



EUROPE

Human Rights in the Digital Age

Executive summary

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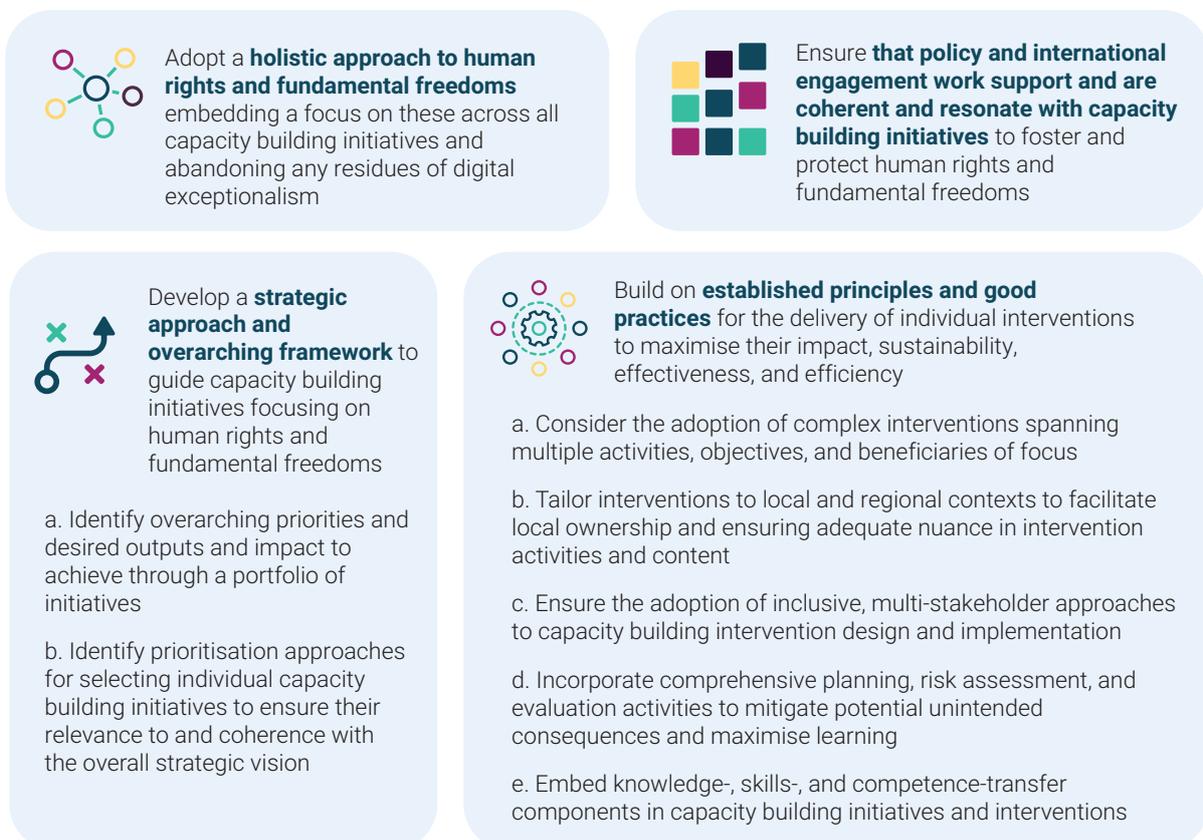
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Digitalisation and its underlying technologies and services provide both opportunities and challenges for fostering and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms. Digital spaces provide a unique opportunity for individuals and groups to interact and exercise their rights and freedoms. Conversely, the digital age also features challenges stemming from the increasing use of digital technologies and services as economic or governance commodities, as well as their deliberate exploitation in the context of rising digital authoritarianism, mis- and disinformation, malicious cyber activities, and other online harms. The implications of digital technologies for human rights are already pervasive, blurring the boundaries between human rights in the physical and digital worlds, thus requiring new approaches towards safeguarding, advancing, and exercising human rights in the digital age (HURDA).

In this context RAND Europe, with support from the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, conducted a study to identify effective ideas for interventions and activities to foster and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in a manner consistent with UK policy objectives. This document provides a summary of the key findings and recommendations of the study.

Capacity-building interventions can serve as an important mechanism for fostering and promoting HURDA, though implementers have to recognise various factors that can shape the impact of interventions as well as potential unintended consequences. The study identified several overarching principles that should inform and guide HURDA-related capacity-building efforts to enable implementers to maximise their impact. These are presented in Figure ES.1 below.

Figure ES.1: Overarching principles for HURDA-related capacity-building



HURDA-related capacity-building interventions take place in a rapidly evolving technology, political and socio-cultural landscape with concrete implications for HURDA. Recognising the various opportunities, threats and challenges this landscape provides, organisations active in capacity building can employ a range of approaches to help foster and safeguard HURDA. Figure 2 below provides an overview of these intervention approaches, organised within four thematic categories.

HURDA-related capacity building is likely to include the sequencing of multiple activities and instruments from across those

presented in the figure above. In designing and implementing capacity-building activities, implementers should consider the trade-offs, strengths, and limitations of different approaches particularly in relation to the specific contexts in which they operate, the beneficiary groups they target, and the resources, expertise and know-how available. The main study report provides an in-depth description of each intervention approach, as well as an overview of illustrative intervention examples and further considerations for implementers.

Figure ES.2: Overview of HURDA-related capacity-building approaches

