



## Supporting Human Rights Defenders in Exile to Achieve Goals

### Program Description

CVT's Incubator for Defenders Remaining in Exile Advancing Movements (IDREAM) project was designed to strengthen the resilience of human rights defenders (HRDs) in exile, equipping them to continue their advocacy work despite the challenges posed by forced displacement. The initiative provided an integrated curriculum, combining training and mentoring to enhance capacity and support the effective application of learning for improved performance in three domains:

- **Psychosocial Resilience:** Strengthen individual and organizational resilience to enable HRDs to better recognize, manage, and mitigate the impacts of stress and secondary trauma.
- **Effective Advocacy:** Build the capacity of HRDs to design and implement strategic advocacy campaigns addressing specific human rights issues.
- **Integrated Security:** Enhance the ability of HRDs to effectively respond to evolving security threats, ensuring the safety of their staff, organizations, and strategic effectiveness.

IDREAM used a cohort-based model, with four cohorts – two consisting of ten individual HRDs and two of ten human rights organizations – participating in the project between 2020 and 2024.

### Evidence Collected

IDREAM employed a mixed-methods approach to collecting evidence of effectiveness. This involved integrating quantitative and qualitative data to assess project outcomes while promoting continuous learning. This brief will focus on a subset of the data collected, specifically:

#### 1. Success markers

Participants identified what they wanted to achieve through the IDREAM project in the domains of Resilience, Advocacy, and Integrated Security and assigned “success markers” to assess their progress towards these aspirational outcomes. Each outcome included one realistic success marker, one that was ambitious, and one that was very ambitious. See below for an example:

**Outcome: As a result of our action during the IDREAM project, we will build a coalition of organizations to advocate together for human rights in our country.**

Realistic success marker: Conduct meetings with at least ten other organizations where we invite them to join the coalition

Ambitious success marker: Two or more organizations officially join our coalition by co-sponsoring the launch event

Very ambitious success marker: Six or more organizations officially join our coalition by co-sponsoring the launch event

Progress towards outcomes and success markers was reviewed at mid-point and final stages, alongside discussion about unanticipated outcomes and other relevant context.

#### 2. End-of-cohort survey

After the first cohort completed their participation in IDREAM, the team added an anonymous end-of-cohort survey asking participants about their confidence in their abilities in IDREAM project domains, compared to before their participation began. The survey also asked about connection to other IDREAM participants as a contributor to resilience. The results of this survey highlight the participant experience and perspective.

# Interpretation of Evidence: Key Findings

## 1. Success markers

Across the four cohorts, all participants (N=40 individuals and organizations) achieved at least one success marker during their IDREAM participation. The table below shows this disaggregated by domain, underscoring that 98% of participants achieved at least one success marker in Resilience, 90% achieved at least one in Advocacy, and 85% achieved at least one in Integrated Security. This indicates that participants report achieving success markers in all domains at high rates. This suggests that participants are utilizing IDREAM skills to achieve advocacy goals, strengthen resilience, and enhance security practices.

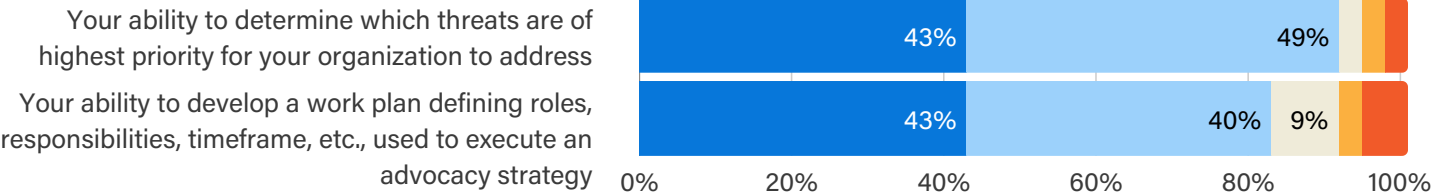
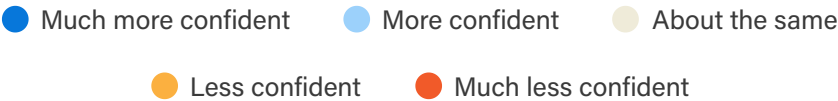
	% of participants who achieved 1+ success marker per domain			Across all three domains
	Resilience	Advocacy	Integrated Security	
Cohort 1 (N=10 organizations)	100%	90%	80%	100%
Cohort 2 (N=10 individuals)	100%	80%	80%	100%
Cohort 3 (N=10 organizations)	90%	100%	90%	100%
Cohort 4 (N=10 individuals)	100%	90%	90%	100%
Across all four cohorts	98%	90%	85%	100%

## 2. End-of-cohort survey

Across Cohorts 2, 3, and 4, thirty-five individuals completed the anonymous end-of-cohort survey. Participants were asked to rate their confidence, compared to before the IDREAM project, in their ability to conduct various security and advocacy related tasks.

- Across 10 security-related tasks, an average of 88% of participants rated themselves “more confident” or “much more confident”; this was 89% across 8 advocacy-related strategies. See one example statement from each section in the chart below.
- In addition, on average 82% of participants “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with 9 items about building connection with other IDREAM participants, contributing to their individual resiliency.

Compared to how you felt when you first joined the IDREAM project, how confident do you feel about each of the following today?



## Conclusion

Data collected suggests that the IDREAM intervention can have a positive impact on human rights defenders living in exile, enabling them to gain confidence and achieve their goals. It appears that IDREAM succeeded in supporting participants across the three domains of Resilience, Advocacy, and Integrated Security, including by building participant connection to themselves and to one another.

## Statement about Interpreting Evidence

While results are promising, without a control comparison group it is difficult to determine the precise contribution of IDREAM towards reported outcomes, acknowledging the potential influence of other factors. Additionally, self-reported outcomes and perceptions can be impacted by response bias such as the tendency to report positive results and change. Attempts were made to mitigate this bias, such as making the survey anonymous.