Developing a Model of the Regional Restoration Camps

HOW WE CAME ABOUT....

The Regional Restoration Camps (RRC or Camps) recently celebrated their tenth anniversary. Following this milestone, Cultural Heritage without Borders - Albania (CHwBA) initiated a process to reflect on how the Camps developed over the past decade, consider their impact, and discuss their future direction. To support this process, CHwBA Executive Director, Lejla Hadzic, asked Dr. Laven and Dr. Jewiss to provide technical assistance to help plan and facilitate a two-day workshop. The planning team for this effort included Lejla Hadzic, Dr. Laven, Dr. Jewiss, and Miri Bllaci, CHwBA Program Manager. Drs. Laven and Jewiss are applied researchers experienced in the field of program evaluation. In preparation for the workshop, the planning team convened for a series of online meetings that included briefing Drs. Laven and Jewiss on CHwBA and the RRC, developing the workshop agenda, identifying a slate of potential workshop participants, and other essential workshop planning tasks.

THE BACKBONE OF THE MODEL.....

The workshop was designed to engage a diverse group of RRC stakeholders in creating a working model of the RRC program. Program models are commonly used in the field of evaluation (as discussed below). Workshop attendees included CHwBA staff, former RRC program participants/volunteers, an RRC lecturer and craftsperson, and representatives from organizations that partner with CHwBA to carry out the program, such as universities, donors, and other institutions.

An immersive, two-day workshop was held in Tirana on 10-11 July of 2018. Drs. Jewiss and Laven co-facilitated the workshop, which guided the 15 attendees through the model-building process. A program model can be thought of as an outline of how the program intends to achieve its goals or a diagram that “tells the story” of how a program is designed to work. Attendees worked in small and large groups to discuss, debate, and document their views on various aspects of Camps’ operations and accomplishments. The workshop presented a rare opportunity for this diverse array of attendees to share their experiences with the RRC, thereby learning from each other and gaining a more holistic perspective of the program.

POST WORKSHOP....

Following the workshop, the planning team convened for an additional series of online meetings to: a) compile and refine the draft model based on the stakeholder input gathered during the workshop, and b) discuss strategic uses of the model.

A draft of the model is included below and is organized according to the following categories:

- **Resources** needed to carry out the program, such as staff, partners, participants, funding, and equipment
• **Activities** that are designed to achieve the program’s goals, such as designing the curriculum and recruiting participants, staff, and volunteers
• **Guiding Principles** that articulate the program’s priorities and values
• **Outcomes** that are expected to result from program activities over time, such as tangible accomplishments and increased knowledge and skills on the part of participants

**THE FINAL RESULT....**

As with most models, a **program model is a simplified representation of a more complex reality.** For clarity, the model is organized in a linear fashion – although programs rarely operate in a linear manner. For instance, activities may be repeated in order to accomplish the intended outcomes and additional resources may be accessed to support the program as it grows. In addition, the model should continue to evolve as the program progresses. As a result, the model presented here is labeled “version 1.0”, and serves as a living, working model that is expected to change over time.

**MODELS’ FUTURE USAGE....**

Version 1.0 of the RRC Program Model can be used to support further program design and planning; stakeholder engagement; documentation and communications; and monitoring, evaluation, and learning. More specifically with respect to evaluation, in the months and years to come, CHwBA may wish to:

• **Review recently gathered feedback**, contained in sources such as evaluations completed by Camp participants, to assess various aspects of the program outlined in the model. For instance, to what extent does existing feedback from participants suggest that the stated outcomes are being achieved?
• **Design and conduct a systematic evaluation using the model as a framework** to structure data collection and analysis. For instance, interviews with Camp participants could be designed to elicit their perspectives on how well the stated activities are being implemented, the guiding principles are being upheld, and the intended outcomes are being achieved.
• **Revisit and update the model periodically** based on findings from future evaluation efforts and with subsequent input from stakeholders as the program evolves over time. For instance, CHwBA could convene a follow-up stakeholder workshop that incorporates a review of the findings from future evaluation(s) and considers revisions to the model based on the lessons learned.

Version 1.0 of the model represents stakeholders’ collective perspectives on the RRC program at a particular point in time. As the program progresses and “the story” continues to unfold, the model will need to be updated accordingly.