

FINDINGS FROM THE ALUMNI SURVEY

APRIL
2015

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES PROGRAM

25 YEARS OF SUPPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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mobilize **confidence** *strategize* **CONNECT** **impact**
policymakers advocate *PARTNER* cooperate *exchange* share
RECORD **interview** research *lobby* organize theoretical
DEEPEN *linkages* *analyze* broaden *global* *learn* writing **unique** *media*
campaign **collaborate** solidarity **aware** *witness* strengthen

HRAP

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Upon marking our 25th year of successfully building the capacity of human rights advocates from all around the world, the Human Rights Advocates Program (HRAP) surveyed its alumni to take stock of the benefits they feel they have derived from the program. The survey represents the first concentrated effort by HRAP to provide alumni with an opportunity to share their impressions of the program's impact not only on them and their organizations but broadly speaking as well.

The overall survey results confirm that HRAP has had a life-changing impact on many participants. As illustrated by the word cloud on the inside cover, the main finding indicates that the program increased the confidence of the participants, prompting them to assume leadership roles at their organizations and in their movements. A significant number of recent alumni reported that their exposure to the issues covered by the other members of their HRAP cohort led them to expand the scope of their work. In recent years, the impact of LGBTQ advocates on their fellow advocates has been especially pronounced. Advocates credited HRAP with imparting them with networks and skills they have used to raise funds and develop partnerships for their organizations and movements back home. The transfer of learning that has occurred when advocates return home has been incredible—advocates report sharing the knowledge and skills they developed while in HRAP not only with their colleagues but with as many as thousands of others primarily through trainings and publications.



2002 Advocate Leonardo Reales of Colombia uses storytelling as a way of teaching young people about human rights.

I PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM GOAL

The Human Rights Advocates Program (HRAP) builds the capacity of grassroots human rights advocates who then transfer the knowledge, skills, and networks gained during the program to their organizations and movements back home.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Through HRAP, advocates:

- Expand their professional networks
- Enhance their theoretical knowledge
- Hone and develop practical skills
- Engage in reciprocal learning through an exchange of experiences among participants, facilitators, faculty, students, staff and resource persons
- Raise their profiles as advocates
- Fine-tune their personal and professional goals
- Have a platform to raise awareness about the challenges they face in the field
- Develop plans for action on how they will transfer the knowledge, skills and networks to their organizations and movements back home



2003 Advocate Patricia Guerrero is founder and legal advisor for La Liga de Mujeres Desplazadas in Bolívar, Cartagena, which supports and advocates for the rights of internally displaced Afro-Colombian and indigenous women and children.

I PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PARTICIPANT SELECTION PROCESS

Since 2008, the number of applications received has more than doubled, from 150 applications in 2008 to 342 in 2014. While the overall quality of the applicants is very high, funding for HRAP limits the number of applicants admitted. The average number of advocates per program since 2008 has been 10.

The application, which was moved from paper to the web in 2009, is available online for a minimum of six months. Applicants are asked to answer five essay questions geared at ascertaining their motivation for human rights work, their ability to transfer learning, and their potential for impact. They are required to submit their CV, two letters of recommendation and a letter of institutional support, which ideally includes a commitment by the applicant's organization that they will be able to work upon return to the organization.

The due diligence process includes a thorough review of all applications by HRAP program staff, consultations with an advisory panel comprised of Columbia University faculty and human rights experts familiar with HRAP, and interviews with HRAP alumni. Finalists are interviewed by the Director of Capacity Building.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

In recent years, advocates have ranged from early career advocates who have cut their teeth in very urgent human rights situations to mid-career advocates who've founded organizations. The following checklist is used when reviewing applications:

- Do they work at the grassroots level?
- What motivated them to work in human rights?
- What kinds of previous training opportunities have they had?
- Do they have concrete examples of their advocacy work?
- Have they exhibited an ability to transfer learning?
- Are they able to provide examples of their ability to be both a team player and a leader?
- Do they exhibit a strong inclination to have impact in their movements?
- Are they able to describe their advocacy path?
- What motivated them to apply for HRAP?
- What do they hope to gain from HRAP?



1993 Aung Myon Min (center) at President Obama's 2014 meeting with civil society leaders in Myanmar.

I PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

CURRICULUM

The pillars of HRAP are academic coursework, networking, and skills-based workshops. Participants are treated as active partners throughout HRAP.

COURSES

Once admitted to the program, participants are sent a list of graduate-level courses at Columbia University that relate to their work. During the first two weeks of the program, they are strongly encouraged to attend the classes that interest them before selecting those they will attend for the duration of the program. The majority of advocates commit to participating fully in two graduate-level courses while in HRAP. While they do not submit any written work or sit for exams, they are expected to do readings and participate fully in class discussions. Professors consistently report that advocates contribute greatly to class discussions, contributing their unique country and situational experiences to the issues at hand.

NETWORKING

A few weeks before the program starts, the advocates are sent a list of networking opportunities available to them in New York City and Washington, D.C. The list provides the names and websites for the more than 100 human rights organizations in

NYC and D.C. that have met with advocates in recent years. The advocates are asked to review the list, visit the organizations' websites and submit to HRAP a list of at least five organizations that they would like to meet with when they are in NYC and at least another five organizations for the D.C. networking trip. They are also encouraged to add the names of organizations not already on the list that are of interest to them. Once HRAP participants select their classes and provide their networking lists, HRAP program staff schedule their networking opportunities. Since there is a subset of organizations that usually interest multiple participants, HRAP staff arrange mini-group meetings.

WORKSHOPS

Advocates have the opportunity to develop or hone practical skills in a series of workshops through HRAP. Workshops include a series on research, writing and documentation led by senior researchers at Human Rights Watch to workshops on fundraising, advocacy and editorial writing. Given the heavy travel

schedules of the instructors, the majority of these workshops are organized well in advance. Most of the workshops take place on Fridays when classes are normally not scheduled.

ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS

To promote openness and transparency, all advocates are asked to use Google calendar. HRAP staff manage the group calendar as well as each of the advocates' individual calendars. Advocates are also asked to file short reports on their networking meetings using a password-protected website. The reports are available to all advocates so that all are aware of the networking that is taking place within the group.

EVALUATIONS

During each HRAP program, participants are asked to fill out mid-term and final evaluations. The participants are asked to provide constructive feedback on courses, workshops, networking, the administration of the program, and International House (where they are housed for the duration of the program).

II KEY FINDINGS

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Between 1989 and 2013, a total of 271 human rights advocates from 81 countries attended HRAP. Of those 271 alumni who attended HRAP between 1989 and 2013, the 241 alumni with valid email addresses were emailed the online survey in July 2014. The survey remained open until December 2014. 73 of the 241 alumni (30 percent) replied. The majority of respondents (59 percent) attended HRAP in recent years (2008 to 2013).

The survey was the first concentrated effort by ISHR to provide alumni with a structured opportunity to share their impressions of HRAP's impact not only on them and their organizations but broadly speaking as well.

The survey consisted of a series of statements which the respondents were asked to agree or disagree with. The respondents were then asked to explain their choice. The only restriction they were given was a word count. The answers were free form.

The appendix lists those advocates who agreed to have their names published in the report. 18 percent of respondents asked that their names not be published although they agreed that their class years and comments could be used in the report.



The 2011 HRAP class at the Statue of Liberty. Photo by Alan Orling.

II KEY FINDINGS

ALUMNI RESPONSES BY THE NUMBERS

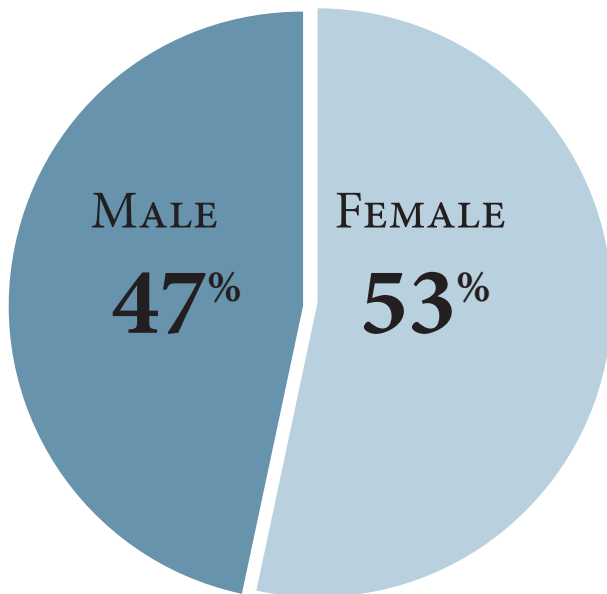
LEADERSHIP

22 OF 73 RESPONDENTS
 (30 percent) serve as executive directors for their current organizations.
 Of those executive directors, 10 are women.

6 OF 10
FEMALE executive directors founded or co-founded their organizations.

7 OF 12
MALE executive directors founded or co-founded their organizations.

RESPONDENTS BY GENDER



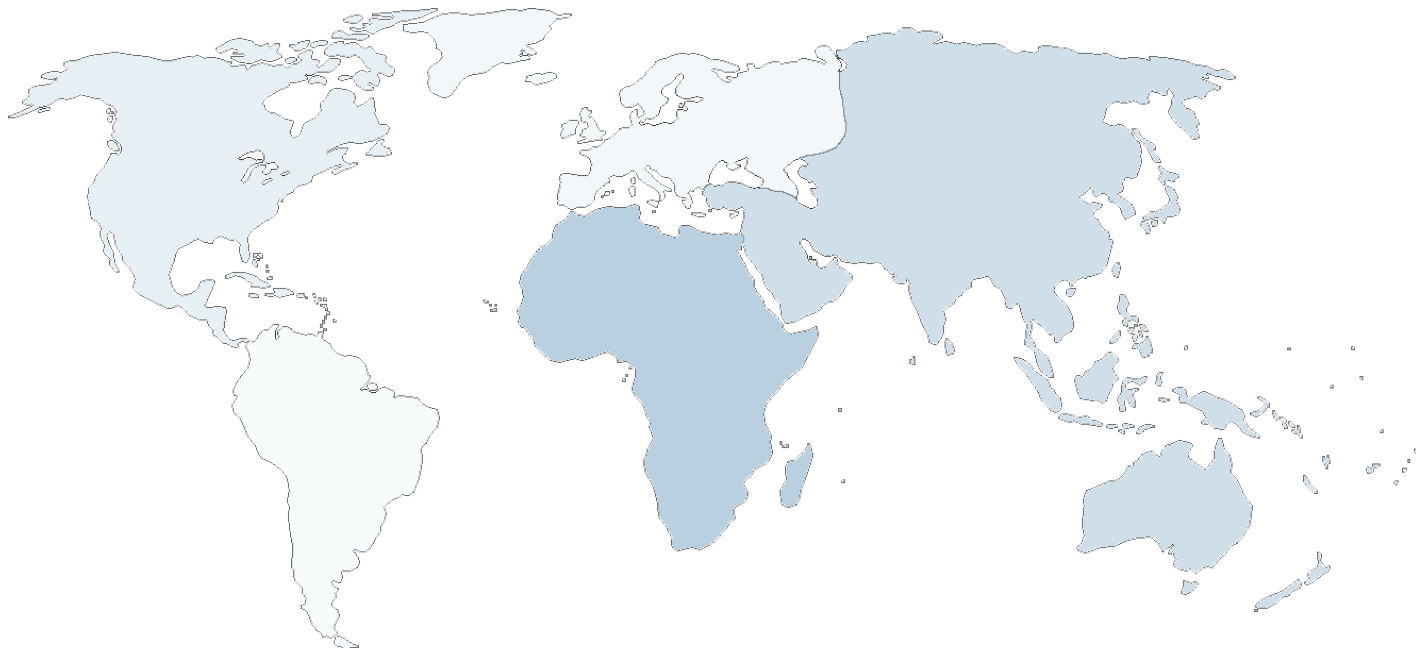
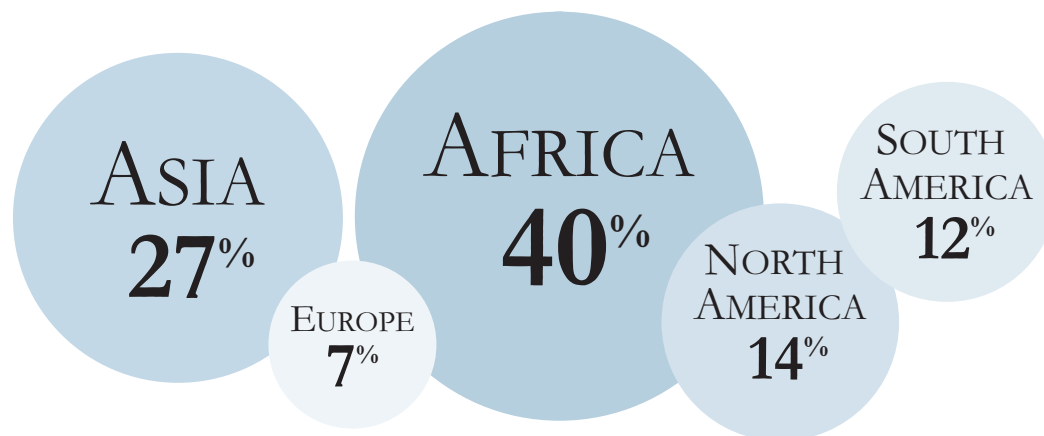
RESPONDENTS BY CLASS

1990	1	2004	1
1993	3	2005	6
1995	2	2007	2
1996	7	2008	2
1997	2	2009	9
1998	1	2010	5
2000	1	2011	13
2002	3	2012	7
2003	1	2013	7

II KEY FINDINGS

ALUMNI RESPONSES BY GEOGRAPHY

Africa	29
Asia (includes the Middle East)	20
North America (includes Central America)	10
South America & the Caribbean	9
Europe	5



II KEY FINDINGS

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, & METHODS/TECHNIQUES

100 percent of respondents reported that they have integrated the knowledge, skills, and methods/techniques acquired during HRAP into their work as human rights advocates. **79 percent** of respondents strongly agreed with the statement.

The single most lasting impact of HRAP reported by the advocates was increased “confidence.” In fact, respondents used the word “confidence” a total of 44 times when illustrating why they agreed with this statement.

45 percent of respondents pointed to their ability to sustain their organizations thanks to the fundraising skills they honed while in the program. 36 percent of respondents reported that the networking they did in the program as well as the skills and knowledge they developed while networking through HRAP (showing up on time, sending thank you notes and following up) influenced them greatly and led them to make changes at their organizations when they returned home.

A **1995 Advocate**: “My analytical skills, confidence and ability to defend human rights—all of which I gathered for the first time from HRAP—are fundamental strengths of my activism.”

2005 Advocate Ida Le Blanc, the General Secretary of the National Union of Domestic Employees in Trinidad and Tobago: “I cannot say exactly what to give an example, but we have gone far since I participated in HRAP. I always gave credit to this program. We went on to collaborate with the International Domestic Workers Network. It has now been transformed into a federation. I have

been working in collaboration with the ILO and UN Women. I think all this happened because of the confidence I gained and the ability to participate with others at the international level. That is what we were doing in HRAP: networking with each other and sharing our experiences. I am able to speak better at public forums. I could not have done it without HRAP.”

2009 Advocate Nazibrola Janezashvili, Executive Director of Association Unity of Judges of Georgia: “I have better skills in the advocacy of different problems regarding human rights and justice. Also my fundraising skills were improved and developed. Above all, my self-appraisal and self-confidence were raised.”

2010 Advocate Agnes Atim, Executive Director of Hope Development Initiative (Uganda), shared: “HRAP increased my fundraising skills and human rights work. I have opened my own women’s rights organisation, carried several human rights advocacy campaigns at the national, regional and international levels, and have since raised over \$500,000.”

2011 Advocate Lydia Cherop, Coordinator of Women Integrated Initiative for Development (Uganda): “The advocacy knowledge I gained during the HRAP has been guiding me in my current job, especially the interviewing skills I got from Human

II KEY FINDINGS

Rights Watch among others because our organization deals with victims of human rights violations.”

2011 Advocate Gisèle Ngungua, lawyer and coordinator with Action Large des Femmes Avocates (DRC): “Since my participation in HRAP at Columbia, I use the technique of communicating in three minutes—I assure you that it works....I am no longer the same person. HRAP was a huge opportunity in my life. It opened me to places I never before imagined.”

kind of violations taking place and have become knowledgeable on how to identify and incorporate key government officials and media representatives.”

2013 Absolom Shalakha, National Adviser, Conflict Early Warning/Early Response, PeaceNet Kenya: “Fundraising used to be a big headache for me as an individual. However, the skills I learned from the fundraising workshops at HRAP have enabled me to comfortably develop proposals and seek out relevant donors. Three proposals have been successfully



2013 Advocate Absolom Shalakha of Kenya facilitates reconciliation and healing in communities torn apart by conflict.

2011 Advocate Athili Sapriina, Executive Member of Naga Peoples Movement for Human Rights (India): “The general confidence derived out of the numerous exposure trips with influential individuals and organizations, both in New York and Washington, continue to be useful. The exposure to video advocacy, the three-minute presentation (elevator speech) and the learning experience from the indigenous political critique’ class at Columbia University have continued to be useful to this day.”

2013 Advocate Mayamba Geoffrey Kuletela, Executive Director, Prisoners’ Future Foundation (Zambia): “I am able to document evidence on the

funded by donor organizations in Kenya already. I have also been able to give interviews to both local and international audiences, something I would normally shy away from since I didn’t have great interview skills. The techniques from the class on media relations are invaluable to me. My advocacy skills have also improved, and many of my peers look up for me to take the lead in advocacy work since my time in HRAP. Recently, we have been lobbying the government to tackle insecurity issues without violating human rights of the targeted community members, especially in the wake of the persistent terrorist attacks.”

II KEY FINDINGS

VISIBILITY & CREDIBILITY

72 of 73 respondents reported that HRAP increased their visibility and credibility as a human rights advocate. Many noted that participation in HRAP imparted them with increased capacity to work in English and they can now actively participate in regional and international events where English is required.

1996 Advocate Aime Wata, UNHCR Senior Protection Officer (Switzerland): “My return from HRAP to my hometown in East Congo coincided with an Amnesty International monitoring mission. The human rights activists from all over the area came to meet with the mission. The Amnesty International researcher informed all present that I was back from HRAP in New York and would be of a good help to all. That visibility later helped save lives when the conflict started as some activists were being hunted down by the police on ethnic grounds. They sought safe haven in my home. I was referred to as ‘the Human Rights Guy.’”

1997 Advocate Fernando Rossetti Ferreira, consultant (Brazil): “Having HRAP on my CV strengthened me as a human rights advocate in Brazil for jobs and consultancies.”

2002 Advocate Leonardo Reales, Coordinator of the Afro-Colombia Movement (Colombia): “I have been able to participate in many events at both the regional and international level as a human rights lecturer. I didn’t do that in English before participating in HRAP.... I have published about 20 academic works and/or human rights reports at both the national and international level after participating in the HRAP. Before HRAP, I had only one publication.”

2008 Advocate Peter Mulbah, Executive Director, Skills and Agricultural Development Services (Liberia): “Prior to my participation at HRAP, little was known about my work and my organization. Having developed my capacity over the four months in New York, people started to see me as a shining star. My level of thinking as well as my speeches and writing improved tremendously. This national level recognition made the Government include me in the delegation to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as a civil society representative.”

2010 Advocate Bakary Tandia, Policy Advocate, African Services Committee, and Co-founder, Abolition Institute (Mauritania/USA): “Attending HRAP has significantly increased my visibility while strengthening my confidence. More importantly, it gives you the comfort of belonging to a community you can always count on.”

A 2011 Advocate: “Whenever I sent my resume for a consultancy, they hinted on my participation in HRAP as a plus in considering me for the work. With the knowledge and confidence gained from HRAP, I never disappoint them.”

II KEY FINDINGS

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

90 percent reported that they made operational changes to organizations for which they have worked or been affiliated due to their experience in HRAP.

2010 Advocate Susan Aryeetey, Resource Mobilisation Officer, International Federation of Women Lawyers-Ghana: “The monitoring and evaluation aspect of the legal aid service has been improved with the introduction of quarterly evaluation of beneficiaries. A fundraising strategy has also been developed and an annual conference to cultivate individual donors has also been instituted.”

2011 Advocate Gisèle Ngungua, lawyer and coordinator with Action Large des Femmes Avocates (DRC): “ALFA use some of the skills and methods that I acquired during HRAP like the respect for project deadlines, the role of social media, and how to manage stress in the office.”

A 2012 Advocate stated: “I decided to implement the group e-mails and Google calendar [which HRAP uses to create a sense of transparency and openness] to ease communication, drawing work plans and to encourage teamwork. HRAP usually required us to work in teams through the theatre classes, the stress reduction classes, meeting donors, critiquing one another on a positive note, etc. I have passed these on to our organization as a whole and coalition alliances we work in!”



2013 Advocate Sylvester Uhaa of CURE-Nigeria complements his work on prison reform with initiatives that target at-risk youth.

II KEY FINDINGS

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

VISIBILITY

92 percent agreed/strongly agreed that participation enabled them to increase the visibility of organizations for which they have worked or been affiliated.

1996 Advocate Aurora Parong, former Executive Director of Amnesty International Philippines and current member of Human Rights Violations Board (Philippines), reported: “The use of the human rights principles and standards that I learned through HRAP improved the credibility and visibility of the organizations I worked with, especially since I was the spokesperson for Task Force Detainees of the Philippines and Amnesty International. I can easily speak and write statements on human rights issues because my HRAP studies helped strengthen my human rights framework.”



1996 Advocate Aurora Parong of the Philippines talking about the Human Rights Victims Claims Board.

A 1996 Advocate reported: “HRAP enabled us to have relationships with Amnesty International and other human rights organizations. International delegations started to visit our office. Before they

only used to visit our HQ. Sometimes they invited me to events in their own countries like Italy and Germany.”

1996 Advocate Aime Wata, UNHCR Senior Protection Officer (Switzerland): “My experience increased the visibility of my organization (AJUV in the DRC) and other local human rights organizations that were formed later. Hence, despite continued violence in East Congo, the human rights movement remains resilient in my town.”

A 2002 Advocate reported: “We belong to more networks and are implementing projects in more states of Nigeria. Internationally, we are much more connected.”

2009 Advocate Akinyi Ocholla, Minority Women in Action (Kenya): “I increased visibility of Pan Africa ILGA, which had all but collapsed by 2012, but which, through my engagement, was able to host its second regional conference in Nairobi in March 2014. Minority Women in Action has also become much more recognized since my HRAP involvement.”

2011 Advocate Rita Mainaly, a lawyer with the Center for Legal Research and Resource Development (Nepal): “My HRAP experience helped increase recognition for my organization and me. This may be one of the reasons why I was appointed by the Government of Nepal as a member of High Level Commission of Peace Agreements Implementation and Recommendation Commission.”

II KEY FINDINGS

IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY/SOCIETY AT LARGE

98.6 percent of respondents reported that their organization's human rights work had a direct or indirect impact on the broader community/society at large. 60 percent strongly agreed with the statement. Many of the advocates pointed to the impact they have had on human rights policy and legislation.

1996 Advocate Aurora Parong, former Executive Director of Amnesty International Philippines and current member of Human Rights Violations Board (Philippines), reported: "We have helped pass human rights laws like the anti-torture law, the anti-disappearance law, the reproductive health law, the anti-violence against women and children law, among other human rights laws. We played significant roles in the ratification of international human rights laws and humanitarian laws by the Philippines."

1997 Advocate Nuala Kelly, a former member of the Irish Human Rights Commission, reported: "I drew on knowledge built in relation to treaty monitoring bodies and their reporting processes to raise awareness about the human rights of persons in detention in relation to the conflict in Ireland and also to assist in efforts to pressure the British and Irish governments to ratify a Council of Europe convention on the transfer of sentenced persons and implement transfer procedures in the spirit of the convention."

A 2002 Advocate wrote: "I have participated in several local and international high-impact research studies on the different aspects of the right to health and published a book on sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as a training manual for NGOs."

A 2002 Advocate responded: "I have integrated my organization into areas that they would not have engaged in. Examples include LGBTI rights and drug advocacy. The Centre today—as a result of the free hand I was given on return and its ability to align itself with my new work—presently is a Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB and USAID sub-grantee working in the areas of LGBTI and injecting drug users project in Nigeria."

2005 Advocate Jia Ping, CEO and Founder, Health Governance Initiative (China): "I helped to draft the national compensation plan for HIV-positive people who had been infected through blood transfusions. I also helped the community to design the Country Coordinating Mechanism of the Global Fund, which greatly enhanced public participation."

2009 Advocate Evalyne Achan, Project Manager with Plan International (Uganda): "I was among those who advocated for the repeal of the Anti-Homosexuality Act in Uganda."

II KEY FINDINGS

PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING

95 percent of the respondents agreed that they were influenced by the work of the other advocates in their cohort.

2000 Advocate Adrian Coman, Program Director, International Human Rights, ARCUS Foundation: “I have learned a great deal about Roma human rights from my HRAP colleague and increased ACCEPT’s attention to ethnic diversity. (We recruited a Roma woman to join ACCEPT’s board.)”

in 2005 allowed me to create part of the vision in ProDESC.”

2008 Advocate Peter Mulbah, Executive Director, Skills and Agricultural Development Services (Liberia): “I learned from my fellow advocate from



2009 Advocate Evalyne Achan (standing on left) led a meeting with former victims of the LRA during a visit by U.S. Senator Chris Coons of Delaware.

2005 Advocate Ida Le Blanc, the General Secretary of the National Union of Domestic Employees in Trinidad and Tobago: “The work of others on our HRAP team, such as the advocate from the DRC working with child soldiers, impressed me and gave me the courage to take on this work that I am doing.”

Colombia. Her style and passion in carrying out advocacy impacted me greatly. Upon my return, I began a collaboration with two organizations to launch a similar campaign focusing on the wives of rubber plantation workers in Liberia.”

2005 Advocate Alejandra Ancheita, Founder and Executive Director of Proyecto de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales (Mexico): “The conversations that I had with my fellows advocates

2009 Advocate Evalyne Achan, Project Manager with Plan International (Uganda), reported that the participation of an LGBT advocate in her cohort led her to advocate for the repeal of the Anti-Gay Act in Uganda.

II KEY FINDINGS

TRANSFER OF LEARNING

97 percent of respondents reported that they have been able to transfer skills developed through HRAP to colleagues.

1993 Advocate Aung Myo Min, Executive Director of Equality Myanmar: “I have trained more than 400 trainers and human rights advocates. They have reached more than 200,000 community members through training programs.”



2013 Advocate Musola Cathrine Kaseketi is the ED and Founder of Vilole Images Production in Zambia.

A 2002 Advocate responded: “I shared information and tools on the documentation of human rights abuses with my colleagues upon my return from the program. [This information was] used to inform a project documenting youth, sexual and reproductive rights violations.”

2005 Advocate Jia Ping, CEO and Founder, Health Governance Initiative (China): “I helped quite a few local CBOs to write proposals for the Global Fund to consider.”

2009 Advocate Ambika Paudel, Program Director, Conscious Media Forum (Nepal): “We just started video advocacy on human rights. I was very much impressed by the workshop on video advocacy at WITNESS. I have given almost half a dozen training workshop on video advocacy.”

2009 Advocate Mary Akrami, Executive Director of Afghan Women Skills Development Center: “I have shared with my colleagues lobbying techniques with religious leaders.”

2009 Advocate Karyn Kaplan, Director, International Hepatitis/HIV Policy and Advocacy, Treatment Action Group (USA): “Through the development of our rights curriculum, we have trained more than 100 Asian grassroots advocates on human rights history, principles/conventions, system, etc. and on documentation as well as advocacy/campaign development.” (Karyn is a co-founder of the Thai AIDS Treatment Action Group.)

2010 Advocate Susan Aryeetey, Resource Mobilization Officer, International Federation of Women Lawyers-Ghana: “I have made changes to the training curriculum for community advocates, and shared this information with 500 members of

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the paralegal network. As a result of the HRAP experience, I am well able to make constructive input into the work of the network for women's rights and have been invited by Plan Ghana to facilitate a human rights training session for 20 of its grant partners."

the larger context of minority rights to ease its understanding."

2013 Absolom Shalakra, National Adviser, Conflict Early Warning/Early Response, PeaceNet Kenya: "We have improved our advocacy strategies as an



2012 Advocate Kemal Pervanic founded Most Mira (Bridge of Peace) to bring young people of different ethnicities together in Bosnia. Photo by Joanne Teasdale.

A 2011 Advocate wrote: "Strategies to confront panic and to deal with sensitive (sometimes dangerous) human rights risks were shared within the organization. We also reflected together around the learned experiences defending woman's rights in other parts of the world. Some budgeting formats and ways of raising funds gained at HRAP have been implemented in the organization."

A 2011 Advocate answered: "In NGO meetings in Rwanda, I often share some of the approaches I discovered during HRAP. One of them concerned advocacy for minority rights, especially LGBT rights in the African perspective. The LGBT issue is quite complex and new for many Africans that it would sound provocative to address them as it is done by many. Rather I suggested to always include it within

organization, and this was due to the skills that I learned at HRAP. I also provided a stress management training for my colleagues, which has helped manage our human resources even better."

2013 Advocate Musola Cathrine Kaseketi, Founder/Executive Director of Viole Images Productions (Zambia): "Since completing HRAP, I have conducted about six disability equality trainings of not less than 15 participants each. I have integrated some of what I gained during HRAP into my trainings."

II KEY FINDINGS

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The Advocates were asked to comment on HRAP's contributions to the field of human rights.

A 2002 Advocate responded: “Before attending the HRAP, I was a run-of-the-mill advocate. However, the program made me a grounded advocate who knows the theory and practice of human rights activism. I was better placed in my work to undertake advocacy for more vulnerable persons that hitherto I would not have advocated for and worked with [such as] LGBTI individuals.”

2009 Advocate Karyn Kaplan, Director, International Hepatitis/HIV Policy and Advocacy, Treatment Action Group (USA): “The extraordinary wealth of people, information, resources, connections, and support on so many levels from professional to emotional is an invaluable and unique opportunity. Working on the ground in adverse political and other environments takes a toll. Being able to recharge in such a stimulating, dynamic and supportive environment, where each day we are learning from each other as practitioners, from leading experts in the field across many rights issues, and being exposed to so many opportunities and new ideas, makes HRAP one of the best programs supporting rights activists that exists.”

2009 Advocate Florencia Ruiz Mendoza of the Center for Historical Research of Social Movements (Mexico): “HRAP is a unique experience that gives very valuable skills to those advocates who are willing to make the most of the experience: visibility, exposure, academic knowledge, networking, friendship and camaraderie among colleagues.”

2010 Advocate Susan Aryeetey, Resource Mobilisation Officer, International Federation of Women Lawyers-Ghana: “The program provides a wonderful opportunity to reflect on innovative human rights approaches that can be utilized to secure the human rights of groups denied of their rights and also to learn from the experiences of other advocates.”



2011 Advocate Salima Namusobya, ED and Founder of Initiative for Social and Economic Rights, at the launch of a health accountability project in Kayunga District, Uganda.

2010 Advocate Bakary Tandia, Policy Advocate, African Services Committee and Co-founder, Abolition Institute (Mauritania/USA): “HRAP is a life-changing experience for its participants who feel recognized by an internationally renowned institution

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after many years of work with little or no support. [In addition to] providing them knowledge and skills they need to become more effective, it reenergizes them for new challenges.”

2012 Advocate Kemal Pervanic, Founder and Director, Most Mira (Bosnia-Herzegovina): “HRAP brings together individuals from diverse cultures and communities and enables them to learn that people the world over fight the same human rights issues and experience the same obstacles in their work. This is important if you feel isolated and sometimes powerless in your work. HRAP creates a large support network that can help advocates make a bigger impact in their work.”

2013 Advocate María Eugenia Carrera Chavez, Forensic Area Coordinator of Centro de Análisis Forense y Ciencias Aplicadas (Guatemala): “HRAP was one of the most beautiful experiences I’ve ever had in my life—not only as a professional, but as a human being, too. I had the chance to increase my knowledge and to be inspired by the people that were part of the process (HRAP staff, colleagues, professors, etc.) Once again, thanks a lot for all the work they do to make HRAP a reality.”



2013 Advocate María Eugenia Carrera Chavez placing the remains of people massacred in Guatemala in 1982 into coffins.

III RECOMMENDATIONS

Only a small number of advocates responded to the request for recommendations. The majority of those who responded recommended that HRAP organize annual alumni conferences, preferably in NYC. Following are other recommendations that were made.

2009 Advocate Evalyn Achan, Project Manager with Plan International (Uganda): “HRAP should connect the advocates to a sponsored master’s program in Human Rights within Columbia University or other universities with in the USA.”

2009 Advocate Ambika Paudel, Program Director, Conscious Media Forum (Nepal): “It is too short!”

2012 Advocate Lydia Nakiganda of the Rakai AIDS Information (Uganda): “HRAP should make sure every advocate wins at least one grant [while in the program].”

2013 Advocate Biel Boutros Biel, Executive Director, South Sudan Human Rights Society for Advocacy (South Sudan): “I would suggest country offices for HRAP. They could serve as bases for Columbia HRAP alumni teams in each country for easy co-ordination of their work and connection with the HRAP office in NYC.”



1993 Advocate Kujtim Çashku (right) invited 2012 Advocate Kemal Pervanic to present his documentary film at the International Human Rights Film Festival Albania, which Çashku founded.

CONCLUSION

The results of the HRAP alumni survey were very positive. The main finding indicates that the program increased the confidence of the participants, prompting them to assume leadership roles at their organizations and in their movements. In fact, 22 of the 73 respondents (30 percent) were serving as executive directors of organizations at the time they responded to the survey. Two of the EDs (both female) reported that HRAP inspired them to found their own civil society organizations. In addition to the program's confidence-building aspects, respondents highlighted the skills they developed during the workshops offered by HRAP, including fundraising, presentation and video advocacy.

A significant number of recent alumni reported that their exposure to the issues covered by the members of their HRAP cohort led them to expand the scope of their own work. In recent years, the effect of LGBTQ advocates on their fellow advocates has been especially pronounced.

The transfer of learning by advocates has extended far beyond what we ask of our advocates when we admit them to HRAP. In addition to sharing what they have learned with their colleagues at their organizations back home, advocates have shared the knowledge, skills and networks they developed in HRAP through workshops, presentations and publications that have reached an untold number of people.

The HRAP formula of classes, skills building and networking has built a cadre of confident advocates who not only have had far-reaching impact as individual human rights advocates but who have shared the benefits of the program with their colleagues and movements, demonstrating the power of the program to sustain, inspire and enrich human rights activism over the past 25 years.



The 2013 HRAP marked the program's 25th class. Photo by Alan Orling.

APPENDIX

The following respondents agreed to have their names published in this report. We thank all the advocates who took the time to respond.

1990

Felipe Michelini, Member of Parliament, Uruguay

Fernando Rossetti Ferreira, consultant, Brazil (former Executive Director, Greenpeace Brazil)

1993

Aung Myo Min, Executive Director, Equality Myanmar, Myanmar

Kujtim Çashku, Vice Chairman, Albanian Helsinki Committee and Rector, Academy of Film & Multimedia MARUBI, Albania

Luis Felipe Polo, Manager, Polo Consultoría Integral, Peru

1995

Joseph Baidoe-Ansah, Member of Parliament, Ghana

1996

Shiva Hari Dahal, Advisor, National Peace Campaign, Nepal

Aurora Parong, Member of Human Rights Violations Board, Philippines (former Executive Director of Amnesty International Philippines)

Juan Rosado, Director of Public Communications, Escuela Nacional Sindical, Colombia

Aime Wata, UNHCR Senior Protection Officer, Switzerland

1997

Nuala Kelly, Coordinator, National Early Years Access Initiative, Ireland

1998

Marie Shaba, Owner and CEO of Kaya FM Radio Bagamoyo, Tanzania

2000

Adrian Coman, Program Director, International Human Rights, ARCUS Foundation, Romania/USA

2002

Leonardo Reales, Coordinator, Afro-Colombia Movement, Colombia

2003

Patricia Guerrero, Founder and Legal Advisor, La Liga de Mujeres Desplazadas, Colombia

2004

Sukumaran Krishnan, India

2005

Alejandra Ancheita, Founder and Executive Director of Proyecto de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales, Mexico

Ida Le Blanc, General Secretary of the National Union of Domestic Employees in Trinidad and Tobago

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Mawuli Dake, CEO, Africa Group Consult, Ghana/ USA

Jia Ping, CEO and Founder, Health Governance Initiative, China

Benedicto Sanchez, Program Manager, BIND, Philippines

Claudia Patricia Juan, Fifth General Visitadora, Mexico City Commission on Human Rights, Mexico

2007

Zachary Norris, Co-Director, Justice for Families, USA



2009 Advocate Mary Akrami (left) has been recognized for her work protecting and promoting the rights of women in Afghanistan.

2008

Peter Mulbah, Executive Director, Skills and Agricultural Development Services, Liberia

Alejandro Rivera Marroquín, HIV/AIDS Program Coordinator, Institute of Health (Chiapas), Mexico

2009

Evalyne Achan, Project Manager with Plan International, Uganda

Mary Akrami, Executive Director of Afghan Women Skills Development Center, Afghanistan

Elsadig Elsheikh, Global Justice Program Director, Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society University of California-Berkeley, Sudan/USA

Karyn Kaplan, Director, International Hepatitis/HIV Policy and Advocacy, Treatment Action Group, USA, and Co-founder, Thai AIDS Treatment Action Group, USA

Akinyi Ocholla, Minority Women in Action, Kenya

Ambika Paudel, Program Director, Conscious Media Forum, Nepal

Nazibrola Janezashvili, Executive Director of Association Unity of Judges of Georgia, Republic of Georgia

2010

Susan Aryeetey, Resource Mobilisation Officer, International Federation of Women Lawyers-Ghana, Ghana

Agnes Atim, Executive Director of Hope Development Initiative, Uganda

Azra Smailkadic-Brkic, Bosnia-Herzegovina/USA

Bakary Tandia, Policy Advocate, African Services Committee and Co-founder, The Abolition Institute, Mauritania/USA

Andrea Nuila, former Coordinator, Centre for Women's Rights (Centro de Derechos de Mujeres), Honduras

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2011

Lana Ackar, Member, Governing Board, Pravnik, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Lydia Cherop, Coordinator, Women Integrated Initiative for Development, Uganda

Colins Imoh, Partners for Peace Program Manager, PIND Foundation, Nigeria

Rita Mainaly, Lawyer, Center for Legal Research and Resource Development, Nepal

Salima Namusobya, Founder and Executive Director, Initiative for Social and Economic Rights, Uganda

Gisèle Ngungua, Lawyer and Coordinator, Action Large des Femmes Avocates, Democratic Republic of Congo

Ifeanyi Orazulike, Executive Director, ICARH, Nigeria

Athili Sapriina, Executive Member of Naga Peoples Movement for Human Rights, India

Huda Shafiq, Co-founder, GESR Center for Development, Sudan

Tunde Abu, Interim Finance Adviser, SOS Children's Villages, Nigeria

2012

Lydia Nakiganda, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Rakai AIDS Information, Uganda

Kemal Pervanic, Founder and Director, Most Mira, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Sulakshana Rana, Coordinator, SAIEVAC, Nepal

Lucy Talgieh, Project Coordinator, Wi'am, Palestine



2013 Advocate Mayamba Geoffrey Kuletela of Zambia leads Prisoners' Future Foundation. Photo by Alan Orling.

2013

Biel Boutros Biel, Executive Director, South Sudan Human Rights Society for Advocacy, South Sudan

María Eugenia Carrera Chavez, Forensic Area Coordinator, Centro de Análisis Forense y Ciencias Aplicadas, Guatemala

Mayamba Geoffrey Kuletela, Executive Director, Prisoners' Future Foundation, Zambia

Absolom Shalakh, National Adviser, Conflict Early Warning/Early Response, PeaceNet Kenya, Kenya

Sylvester Uhaa, Executive Director, CURE-Nigeria, Nigeria

Musola Cathrine Kaseketi, Founder/Executive Director, Viole Images Productions, Zambia



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