The Human Rights Support Mechanism (HRSM) is a USAID funded, five-year leader with associates (LWA) cooperative agreement (# AID-OAA-A-16-000444) aimed at implementing USAID’s Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) Strategy, specifically objective #3: Protect and promote universally recognized human rights. HRSM is implemented by the PROGRESS Consortium. PROGRESS provides technical assistance and support to partners and beneficiaries in developing countries around the world to achieve the following objectives:

1. Improve enabling environments for preventing and addressing human rights violations and abuses,
2. Implement effective response actions to mitigate the impact of human rights violations and abuses,
3. Implement effective remedies to human rights violations and abuses,
4. Identify effective approaches for protecting human rights; and
5. Implement rapid response activities to urgent or unforeseen crises.

All projects implemented under HRSM incorporate a technical and/or region-specific Applied Political Economy Analysis (APEA) conducted or directed by Pact. In addition, the Senior Gender and Inclusion Advisor is consulted throughout each project.

LEARNING AGENDA

To support the broader human rights community in responding to today’s new realities, the Leader Award funds learning initiatives that identify and disseminate effective approaches for protecting human rights in both non-permissive and increasingly oppressive environments.

Development of knowledge products and tools: PROGRESS is developing methodologies, training curricula, tools, and case studies to enable future programming to benefit from past experience.

Dissemination of knowledge and learning: PROGRESS is launching the PROGRESS Community Space on the DME for Peace platform to share knowledge products and other relevant resources with the wider human rights community.

To guide and focus learning initiatives over the five-year life of HRSM, PROGRESS has developed an overarching Learning Agenda. Associate and Leader Award activities will contribute evidence to help answer the following questions through standardized indicators from the HRSM M&E Plan, as well as additional analytic and evaluative activities undertaken at the conclusion of a project.

The HRSM Learning Agenda:

1. What types of support to human rights defenders and institutions most effectively improve enabling environments for human rights outcomes, and what aspects of political regimes, institutions, and society condition the likelihood of success or failure?
2. What human rights interventions or combination of initiatives help victims of human rights abuses integrate into society or pursue a life after the abuse?
3. How well does external pressure from civil society organizations, impact litigation, media outlets, and citizen participation improve accountability and transparency compared to internal reforms within judicial and political institutions? And in which combination and sequence are such initiatives most effective?

RAPID RESPONSE

Rapid response (RR) interventions respond to “action-forcing events” with the goal of countering, preventing, or minimizing human rights abuses and restrictions on operating environments for human rights defenders. An “action-forcing event” is broadly defined as a development in country that is likely to trigger a human rights crisis in the absence of external intervention. Interventions can also respond to rapidly evolving political contexts where timely interventions could have a lasting impact on the enabling environment for human rights in the country.

It is envisioned that RR interventions will not last longer than 6 months and that the total cost will not be greater than $150,000. Under specific circumstances, particularly where there is USAID Mission buy-in, the length and amount of the award may be greater. USAID may permit partners to utilize pre-authorization letters in urgent contexts in crisis areas. Additionally, in crisis contexts, HRSM encourages Missions to utilize pre-authorization letters that allow partners to incur limited costs for a forthcoming Associate Award.

- Initially $1.75M over 5 years under the Leader Award
- Supports initiatives in urgent threats or limited windows of opportunity
- Minimal process and AOR delegated approval authority
- Leader ceiling allows for $20.5M of additional “buy-ins”
This is the text from the document.