Findings Track

Session I: Advancing Civic Spaces and Protecting Human Rights

Wednesday, March 10,
9:00 - 10:30 am Eastern

- Please keep yourself on mute and off video.
- For questions to speakers and panelists, please use the Q/A feature.
- Feel free to write comments in chat for other thoughts or comments.

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Findings Track

Session I:

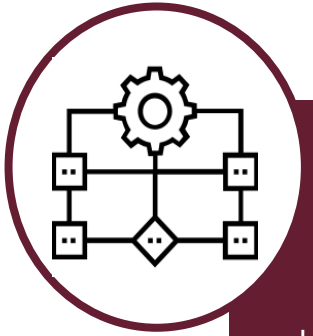
Advancing Civic Spaces and Protecting Human Rights -

March 10, 9:00 - 10:30 am Eastern

Session 2:

Achieving Accountability: From Social Movement to Decentralization

March 11, 9:00 - 10:30 am Eastern



Process Track

Session 3:

Learning from Learning Agendas: Improving the Art of Organizational Learning

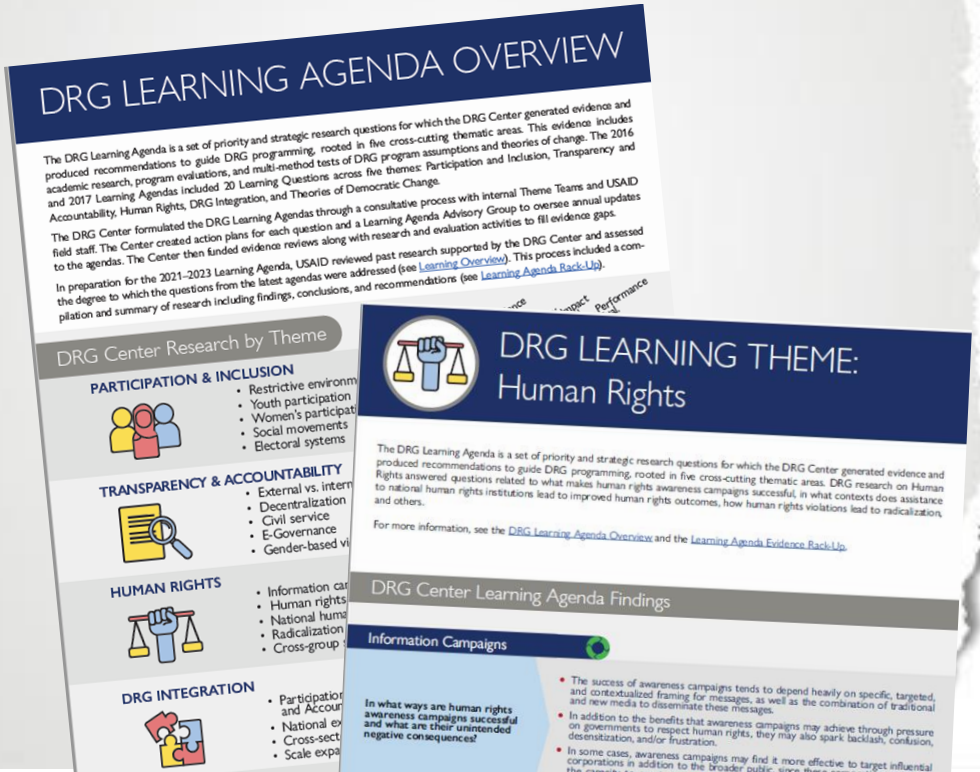
March 16, 2020 at 9:00 - 10:30 am Eastern

Session 4:

Lessons Learned from 27 DRG Impact Evaluations

March 18, 2020 10:00 - 11:30 am Eastern

DRG Learning Agenda Overview



DRG LEARNING AGENDA OVERVIEW

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, rooted in five cross-cutting thematic areas. This evidence includes academic research, program evaluations, and multi-method tests of DRG program assumptions and theories of change. The 2016 and 2017 Learning Agendas included 20 Learning Questions across five themes: Participation and Inclusion, Transparency and Accountability, Human Rights, DRG Integration, and Theories of Democratic Change.

The DRG Center formulated the DRG Learning Agendas through a consultative process with internal Theme Teams and USAID field staff. The Center created action plans for each question and a Learning Agenda Advisory Group to oversee annual updates to the agendas. The Center then funded evidence reviews along with research and evaluation activities to fill evidence gaps.

In preparation for the 2021–2023 Learning Agenda, USAID reviewed past research supported by the DRG Center and assessed the degree to which the questions from the latest agendas were addressed (see Learning Overview). This process included a compilation and summary of research including findings, conclusions, and recommendations (see Learning Agenda Rack-Up).

DRG Center Research by Theme

PARTICIPATION & INCLUSION

- Restrictive environm
- Youth participation
- Women's participat
- Social movements
- Electoral systems

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

- External vs. intern
- Decentralization
- Civil service
- E-Governance
- Gender-based vi

HUMAN RIGHTS

- Information ca
- Human rights
- National huma
- Radicalization
- Cross-group

DRG INTEGRATION

- Participatio and Accou
- National ex
- Cross-sect
- Scale expa

DRG LEARNING THEME: Human Rights

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, rooted 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.

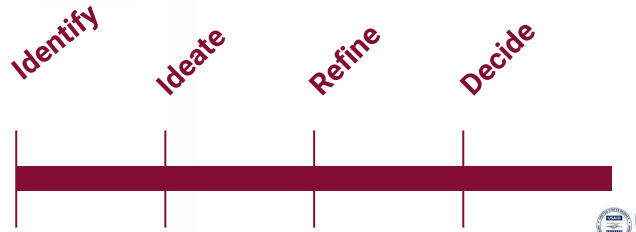
For more information, see the DRG Learning Agenda Overview and the Learning Agenda Evidence Rack-Up.

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



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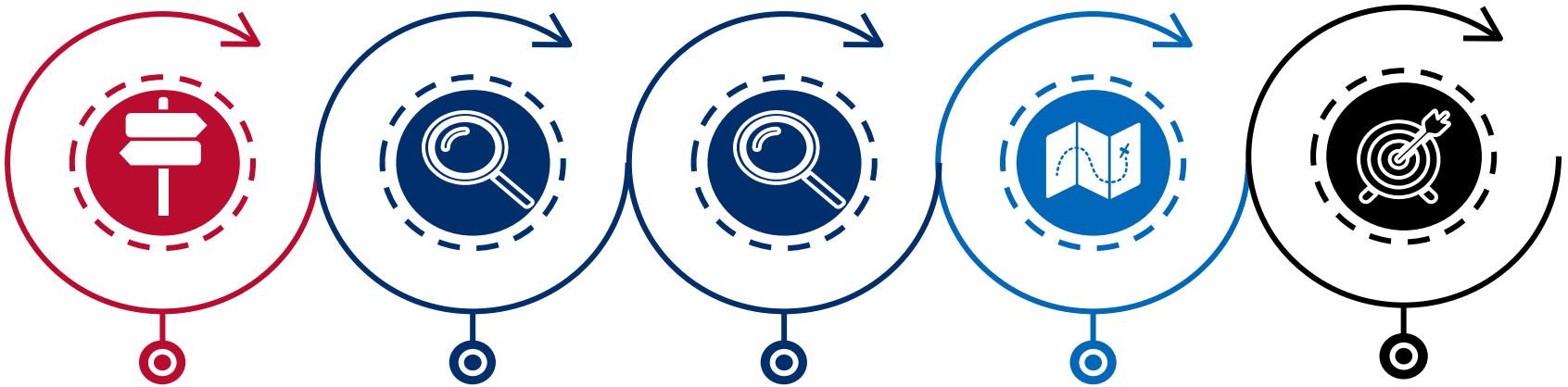
AGENDA



Welcome / Background

Presentation 1 followed by Q&A

Presentation 2 followed by Q&A

Utilization Reflections

Plenary Discussion

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Session I: Advancing Civic Spaces and Protecting Human Rights

Speakers:

Presentation 1:

Erica Chenoweth, Harvard University and Jonathan Pinckney, USIP: *Struggles from Below: Literature Review on Human Rights Struggles by Domestic Actors*

Presentation 2:

Ximena Velasco Guachalla, University of Essex: *Maintaining civic space in backsliding regimes*

Utilization Reflections:

Mark Goldenbaum, USAID/DDI/DRG

Erica Chenoweth, Harvard University and Jonathan Pinckney, USIP

Struggles from Below: Literature Review on Human Rights Struggles by Domestic Actors

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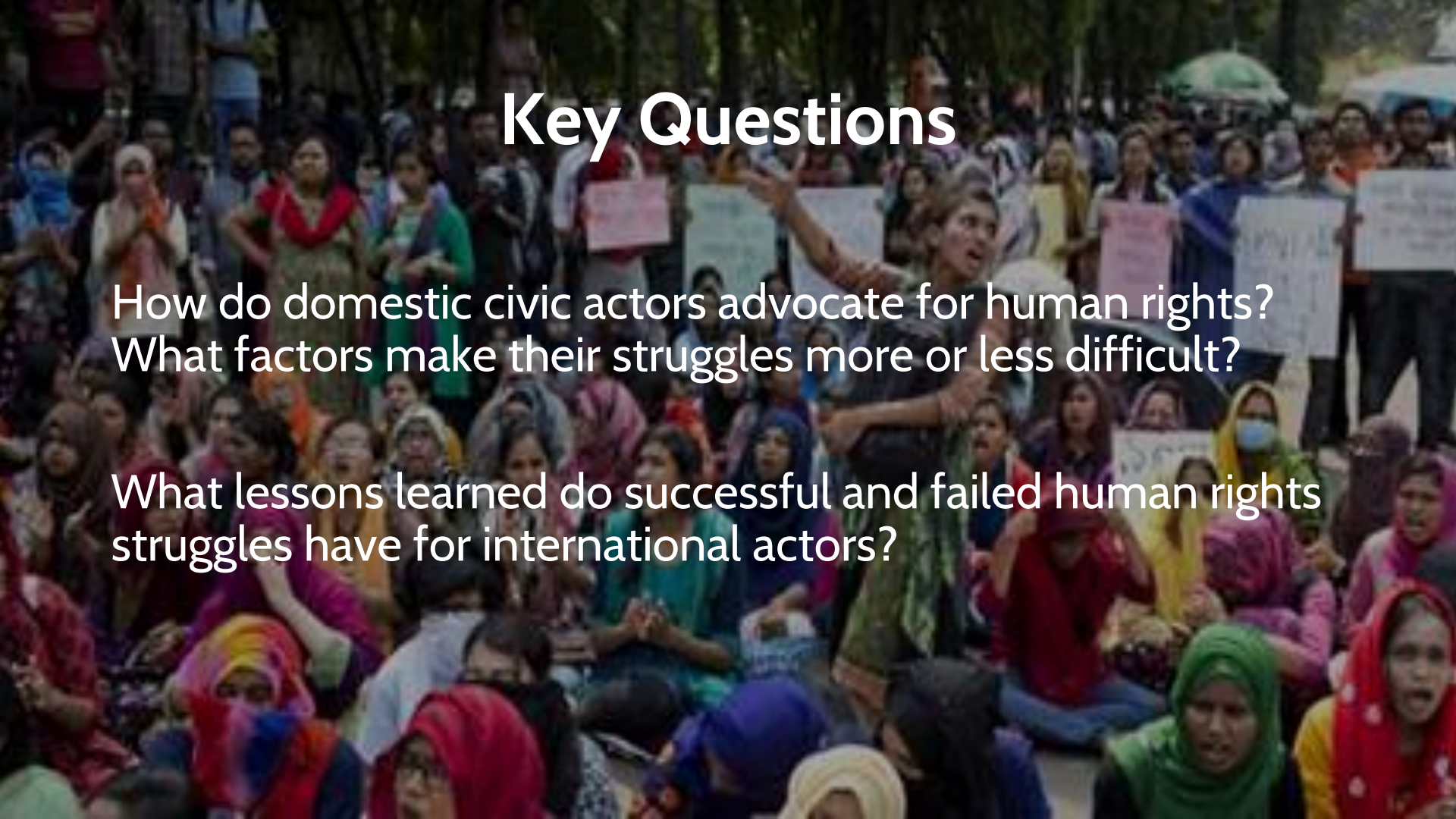

Key Questions

How do domestic civic actors advocate for human rights? What factors make their struggles more or less difficult?

What lessons learned do successful and failed human rights struggles have for international actors?

Three Takeaways

- The power of a human rights frame.
- The crucial need for in-depth knowledge.
- The transformative potential of networks.

Questions / Responses

- Please write your questions in the Q/A feature only.
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- Please feel free to use the upvote feature if you like a question
- Time will not allow for all questions to be answered in the session.
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Ximena Velasco Guachalla, University of Essex

Maintaining Civic Space in Backsliding Regimes

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Maintaining Civic Space in Backsliding Regimes

Andy Baker

Carew Boulding

Shawnna Mullenax

Galen Murton

Meagan Todd

Drew Zackary

Presenter:

V. Ximena Velasco-Guachalla

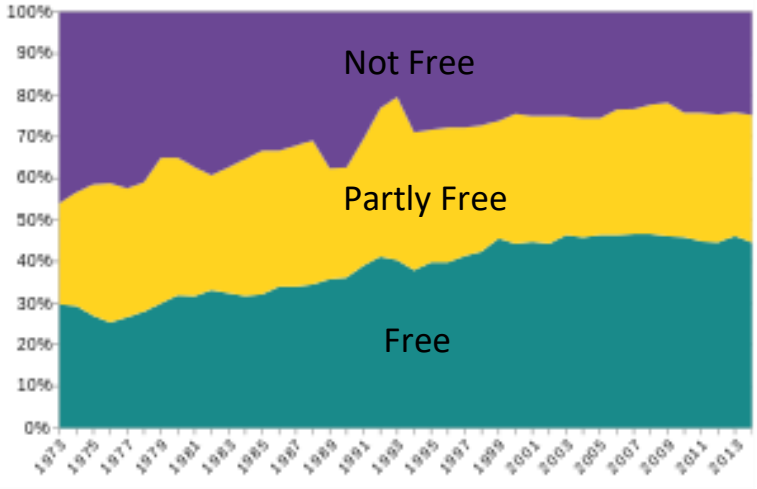
The Learning Agenda Questions Paraphrased

- ✔ What enables civic and political participation in countries where civil liberties are being taken away?

- ✔ What strategies can civil society actor and groups use to safely and successfully pry open or keep open civic space in backsliding regimes?

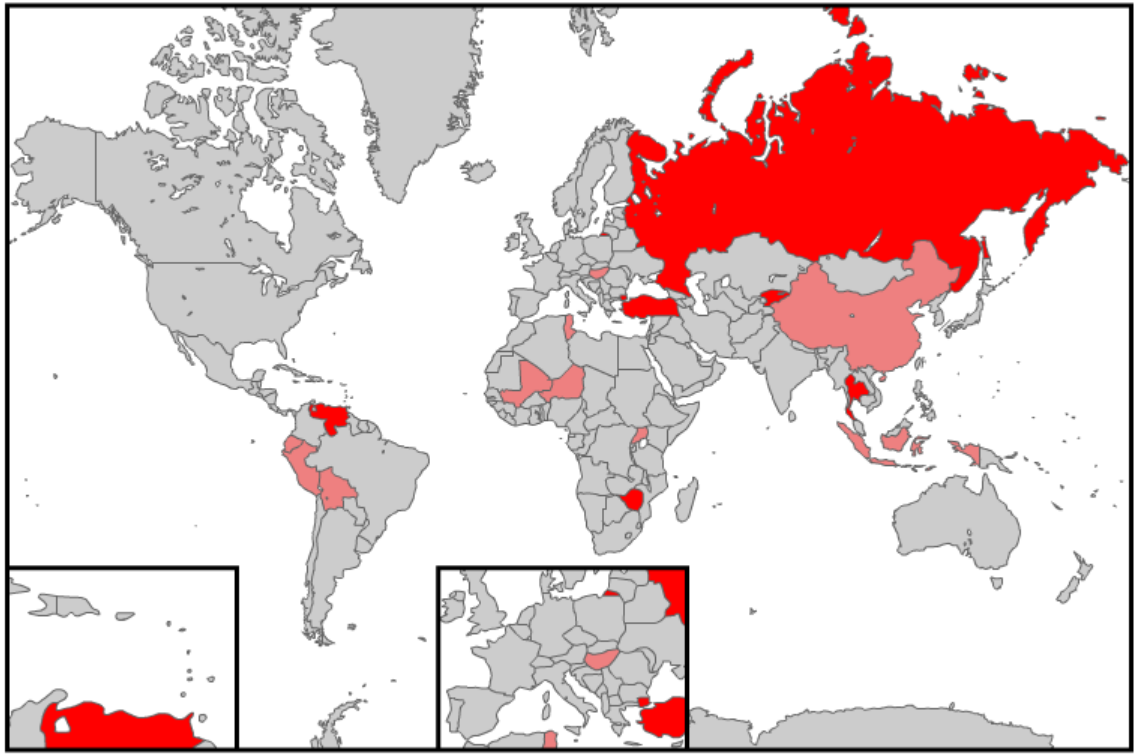
What is Backsliding?

"Change in a combination of competitive electoral procedures, civil and political liberties, and accountability... [B]acksliding occurs through a series of discrete changes in the rules and informal procedures that shape those elections, rights, and accountability" (Lust and Waldner 2015, p. 2)



Our Approach

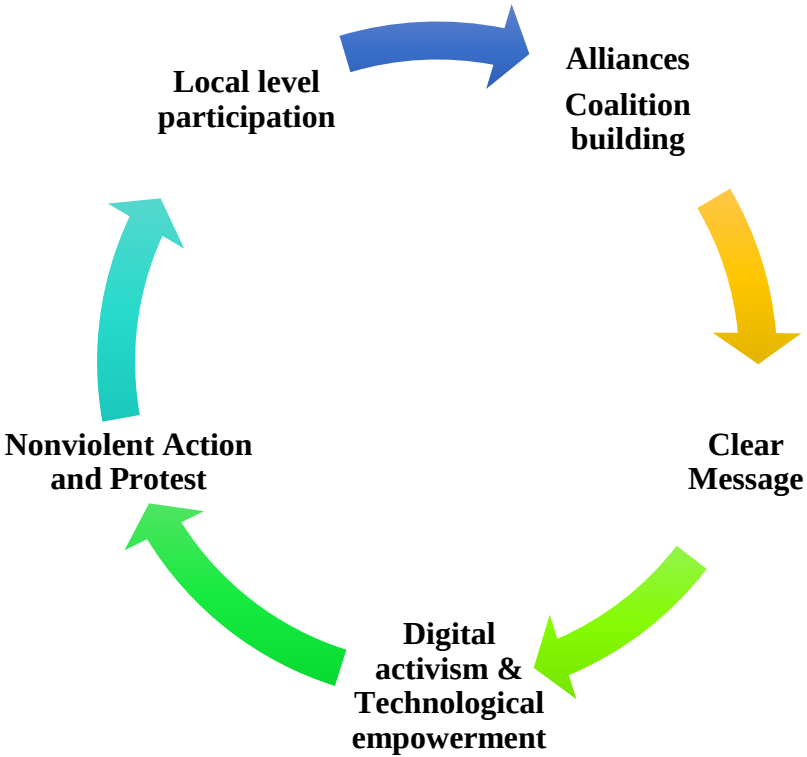
- ➔ Case studies
- ➔ **Interdisciplinary**: Political science, Geography, Anthropology
- ➔ Mostly regional
- ➔ But special thematic foci on women and LGBT groups, NGOS, and opposition parties.
- ➔ **Regions covered:**
- ➔ Latin America, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, South, Southeast, and East Asia



INCREASING REPRESSION AND GOVERNMENT CONTROL

- ✔ Cooptation
- ✔ Government control over media
- ✔ Framing/Reframing gender and sexuality
- ✔ Discriminatory legalism
- ✔ Executive aggrandizement
- ✔ Opposition harassment

In contexts of closing civic space, what has worked?



Greater Number of Participants

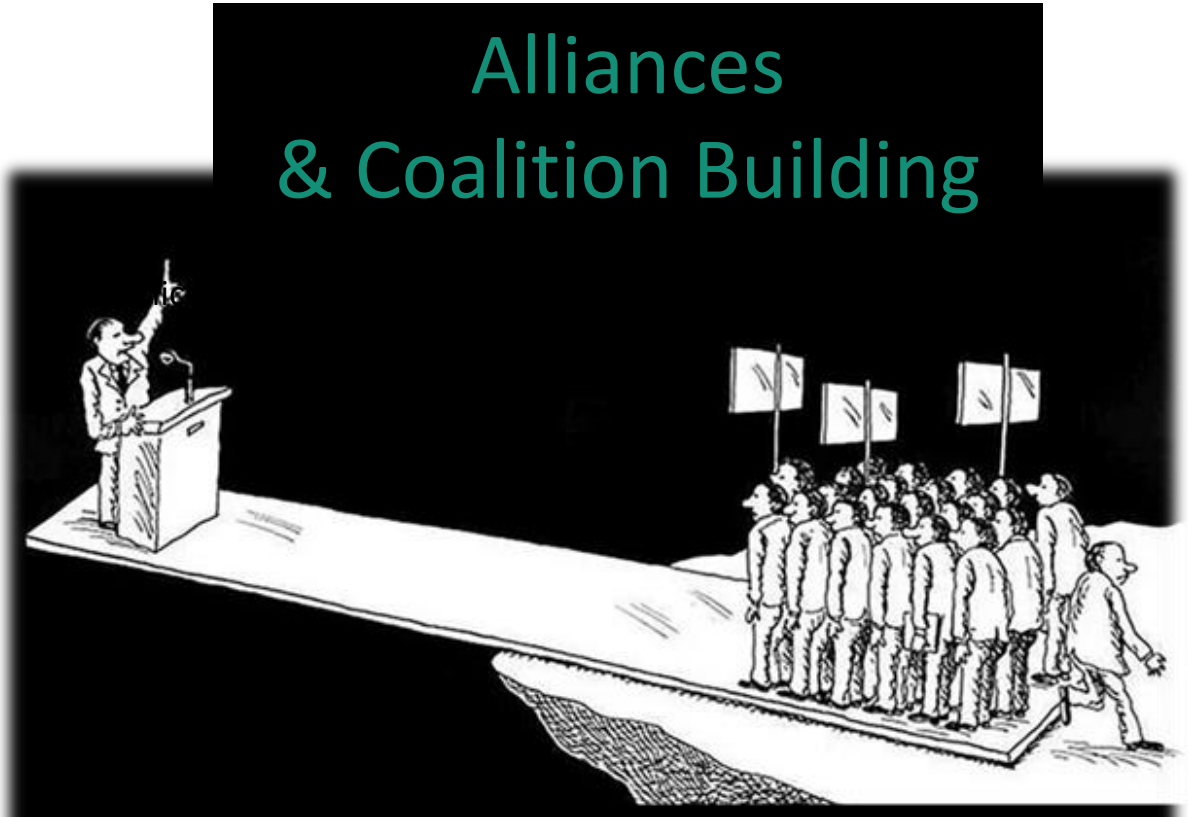
1. Increased pool of resources

2. Collective demands are strengthen

3. Greater reach to multiple audiences

4. Direct experiences with democratic principles

Legitimacy



REPRESSION BY GOVERNMENTS CAN BACKFIRE

LOWER PHYSICAL & MORAL BARRIERS

INCREASED STRATEGIC INNOVATION

NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE

INCREASED PARTICIPATION

DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL DEMONSTRATION EFFECTS

LOCAL LEVEL PARTICIPATION

- Groups mobilizing at various localities can provide a broader base for the movement
- Lower risk of government repression

CLEAR MESSAGE

- Electoral success will depend on the opposition's delivery of a clear, credible, and common message that provides the population a real alternative to the current administration (Hawkins 2016)

BROADER LESSONS

Diversity of Civil Society

Pros & Cons of technological empowerment

Legitimacy / Autonomy

Constitutional Rights: Necessary but not sufficient

Subtle ways to dismantle democracy from within with civil society support

Questions / Responses

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- Time will not allow for all questions to be answered in the session.
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Mark Goldenbaum,
DDI/DRG

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- The moderator will be asking specific questions to guide the conversation.
- Please write your questions or comments in the Q&A.
- Another host will be monitoring the Q&A for questions / comments.
- We may ask you to come off mute to give voice to your question
- Please use the upvote feature
- Please be patient as time will not allow for all questions and comments to be addressed.

Please take a moment to fill out survey to engage in the future learning agenda formulation process and give us feedback!

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If you have any questions, please contact Matt Baker
mabaker@usaid.gov