



Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

DRL Rule of Law Programs Outcome Evaluation

Overview

At its core, Rule of Law (ROL) requires that government officials and citizens be bound by, and act consistently with, the law, which is fairly applied by relevant state institutions and reflects the principles of fairness, transparency, and accountability.

ROL is a fundamental institutional principle in consolidated democracies and consistent with international human rights norms and standards. ROL is a critical factor to the advancement of democracy and human rights, and is a precondition for access to justice, especially for underrepresented populations.

Source: "Ex Post Evaluation of DRL Rule of Law (ROL) Programs – Final Internal Report" (Encompass and New Rule, 2019)

Rule of Law Under Threat

74%

of 139 countries surveyed experienced declines in ROL performance

6.5 billion

people live in countries experiencing this ROL weakening

82%

of countries faced a decline in civic space (e.g., civic participation, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly and association)

Key Rule of Law Factors



Constraints on Government Powers



Fundamental Rights



Absence of Corruption



Regulatory Enforcement



Order and Security



Civil Justice



Open Government



Criminal Justice

Source: Statistics and Factors as determined by the 2021 World Justice Project Rule of Law Index and Report

DRL Rule of Law Program Objectives

Through technical assistance, DRL/GP helps to build the organizational and institutional capacity of local, grassroots civil society organizations (CSOs) in order to enable sustained, systemic ROL improvements that promote due process, just and accountable laws, and access to justice.

	Local Relevance	Strategic Partnerships	Flexible Approach	Issue Sequencing
Approach	Programs driven by local input in order to reflect current political contexts and leverage windows of opportunity during political openings	Prioritize partners with local knowledge and deep ROL expertise to gain legitimacy and leverage coalitions / networks for sustained impact	Flexible programming enables work in complex environments and changing contexts, even when other funders pull out	CSOs work on existing, less controversial issues in order to generate government buy-in on more sensitive ROL initiatives
Examples	Enable CSOs to work with legislatures to adopt new laws for greater accountability during a political transition	Build civil society coalitions, including with universities and private sector actors, to overcome ROL restrictions	Realigned activities and workplans to meet changes in laws or circumstances, such as government crackdowns on civil society	Focused on disability rights as CSOs developed advocacy skills and garnered government buy-in on broader ROL issues

DRL's Impact

Strengthening ROL Supply



DRL programs enhance the professionalism and capacity of justice sector institutions to enforce rights, order and security, and regulations. DRL grantees have:

- Increased the capacity of justice sector professionals
- Enabled internal oversight mechanisms
- Reformed court procedures
- Promoted budget transparency

Fostering ROL Demand

DRL programs empower CSOs and activists to secure fair, effective, and non-discriminatory enjoyment of human rights before justice institutions. DRL grantees have:

- Improved investigative journalism on judicial oversight and anti-corruption
- Supported legal actions to enforce rights
- Provided legal aid to underrepresented groups
- Strengthened CSO advocacy skills

Program Highlights

Sub-Saharan Africa | By providing technical support through a network of local public litigation lawyers, CSOs were able to bring forward cases to hold security forces accountable for past human rights violations committed against civilians. The DRL grantee also facilitated dialogue between CSOs and the government, including the Judiciary, to increase use of the redress process.

East Asia and Pacific | A DRL grantee built professional networks of public interest lawyers to increase the protection of the rights of underrepresented groups, including persons with disabilities, survivors of domestic violence, and children. Trainings and written resource guides strengthened lawyers' capacity to provide legal representation to these groups.

South and Central Asia | A DRL grantee trained 1,925 lawyers and law students to help them effectively represent clients and advocate for judicial reform. Targeted roundtables and consultations with key government, judicial and academic stakeholders focused on re-establishing an independent bar association and ongoing policy reforms.

Impact By The Numbers

5,700+

Judicial personnel, including judges, trained

59,800+

Individuals from low income or marginalized communities who received legal aid or victim's assistance

20,100+

Human rights defenders, including lawyers and paralegals, trained and supported

1,100+

CSOs engaged in advocacy interventions

55

Laws, policies, or procedures adopted, revised, stalled, or changed to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms

Source: Statistics are based on reporting from DRL grantees on FY 2017 to FY 2021 activities

The Way Forward

Building on the lessons learned from its ROL programming, DRL/GP will be continuing and increasing its focus on:



Sustained impact
elevated through targeted program design and risk mitigation planning



Deeper focus on **joint supply-demand efforts** to advance systemic ROL improvements



Closer coordination with other donors and other ROL programs



Collective impact through public education, and coalition and capacity building



Continued engagement with underrepresented populations and local partners