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Building the Capacity of Human Rights Leaders and their Organisations

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Introduction

The Human Rights Advocates Program (HRAP) has pioneered a unique model of human rights capacity building linked to higher education, consisting of a combination of training in practical skills, deepening academic knowledge and developing international networks of contacts. The program is designed for proven human rights defenders from the Global South and marginalised communities in the United States.

Originally begun in 1989 by the Center for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR), HRAP has grown from a basic training program for workers from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) into a sophisticated and tailored programme designed to build the skills of experienced leaders grappling with complex rights issues. The focus is both on strengthening the skills of individual human rights defenders and providing the tools to build sustainable organisations with the resources to benefit disadvantaged communities.

Over the last 17 years, HRAP has trained 199 advocates from 72 countries. At the individual level, anecdotal information on

the accomplishments of HRAP alumni are multiple and impressive. HRAP alumni report that the program has directly contributed to their individual development, and enabled their organisations to become more effective.

Human Rights NGOs' Need for Capacity Building

In 1989, the CSHR began to invite human rights activists from the Global South to Columbia University for a semester of study, reflection, networking, and skills building. The program provided an exceptional opportunity for these grassroots leaders to develop their understanding of international standards and to gain exposure to an international network of contacts.

In the early years of the program, the needs of activists were often very basic: without the ease of technology, communicating about human rights abuses and connecting with international institutions was nearly impossible at the local level. At that time, HRAP's training focused on emerging leaders who needed enhanced skills to gather data, report on abuses, lead advocacy initiatives, and

respond to crises. As the field has progressed and communication has become easier, the level of sophistication among grassroots leaders in most countries has also increased significantly.

HRAP has continued to evolve and develop to meet these changing needs of grassroots organisations and to address the changes in the international human rights field. As human rights issues have entered into the mainstream, demand for training has grown exponentially, far outpacing that which HRAP can address. To begin meeting the significant demand for capacity building, CSHR developed regional training programmes in collaboration with HRAP alumni at universities in Brazil and Ghana. These regional trainings reach many more grassroots advocates than can be accommodated in HRAP's New York-based program.

At the same time, the focus of HRAP was shifted to address needs that cannot be met through regional programmes. In 2004, in response to demand from the field and an external evaluation of the program, HRAP adopted a specialised focus on human rights advocacy and the global economy to advance discourse on emerging issues at this nexus. Former advocates and other stakeholders recommended that HRAP focus on providing advanced training to experienced activists dealing with the complicated human rights problems resulting from the global economy. These problems both transcend national boundaries and resist existing mechanisms for accountability. HRAP continues to capitalise on its location in New York and at Columbia University, which gives advocates access to several key institutions that are otherwise difficult for them to approach.

HRAP's Development

When CSHR first began bringing human rights leaders to Columbia University for a semester-long residency, there was no structured program. CSHR staff would meet with advocates individually and they were encouraged to sit in on courses and to meet with NGO staff and others based in New York. While this provided the visiting human rights leaders with many opportunities to learn and build contacts, it often was difficult for them to navigate the University and the city. Without a planned program, advocates sometimes went through their residency without even meeting each other.

Evaluation and feedback from these early years led to the gradual development of a more structured program and the engagement of dedicated professional program staff. Over time, the courses, workshops, and activities that form the core of HRAP were developed in response to the needs of the program participants. Through ongoing evaluation and analysis, HRAP continues to be revised, as the needs of human rights organisations and activists change and the field as a whole develops.

The most recent changes to HRAP include a revision of the advocate's seminar to increase the coverage of foundational human rights theory and the requirement that each participant write an introductory essay prior to their arrival at Columbia. In the coming year, program staff plan to develop courses to strengthen HRAP's coverage of organisational management issues. This is in response to requests from advocates that HRAP help them address problems with the lack of infrastructure as they struggle to make their organisations sustainable.

HRAP's Methodology

HRAP seeks to strengthen the effectiveness of individual human rights leaders with a view to allowing them to increase the capacities of their organisations and the movements in which they work. To do this, the program takes a holistic approach to build up knowledge, fundamental skills, and a wide array of contacts. Equally important is the program's structured format for dialogue among advocates.

A rigorous selection process provides the foundation for the program. Although many factors are considered in choosing individual advocates and in the composition of each year's cohort, some of the most important are an individual's commitment to return to their organisation, their potential for growth, and their previous experience working on human rights. HRAP's selection committee attempts to bring together a group of advocates that is diverse but also with significant overlaps to facilitate exchange and learning.

To provide a holistic program, HRAP staff provide courses and activities that address the wide range of needs of human rights leaders for both foundational and advanced knowledge, as well as practical skills. Program staff face a challenge in designing courses that will meet the diverse needs of advocates who come to the program with a wide range of expertise but also with distinct gaps in their knowledge and skills. Core program components, notably a weekly seminar, provide advocates with grounding in human rights theories and structures. Additional workshops and courses are provided to build essential skills in documentation, strategic planning, fundraising, management, advocacy, the

application of technology and communications.

Program staff call on the support of a variety of specialists in the provision of the wide-ranging program components. A holistic program would not be possible without the integration of experts with different skills, issues focuses or organisational approach. Speakers and trainers are recruited from the ranks of Columbia University's faculty, as well as from the NGO communities based in New York and Washington, D.C.

In addition to core components that participants engage in as a group, all advocates are able to tailor the program to their specific interests and needs by taking advanced, graduate-level courses from across the University's offerings. In this way, advocates are able to complement the generalist core with an extended exploration of topics and issues relevant to their work. For example, those promoting the rights of workers have participated in legal seminars on labour rights in the global economy as well as gender discrimination in employment. Meanwhile, those addressing complex issues around the spread and treatment of HIV/AIDS have taken courses on public health, sexuality, and gender. Columbia University's diversity of offerings allow others to focus in depth on other topics including sustainable development, conflict resolution, transitional justice, women's rights, natural resources, and the rights of indigenous peoples.

The program consciously facilitates exchange among advocates to encourage them to learn from one another. The four-month residency allows for extended dialogue, debate and collaboration within each year's cohort. Through a weekly advocacy roundtable, participants deeply explore the work and experiences of their

colleagues through presentations and focused workshop exercises. This exchange is one of the core components of HRAP.

The four-month residency is a key element of the methodology but one that has both benefits and drawbacks. By taking human rights leaders out of their daily lives, the program creates space from the pressures of their busy personal and professional responsibilities. This allows advocates to devote time and mental energy to the rigors of a challenging academic environment and the plethora of opportunities presented by life in New York City. However, this extended separation from their organisations, families, communities and friends can also create stress and difficulty for the advocates.

HRAP's Strengths

HRAP's distinctive mix of academic classes, training on practical skills, and introduction to NGOs and intergovernmental organisations capitalises on its affiliation with a world-class university and its location in a global advocacy hub. Advocates participating in HRAP are particularly fortunate to have access to Columbia's distinguished and wide-ranging faculty who specialise in most areas of global human rights.

HRAP's affiliation with Columbia University also allows advocates to interact with students at several schools, particularly Columbia Law School and the School of International and Public Affairs; these informal contacts sometimes develop into extended collaborations through student internships and projects.

Although an ever increasing number of institutions of higher learning are attempting to inaugurate human rights educational initiatives including degree and certificate programs, capacity building, as distinguished from educational programs, are found among only a handful of universities worldwide. Some are only offered on an ad hoc basis as universities rarely make commitments to sponsor serious and recurrent advocacy training programs. Of those that do make such commitments, few have used HRAP's model of multi-disciplinary education, skills training and visits to government and NGO agencies.

From the point of view of those attending HRAP, the program's prestige, scope, and duration make it very attractive. HRAP is unparalleled in the United States in targeting human rights workers who cannot come to the United States for more extended programs, such as a Masters in Law or International Affairs. The program is specifically designed for activists who will return to their organisation following their residency at Columbia University. To enable activists to take leave from their work and facilitate their return, HRAP's duration is capped at four months. Several alumni credit HRAP's length and small group profile as crucial to their later achievements. For example, Nan Htay Htay Win, who attended HRAP in 2000, has written a book titled *Guidelines and Response to the Needs of Burmese Migrant Women in Thailand*, which is used by the Migrants Assistance Program, an NGO she co-founded. She reports that she would never have been able to produce this book without her work in HRAP 'because the small group setting helped me sharpen my skills in ways impossible in the larger training programs such as the Canadian Human Rights Education Program with 120 participants every June.'

The profile of advocates also distinguishes the program. Each year's cohort brings together a diverse mix of community organisers, development specialists, lawyers, journalists, union leaders, and other NGO professionals. The opportunity to build practical skills as well as to study human rights in law, international affairs and public health is particularly relevant for grassroots leaders, as one discipline is not enough to deal with serious problem-solving, educational activities and organisational development.

HRAP's Challenges

For several years, it has been difficult to find sustained funding for HRAP. Attracting general support has been particularly difficult. There has been greater success in soliciting support for the participation of specific advocates usually on the basis of the country in which they work or the issues on which they focus. This dependence on donor support for individual advocates makes it more difficult for the program to ensure that it is able to work on issues and include advocates from countries that do not have a well-developed base of donor support.

The program faces several challenges in the recruitment process. It has been difficult to solicit application from all areas covered by the program. This results in geographic and issues gaps within cohorts and across years. For example, there have been very few applications from the Middle East and North Africa over that past few years and, as a consequence, there have been no participants from these regions since 2001. In part, this is the result of a failure to get the call for applications out to the right groups and networks. But other

contributing factors include language barriers and the program's location in the United States.

HRAP requires advocates to have a functional command of English. At a minimum, each advocate needs to be able to engage in discussions with others about their work and human rights work more broadly. For those who speak English as a second language, exposure through the program strengthens their language skills. Those with the greatest interests in improving their English abilities are able to take English as a second language courses at Teacher's College, a Columbia University affiliate. However, for many human rights leaders, the program's English language requirements are an insurmountable barrier to application and participation.

While the four-month residency has many advantages, it also presents a barrier to human rights leaders who are unable to leave their organisations, communities or families for such an extended period of time. HRAP staff have found that women leaders face greater challenges in this regard as they are more likely to have significant childcare responsibilities that they are unable to temporarily shift. The intensive nature of the program, along with prohibitive costs associated with caring for a young child in New York, make it extremely difficult for participants to bring children with them during their residency.

The process of applying for visas to travel to the United States has become increasingly difficult. Those selected for p are sometimes denied visas or face extreme delays in the process. While program staff are able to provide support in some cases where the advocate has been denied a visa, general delays, particularly those due to increased security

measures taken regarding visa applications from Muslim-majority countries, are difficult to challenge.

Finally, the global scope of the recruitment process limits the extent to which participants can be vetted before they are accepted into HRAP. This occasionally results in the inclusion of those who are not good fits for the program or who lack long-term dedication to their organisation and human rights work. CSHR staff members intend to strengthen the vetting process in future selection processes. In particular, staff will seek a greater engagement with others in the applicants' organisations in order to build greater buy-in. In addition, advocates will be asked to make a stronger commitment to remain at least 18 months with their organisation following the close of HRAP.

Thematic Focus

The program's current focus has emerged in recent years as a response to the negative impacts of the global economy on those with the least access to decision-making processes. HRAP recognises that despite the profound and often devastating effects that the global market can have on local communities, relatively few NGOs are fully equipped to advocate on behalf of their constituencies. Significant discussions on the issue of global economic integration take place at the highest levels of policymaking, often in New York or Washington D.C. Given their physical and symbolic distance from these centres of power, grassroots leaders, particularly in the Global South, are typically unable to lobby for equitable outcomes from global economic policymakers. Without opportunities or resources, local and national human rights

leaders are left with few means to make their cases heard on the international stage. Those who do gain access are often unprepared, lacking the skills or contacts necessary to influence these processes. This results in policies that are out of touch with the needs of local communities most in need of just solutions to global inequalities and human rights abuses. The design of HRAP is intended to help level the playing field for those lacking the access and relevant skills or knowledge to lobby effectively for their causes.

Since 2004, HRAP has concentrated its support on individuals and organisations that address issues broadly related to the global economy. Advocates address a wide array of rights-based topics including: environmental injustice, labour rights violations, abuses by multinational corporations, the ramifications of resource extraction, public health crises, unsustainable development, and the vulnerabilities of women and indigenous peoples. This focus has allowed the program to bring together a diverse group of advocates from many geographic regions who nonetheless have a thematic link. This distinct focus has also enabled HRAP to provide a more tailored and efficient form of support to the individual advocates and their organisations and has further led to more organic and productive collaborations within program cohorts.

Current Program Design

Long-term goals

- To enable rights leaders to raise the concerns of their communities effectively in national and international policy debates on the global economy.

- To help leaders to develop concrete ways to hold public and private officials and institutions accountable for human rights abuses related to the global economy.
- To encourage advocates, through their participation in policy, advocacy and scholarly debates, to advance new solutions to the negative impacts of economic globalisation.
- To promote new understanding, dialogue and debate about the impact of economic globalisation on human rights among scholars at Columbia.
- To support the development of strong and sustainable regional human rights capacity-building programs.

Objectives

HRAP broadens advocates' knowledge so that they are able to:

- articulate how the issues on which they work relate to the broader patterns of the global economy;
- fully grasp the various ways in which the global economy affects their communities;
- assess how international human rights standards can be applied to the issues on which they work; and
- understand a range of international mechanisms through which they can respond to these issues.

HRAP improves advocates' tactical skills so that they are able to:

- plan and carry out strategic campaigns using effective advocacy tools;
- broaden constituencies at home and internationally;
- increase awareness and promote good policies and practice by effectively engaging the media;
- address issues of organisational leadership and health; and

- secure funds to sustain individual projects and the longevity of their organisations.

HRAP establishes networks for ongoing action and engagement, including:

- alliances between advocates and US-based NGOs;
- cross-regional partnerships and joint action by advocates working on related issues;
- collaboration between Columbia University faculty and students and the advocates;
- engagement with policymakers, the media and the public to raise awareness about their work; and
- exchange of ideas, collaboration and support within the diverse worldwide network of HRAP alumni.

Impact

In post-residency evaluations and follow-up, alumni have reported that the long-term impacts of HRAP on each person were multiple. Assessed in a variety of ways, the benefits of HRAP are immense.

Fundraising success — Advocates complete their residency with a funding proposal that they can immediately submit to foundations. In recent years, advocates have, on average, raised more than the full cost of HRAP within one year after completing their residency. One 2003 advocate, Patricia Guerrero of the League of Displaced Women, has raised approximately US\$1.5 million for her organisation that advocates for the rights of women and girls displaced by internal armed conflict in Colombia.

Alumni support and collaboration — Advocates are networked with more than 180 HRAP alumni around the world, relying on one another for information exchange and alliance building, and varied support. One notable example of such support came when a Liberian advocate was imprisoned and severely tortured for his rights work. A fellow Uruguayan alumnus who had since become a Member of Parliament successfully mobilised diplomatic representatives of his government to demand and secure the Liberian's release.

Advocate alliances — Alumni establish cross-regional and thematic partnerships on a variety of issues. Most recently, advocates from Congo, Ecuador, Mexico and the Philippines began a project to enable grassroots groups to monitor the effects of transnational corporations' activities on local communities in the Global South.

Influencing policy — Advocates use HRAP as an opportunity to lobby for their causes, but also to build networks that will ensure effective advocacy once they return home. Delphine Djiraibe, founder of the Chadian Association for the Promotion of Human Rights, raised international attention during her 1999 HRAP residency that ultimately led to the former Chadian President's indictment on charges of torture in 2000. Delphine also pushed for an influential international study on the environmental impact of Chadian oil extraction that led to policy changes by the World Bank on the project.

Strengthening the international human rights movement — Independently sustainable alliances and collaboration develop from connections between HRAP alumni all over the world. For example, a core group of six Brazilian

HRAP alumni collaborated with the Center for the Study of Human Rights to establish what has ultimately become a self-sustaining rights-based capacity-building program in São Paulo. The program has trained almost six hundred activists from Brazil, greater Latin America, Asia and Africa. Building on this Brazilian experience, CSHR is currently supporting a similar program for West and Central Africa.

Broadening conceptions of human rights — Advocates have frequently expressed their new appreciation for the global scope of international human rights. As Carmen Reinoso (Peru, HRAP 1995) said: 'The program changed my conception about human rights, and it gave me a new understanding of my job from a broader perspective, as a part of an international movement. I was not alone anymore.'

Increasing confidence — Many advocates have said that open exchange and discussion resulted in newfound confidence about expressing themselves in public. Two valued consequences have followed: a new sense of personal efficacy and the development of a sense of security. Knowing like-minded activists abroad has engendered a sense of immunity from national abuse, which in turn enhances leadership potential. For example, National Endowment for Democracy (NED) staff described one young Liberian advocate, to whom they granted funding, as being 'so inspired by his work at Columbia that he decided to return to his country in the middle of the civil war, successfully founding the Center for Law and Human Rights Education in Monrovia.' The NED official commented further, 'I know that those coming to Columbia from Africa are proving in fact to emerge as leaders, and NED has

funded groups to which they have returned in Zaire, Liberia and elsewhere.’

Examples of HRAP’s Impact on Leadership

The following biographical summaries describe the work of just a few of the individual human rights defenders who have participated in HRAP over the last 17 years. These leaders have played vital roles in the human rights movement at local, national, regional and international levels. Many have gone on to found new organisations, raise substantial funds for their causes and lobby successfully for change on national and international policies. Some have joined the UN or have entered government service in order to be able to more directly address rights-based issues. Advocates have praised the opportunities the program provides for them to link their local challenges to global human rights claims. As some describe in their own words below, their participation in HRAP was often pivotal in enabling them to realise their achievements.

At this point, HRAP staff have been able to trace the development of individual advocates. However, in each individual case, it is difficult to assess the role HRAP played in the development of the leader’s career. Program staff plan to carry out a more aggregate study that would allow for greater analysis of what participation in HRAP means for advocates’ organisations and their careers.

Brazil

Oscar Vilhena Vieira, professor of law at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo and at Fundação Getúlio Vargas Law School, participated in HRAP in

1991. After completing HRAP, Oscar returned to Brazil to head a UN institute focused on strengthening the rule of law in the southern Cone. He also introduced the first formal international human rights course in a Brazilian law school. Oscar has taken a lead role in establishing two organisations dedicated to capacity building in the Global South, Conectas Human Rights and Sur-Human Rights University Network. In this capacity, Oscar has promoted the development of South–South exchange among human rights activists, academics and officials from the UN.

Bhutan/Nepal

Mangala Sharma, a 1997 advocate, founded Bhutanese Refugees Aiding Victims of Violence (BRAVVE) when she lived in a refugee camp near Nepal after being expelled from Bhutan in 1992 because of her ethnicity. BRAVVE assists women refugees who have been raped and tortured. Run entirely by refugees, the organisation provides skills training to refugee women and adolescents in tailoring, weaving, shoe-making and typing, among other activities. The money they earn is used to buy food to supplement the limited provisions they receive. Mangala’s activism in Nepal ultimately put her at risk, and she was granted US political asylum in 2001. She now works as the Leadership and Health Promoters program coordinator for the Refugee Women’s Network in Decatur, Georgia. In 1997, Mangala was the recipient of the first Ginetta Sagan Fund Award of Amnesty International USA.

Cambodia

Chanthol Oung, who completed HRAP in 1995, went on to found the Cambodian Women’s Crisis Center (CWCC), the first organisation of its kind in Cambodia.

CWCC offers protection, shelter and legal assistance to women and children who have survived gender-based violence and advocates for an end to violence against women. Chanthol credits the support she received from HRAP as critical in the shaping of the organisation: 'For me, [CSHR] is more than a place where I received knowledge about the history, concepts and development of human rights, or a place to network with colleagues from different countries. It also gave me the confidence and direction to start CWCC to help women and girls who suffer from gender-based violence. If I did not attend the Advocates Training Program, there would be no CWCC now.'

Chad

As a 1999 advocate, Delphine Djiraibe, founder of the Chadian Association for the Promotion of Human Rights, raised the transparency and governance problems of her country to an international level. Largely resulting from her tireless advocacy while in HRAP, the former President of Chad was indicted on charges of torture in a groundbreaking case in Senegal in 2000. Delphine also initiated an influential international study on the environmental impact of Chadian oil extraction that contributed directly to changes in trade and revenue policies developed by the World Bank for the project. Delphine discussed HRAP's influence on her work: 'The Advocates Program enabled me to create a network around the main issues that my organisation works on: the Chad-Cameroon pipeline project and the prosecution of Hissen Habre, the former dictator of Chad.' In 2004, Delphine received the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Human Rights Award for her leadership.

Colombia

Patricia Guerrero, a 2003 advocate, is a founder and legal advisor to the League of Displaced Women, an organisation that argues for the rights of women and girls displaced by internal armed conflict in Colombia. She is also the executive secretary of the Colombia section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and a member of the Permanent Committee for the Defence of Human Rights in Cartagena. She was instrumental in organising a visit by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women to Colombia, and has testified before the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. A courageous activist, Patricia has worked tirelessly to advocate for the rights of internally displaced women. Since her 2003 participation in HRAP, she has raised an estimated \$1.5 million for her organisation through the connections she made as an advocate.

México

Alejandra Ancheita Pagaza, a 2005 advocate, blends environmental advocacy with labour rights protection as the director and co-founder of the newly established Project of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ProDESC) in Mexico. The organisation seeks to realise environmental justice and to improve the life of workers, in particular those who work in the *maquiladoras* — export-oriented factories in Mexico that are established to take advantage of cheap labour and weak regulation. Alejandra returned to Mexico after participating in HRAP determined to share the wealth of what she learned in the program with the Mexican human rights community. She believes HRAP has provided her with the tools and renewed energy needed to meet

the challenges currently facing human rights leaders in Mexico.

Pakistan

Hina Jilani participated in the first HRAP in 1989. Hina, together with her sister Asma Jahangir, founded the first all-women's law firm in Pakistan in 1981. The pair also founded the Women's Action Forum, a pressure group campaigning against discriminatory legislation. Both sisters were arrested for their part in protests against these laws and were detained for short periods. In 1986, Hina and her sister established AGHS Legal Aid, the first free legal aid centre in Pakistan. The same year, they were among the founding members of the non-governmental Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. Since August 2000, Hina has served as the UN secretary-general's first special representative on human rights defenders.

United States of America

Jennifer Flynn, co-founder and director of the New York City AIDS Housing Network (NYCAHN), participated in HRAP in 2002. Established on the core belief that housing is a human right, NYCAHN empowers low-income people living with HIV/AIDS to organise and advocate for quality housing and sound public policies. Jennifer actively incorporates the use of the international human rights framework and international law into her work in the United States. She explains that HRAP 'gave me a chance to step back and see my work in a context that made the connections with other social justice movements stronger. By defining myself as a human rights activist, I was finally able to step out of the micro demands of local policy work here in the United States and see myself

and my work as truly part of a web of resistance.' The experience, she adds, 'strengthened my commitment to forcing the US to protect local human rights, recognising that then people in other countries could use that as leverage for their own countries.'

Uruguay

Felipe Michelini, a 1990 advocate, earned an LL.M. at Columbia Law School after completing HRAP, and later worked on the legal staff of the United Nations Truth Commission in El Salvador. When he returned to Uruguay, Felipe became the regional director of the Center for Justice and International Law and a consultant for the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights in the southern Cone. Since 1994, he has served as a Member of Parliament and has recently been appointed the undersecretary for Education and Culture. In these governmental positions, he has been able to push forward key human rights issues at the national, regional and international levels. Felipe explains that HRAP 'gave me a great opportunity to approach human rights globally, sharing local perspectives. It provided an oasis to think and to strengthen my commitment to the human rights cause. It gave me a permanent link with the human rights movement, and a source of inspiration to keep working hard.'

Replication

There are four key elements of HRAP that could be incorporated into other capacity-building programs that focus on the development of individual leaders.

Holistic approach — By providing a range of knowledge and skills, programs

can strengthen a leader's overall ability to carry out their work and manage their organisation. Leaders often need support on multiple levels and across a spectrum of competencies. A holistic approach seeks to integrate theory and practice as well as increasing access to resources and contacts.

Extended residency — By taking individuals out of their daily context, programs can relieve participants of some of the responsibilities, stresses and demands that make it difficult for leaders to focus on the growth of new skills and knowledge. Extended residencies also allow for exchange and learning within a cohort and the development of strong bonds between leaders that can continue after the end of the residency period.

Academic affiliation — The establishment within, or affiliation with, an academic institution often provides unique resources and expertise. Through an academic base, programs can draw on academic courses, the presence of professors and students, and information resources, among other benefits.

Structure for exchange — The incorporation of activities that consciously require participants to reflect on and present their work, alongside consideration of the experiences of others, builds on the greatest resource that such programs have: the participants themselves.