs)						
Milestone 1 averages breakdown by country:		Outcome indicator 2.1	Outcome indicator 2.2	Outcome indicator 2.3			
		Hispaniola (47.70)	Somaliiland (58.80)	Somaliiland (42.5)			
		Somaliiland (47.00)	Yemen (-)	Yemen (-)			
		Zimbabwe (65.10)	Timor leste (52.00)	Timor leste (64.00)			
			Zimbabwe (67.10)	Zimbabwe (66.7)			

OUTPUT 1	Output Indicator 1		Baseline	Milestone 1	Milestone 2	Target 2014	Assumptions
Progressio provides development workers to strengthen the capacity of Civil Society Organisations	Number of development workers in 6 countries to strengthen the capacity of Civil Society Organisations	Planned		56	56	56	56
		Achieved			61		
		Source Progressio Development Workers Forecast Table					
							1. Progressio manages to maintain the level of funding that will allow us to retain the number of development workers. Progressio will attract further funding to increase the number of development workers. 2. Progressio is able to continue to work without civil unrest or deterioration of the state infrastructure 3. Since this is an output indicator, the level of activity will remain roughly constant - we would not expect a huge variation upwards or downwards - by comparison with outcome indicators where we plan to see an upward trend.
IMPACT WEIGHTING (%)							RISK RATING
30%							Medium
INPUTS (£)	DFID (£)		Govt (£)	Other (£)	Total (£)	DFID SHARE (%)	
INPUTS (HR)	DFID (FTEs)						
	Baseline breakdown by country		Output Indicator 1: Timor Leste (9); Zimbabwe (12); Yemen (9); Somaliland (13); Dominican Republic & Haiti (13)				
	Milestone 1 (2012-13) breakdown by country		Output Indicator 1: Timor Leste (10); Zimbabwe (13); Yemen (10); Somaliland (10); Dominican Republic & Haiti (13)				

<b>OUTPUT 2</b>	<b>Output Indicator 2.1</b>		<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Milestone 1</b>	<b>Milestone 2</b>	<b>Target 2014</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>		
The capacities of Progressio's partner Civil Society Organisations are strengthened in: 1. Effective Governance and Participation 2. Sustainable Environment and Climate Change 3. HIV and Aids	Civil society organisational level capacity strengthened index in six countries	Planned	(Average: 8.47)	8.50	8.65	8.75	Maintenance of high quality of training, high standard of development workers' skills and attitudes - continued good recruitment and ability to attract development workers to those countries, given that they are fragile states.		
		Achieved		7.74					
		<b>Source</b>							
		Keystone independent survey (value of 0-10)							
	Civil society organisational level of skill index of development workers in six countries	<b>Output Indicator 2.2</b>	Planned	(Average: 8.6)	8.65	8.70		8.75	
			Achieved		7.72				
			<b>Source</b>						
			Keystone independent survey (value of 0-10)						
	Civil society organisational level of attitude index of development workers in six countries.	<b>Output Indicator 2.3</b>	Planned	(Average: 8.6)	8.65	8.65		8.75	
			Achieved		7.14				
<b>Source</b>									
Keystone independent survey (value of 0-10)									
<b>IMPACT WEIGHTING (%)</b>							<b>RISK RATING</b>		
20%							Medium		
<b>INPUTS (£)</b>	<b>DFID (£)</b>		<b>Govt (£)</b>	<b>Other (£)</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>	<b>DFID SHARE (%)</b>			
<b>INPUTS (HR)</b>	<b>DFID (FTEs)</b>								

OUTPUT 3	Output Indicator 3.1	Planned	Baseline	Milestone 1	Milestone 2	Target 2014	Assumptions	
Progressio's Partners' Projects reach Civil Society Organisations and beneficiaries	Number of projects, in Progressio's strategy in 6 countries	Planned	19	19	19	19	1. Progressio manages to maintain the level of funding that will allow us to retain the number of CSOs and beneficiaries. Progressio will attract further funding to increase the number of CSOs and beneficiaries 2. Progressio's partners are able to continue to work without civil unrest or deterioration of the state infrastructure	
		Achieved		21				
	Source							
	Progressio's Strategy							
	Output Indicator 3.2	Number of Civil Society Organisations reached by Progressio in 6 countries	Planned	471	471	695		695
			Achieved		695			
	Source							
	Progressio Project Plans							
	Output Indicator 3.3	Number of beneficiaries reached by Progressio through partners in 6 countries	Planned	1,900,000	1,900,000	3,143,000		3,145,000
			Achieved		3,140,920			
Source								
Progressio Project Plans								
IMPACT WEIGHTING (%)							RISK RATING	
20%							High	
INPUTS (£)	DFID (£)		Govt (£)	Other (£)	Total (£)	DFID SHARE (%)		
INPUTS (HR)	DFID (FTEs)							
	Milestone 1 breakdown by country	Output 3	Output Indicator 3.1	Output Indicator 3.2	Output Indicator 3.3			
			Timor Leste (4)	Timor Leste (33)	Timor Leste (300,000)			
			Zimbabwe (7)	Zimbabwe (552)	Zimbabwe (705,000)			
			Yemen (4)	Yemen (28)	Yemen (11,200)			
			Somaliland (3)	Somaliland (35)	Somaliland (1,500,000)			
			Dominican Republic & Haiti (3)	Dominican Republic & Haiti (47)	Dominican Republic & Haiti (24,440)			
	Milestone 1 breakdown by country	Output 2	Output Indicator 2.1	Output Indicator 2.2	Output Indicator 2.3			
			Timor Leste (6.8)	Timor Leste (7.5)	Timor Leste (6.8)			
			Zimbabwe (8.8)	Zimbabwe (8.6)	Zimbabwe (8.3)			
			Yemen (8.6)	Yemen (7.9)	Yemen (9.3)			
			Somaliland (10)	Somaliland (9.3)	Somaliland (9.3)			
			Dominican Republic & Haiti (8.2)	Dominican Republic & Haiti (9.6)	Dominican Republic & Haiti (9.3)			

OUTPUT 4	Output Indicator 4	Planned	Baseline	Milestone 1	Milestone 2	Target 2014	Assumptions
Policy interventions rooted in partner experience, researched and appropriately targeted towards agreed policy makers by Progressio	Number and description of policy interventions delivered and/or progressed	54		90		152	192
				112			
<b>Source</b>							
Monitoring Advocacy Report							
NB A policy intervention is an action by Progressio's staff which conveys evidence and/or analysis to inform decisions which lie under the responsibility of a policy maker. For example: Production of a public report or briefing paper; Oral or written submission to a formal consultation process; Organising a public or private event for the purpose of sharing policy messages; Private briefings to decision makers; Facilitating a policy intervention by a network or consortium (such as the Zimbabwe Europe Network); Facilitating / conveying a policy intervention on behalf of partner organisation(s)							
<b>Milestone 1 breakdown by country &amp; policy area</b> <b>Output Indicator 4:</b> Timor Leste (-); Zimbabwe (11); Somaliland (10); Dominican Republic & Haiti (10); Water & climate change (3); Virtual Water (17); Illegal logging (5); Other (6)							
<b>IMPACT WEIGHTING (%)</b>							<b>RISK RATING</b>
10%							Low
<b>INPUTS (£)</b>	<b>DFID (£)</b>		<b>Govt (£)</b>	<b>Other (£)</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>	<b>DFID SHARE (%)</b>	
<b>INPUTS (HR)</b>	<b>DFID (FTEs)</b>						
OUTPUT 5	Output Indicator 5	Planned	Baseline	Milestone 1	Milestone 2	Target 2014	Assumptions
Progressio promotes learning and sharing of good practice	Number of case studies published, disseminated and shared	5		10		15	20
				12			
<b>Source</b>							
DW Reports							
<b>IMPACT WEIGHTING (%)</b>							<b>RISK RATING</b>
20%							Low
<b>INPUTS (£)</b>	<b>DFID (£)</b>		<b>Govt (£)</b>	<b>Other (£)</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>	<b>DFID SHARE (%)</b>	
<b>INPUTS (HR)</b>	<b>DFID (FTEs)</b>						
<b>Milestone breakdown by country Output 5</b>							
			Timor Leste (2)	Zimbabwe (-)	Yemen (1)	Somaliland (2)	Dominican Republic & Haiti (2)

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## Annex H: Details of the evaluation team

**Jon Barnes** is a freelance writer and consultant on international development with considerable experience of NGO programme management and programme evaluation. He has recently undertaken assignments for NGOs such as the pan-African social justice organisation ACORD and the UK-based women's rights organisation Womankind Worldwide, as well as donors such as the International Development Research Centre.

Jon Barnes has strong expertise and interest in governance and civil society participation in decision-making. He was head of the globalisation programme at Panos London, the media and communication for development NGO where he ran projects on the potential of the media to promote the transparency and accountability of poverty reduction strategies and trade policy-making. With a strong background in development and human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as experience of global work in other regions, he has held editorial, policy and programme management positions in international organisations and NGOs such as Consumers International, HelpAge International, and the Catholic Institute for International Relations. As a freelancer, he has also written on international development, political and economic issues for the media and business publishers.

**Josephine Tsui** is evaluation consultant with experience in South Asia, Southern Africa, Western Africa, Eastern Africa. She focuses on women's rights, rural livelihoods and civil society can be demonstrated through her various consultancies and employment including; evaluation of NGO's, social impact assessment of rural roads in Malawi, and advising the Vietnamese government in the revision of their land laws for women's land ownership. Josephine has extensive evaluation experience with NGO's including working with the Huairou Commission in their final evaluation of MDG3 Accountability Initiative, Progressio, and Marie Stopes International on their PPA Independent Progress Review.

Complimentary to her field experience is her strong skills in policy analysis, desk research and writing skills. Josephine is the author of five gender policy briefs for DFID aimed to strengthen the evidence base of gender within DFID's future programming. Prior to joining theIDLgroup in 2009, Josephine was a researcher at the UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission of Europe) where she applied gendered economics to provide tools to integrate gender in economic policies. These policy areas include gender pay gaps, divorce and taxation laws, and violence against women.

## Annex I: PPA organisation's management response to report's findings (post-submission)

**Progressio's Management Response to the October 2012 Independent Progress Review of their DFID PPA grant.**

### Acknowledgement

Progressio would like to thank the team at IDL, in particular Jon Barnes and Josephine Tsui, for their insightful progress review of Progressio's work in relation to the PPA since April 2011. Their way of working with Progressio staff has been evidence-based, constructive, challenging and helpful, validating the quality of work while providing a useful feedback on areas for improvement

### Results

Progressio is delighted that the evaluators have found that Progressio:

- is doing high quality systemic value for money work
- is performing well against each of the IPR evaluation criteria and against the objectives of its PPA logframe with DFID and in particular has achieved results in both PPA key outcomes 1 and 2, and
- displays strong thematic relevance to DFID's theory of change outcomes, such as active citizenship, responsive accountable governments and institutions and partnerships between government and civil society.

This progress is endorsed by the evaluators' high level of confidence in the robustness and quality of the results and confidence that the progress reported in the first annual report is valid. The evaluators highlight some of the strengths on which Progressio can build further success including:

- the results relevant to key issues in DFID's own outcomes such as increased economic opportunities and survival for the poor and marginalised as evidenced in for example the northern border areas of Dominican Republic and Haiti where improved agricultural practices are boosting community production, food security and nutrition
- the high regard in which partners, both civil society and state, hold Progressio's approach to partnership due to both its capacity building approach and commitment to working to the partners' agendas rather than its own
- in policy work, clear results such as support for election observation in Somaliland, incorporation of water resources management issues into the Rio+20 summit agreement, and improving accountability to Haitian civil society. Progressio's reputation as an effective and respectful bridge builder between different positions is key to this success.
- the additional contribution Progressio is making in the area of Faith and Development, using its particular position as an independent faith based agency to support DFID's own work in this area.

### Learning and Recommendations

Progressio welcomes the observations in the section on Lessons Learnt at policy level, sector level, PPA fund level and organisational level and the recommendations. Progressio recognises that further work is needed in a number of areas and has already started plans and measures to achieve this:

- *PPA reporting* – Progressio will welcome continued dialogue with DFID about how both Progressio and DFID can act on the evaluators' recommendations. The IPR process has also been extremely helpful in modelling a more analytic approach to reporting.

- *Data collection and analysis* - This has been the first full year of working with RICA and the more rigorous reporting regime from DFID. Progressio welcomes the evaluators' thoughtful discussion of M&E systems, with suggestions for strengthening. The impression overall is that high quality, very important work is being carried out, but because it is often complex and in difficult settings, it is also challenging to capture data always with sufficient rigour and succinctly in the M&E.
- The evaluators note that the monitoring system is already a vital and valued management tool, allowing Progressio to monitor progress and take action as needed. Progressio welcomes the evaluators' positive assessment of the PATT tool which is being piloted this year for measuring and analysing the impact of advocacy and civil society accountability work.
- Progressio will review M&E on the basis of the evaluator's comments and take steps to strengthen systems.

Future reporting will, alongside clear numerical indicators also present additional narrative which allows easier analysis of impact achieved.

- *Beneficiaries and capturing the value of capacity-building and promoting its recognition* - The evaluator has usefully identified the importance of Progressio's "catalytic" role with partners as a key contribution to the development process, and the importance of capturing this better within the monitoring system. The intent is to build stronger local partner organisations which are better able to act on poverty reduction and so the success rightfully belongs to its partners above all, but Progressio can do more to identify and communicate their key contribution in enabling this. As they review and refine the M&E system following this evaluation Progressio will seek to introduce suitable indicator(s) that capture this better, in line with the action plan proposed by the evaluators.
- *Maximising impact and the sustainability of gains for poor people and Lessons promotion and synergies between capacity building and international policy work* – Progressio will aim more systematically to identify and capitalise on the best 'impact chain' opportunities that arise from their special combination of long-standing skills sharing and grass-rooted advocacy across countries and continents and link this into the Theory of Change process.
- *Enhancing the PPA's value added and promoting value for money* – Progressio welcomes the evaluators findings that Progressio generally works efficiently and effectively and achieves value for money as well as added value. Progressio agrees in particular that the PPA enables Progressio to add significant value because of the flexibility it gives to achieve greater strategic impact from the combined advocacy and skills sharing. Progressio has also increased non-PPA funding already this year to add further value for money. At the same time further measures are already being put in place to strengthen approaches to cost recovery in donor applications and Progressio recognises the need to sharpen and pull together its value for money tools.

In conclusion Progressio finds the findings of the evaluation very helpful in:

- affirming the significant progress on outcomes and
- highlighting Progressio's special contribution to its partners' development gains, while also
- identifying areas for further improvement which Progressio will address.

Progressio looks forward to discussing with DFID the report and next steps to be taken on the recommendations, including DFID's own conclusions about the value and indeed added value that Progressio's achievements secure for DFID and for sustainable development.

The evaluators make observations which hopefully will inform DFID's own discussions on how to design flexible post PPA funding streams that achieve maximum development impact when funding organisations such as Progressio.

Mark Lister  
Chief Executive  
Progressio

17<sup>th</sup> October 2012

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**Annex J: Evaluation Manager's response to report's findings (post-submission)**

