



# DRG LEARNING THEME:

## Human Rights



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The DRG Learning Agenda is a set of priority and strategic research questions for which the DRG Center generated evidence and produced recommendations to guide DRG programming in five cross-cutting thematic areas. DRG research on Human Rights answered questions related to what makes human rights awareness campaigns successful, in what contexts does assistance to national human rights institutions lead to improved human rights outcomes, how human rights violations lead to radicalization, and others.

For more information, see the [DRG Learning Agenda Overview](#) and the [Learning Agenda Evidence Rack-Up](#).

## DRG Center Learning Agenda Findings

### Information Campaigns



**In what ways are human rights awareness campaigns successful and what are their unintended negative consequences?**

- The success of awareness campaigns tends to depend heavily on specific, targeted, and contextualized framing for messages, as well as the combination of traditional and new media to disseminate these messages.
- In addition to the benefits that awareness campaigns may achieve through pressure on governments to respect human rights, they may also spark backlash, confusion, desensitization, and/or frustration.
- In some cases, awareness campaigns may find it more effective to target influential corporations in addition to the broader public, since these corporations may have the capacity to exert strong financial pressure on governments to follow human rights guidelines.

Key Documents: "[Making Human Rights Campaigns Effective While Limiting Unintended Consequences](#)"; "[Infographic: Design and Implement Effective Human Rights Campaigns](#)"

### Human Rights Defenders



**What types of support to human rights defenders and institutions most improve human rights outcomes, and what aspects of political regimes, institutions, and society condition the likelihood of success or failure?**

- Among the most promising and least risky strategies for supporting human rights defenders is domestic coalition-building, which can be encouraged through external assistance that supports the convening of defenders with diverse goals and/or strategies.
- Selecting partners who use the "human rights" label or frame, and/or encouraging its use, can help to embed defenders within a transnational community that can respond to government crackdowns.
- Human rights defenders working within social movements or civic organizations may benefit from external resources. However, this support can present challenges; it can bind the defenders' agenda or activities or reduce defenders' legitimacy in the eyes of domestic constituencies.

Key Documents: "[Struggles from Below](#)"; "[Infographic: Supporting Civic Action in Successful Human Rights Programming](#)"

#### Legend



Learning questions addressed by DRG research



Learning questions partially addressed by DRG research



Learning questions not yet addressed by DRG research

## National Human Rights Institutions

**In what contexts does assistance to national human rights institutions lead to improved human rights outcomes?**

**How can the possible risks of such assistance be mitigated?**

- External development assistance programs have successfully provided support for national human rights institutions on a range of issues, including human trafficking reduction, judicial fairness and efficiency, and crime reduction.
- As with support for human rights defenders, externally funded programs could run the risk of altering institutions' goals and undermining domestic legitimacy.
- The provision of data and technology may be one viable means through which development assistance can support national human rights institutions while reducing the risk of excessive external interference.

Key Documents: "[Legal Enabling Environment Project II \(LEEP II\)](#)"

## Radicalization

**What are the drivers of radicalization?**

**How do violations of human rights and rule of law lead to radicalization?**

- Many of the most effective strategies for countering violent radicalization seek to strengthen a "moderate middle" embedded within civil society.
- Targeting pro-social individuals who may be at-risk for radicalization and supporting them in pursuing nonviolent social leadership pathways can effectively reduce extremism.
- Media can play an important role in either reducing or sparking violent extremism; while results vary with context, interventions that attempt to leverage media to reduce radicalization are effective, or at least do not intensify radicalization.

Key Documents: "[Countering Violent Extremism\\*](#)"; "[Counteracting Violence Through Narrative Media\\*](#)"

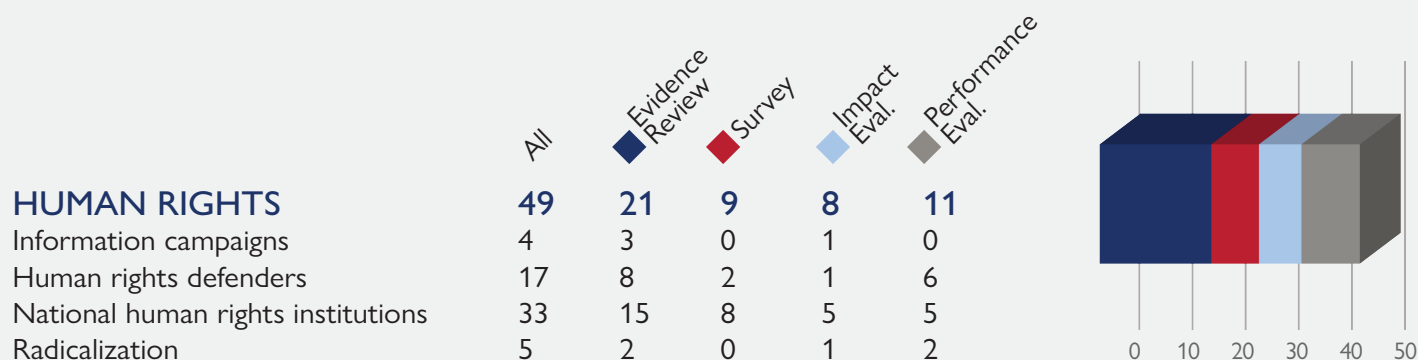
## Gender-Based Violence

**When a government sets up separate institutions in the justice sector that address gender-based violence (e.g., police units, prosecutors, courts), what are the implications for both the victims' access to justice and the mitigation of harm to victims?**

- Multi-faceted, cross-sectoral strategies tend to be most effective in reducing gender-based violence.
- Successful interventions typically address formal legal frameworks as well as informal cultural norms, and take the perspectives of both perpetrators and survivors in designing strategies to reduce gender-based violence and hold perpetrators accountable.
- Interventions promoting women's livelihood and socioeconomic empowerment may reduce gender-based violence. However, they can also spark violence in the short-term, necessitating close attention to violence risks for all such projects.
- Workplaces constitute risk sites for gender-based violence. These risks may be especially severe in informal economies.

Key Documents: "[The Impact of Information Communication Technologies on Gender-Based Violence](#)"; "[Violence Against Women in the Informal Sector](#)"; "[Village Savings and Loan Associations and Intimate Partner Violence](#)"

## DRG Center Research by Category



\* Indicated Key Documents available upon request.

For further information, please contact the DRG Center Evidence & Learning Team at [ddi.drg.elmaillist@usaid.gov](mailto:ddi.drg.elmaillist@usaid.gov).