**Reflections on Residency**

As a part of three year project of building capacity amongst faculty, students and community partners of University of Ibague (Tolima, Colombia), the first week-long residency was organized at UI during February 20-24, 2023. This capacity strengthening intervention is entitled “Flourishing capabilities for community-based participatory

research in the context of the Necessary University”, and aims to support the transformation of UI as a ‘necessary University’ serving the socio-economic-ecological development of Tolima region (and beyond) in an inclusive and sustainable approach.

The face-to-face residency is a part of the pedagogical design of MTP especially created for UI, combining online learning, two face-to-face residencies, and a field study by each mentor, spread over 9 months (additional face-to-face interactions will also occur throughout with facilitators in UI).

This brief note is intended to share our reflections and provide some suggestions for supporting the learning process planned so far. Results of a survey review conducted after the completion of the residency are attached. The following highlights have taken into account the above data.

***1.Overall Results***

As the above reviews demonstrate, and our own assessments indicate, the residency overall was very successful in achieving the learning objectives set out. The launch of the project, with Rector’s opening presentation, and explanations by UNESCO Co-Chairs, helped establish the purpose of this project more clearly in the minds of participants of the first batch.

Once the residency got going, and the participants began to engage in the learning process, they found it exciting and useful. Its best indication was near full attendance on the day of taxi strike (Feb 22).

It also helped them understand the overall pedagogical design of the MTP, comprising different components, and expectations of the same. The deliberations in the residency helped in clarifying the theoretical and normative framework of CBPR, especially meanings of co-construction of knowledge…’research with people’!

Linking this body of knowledge and expertise to its Latin American roots was found to be very helpful; historical trajectory of CBPR, and two Colombian resource persons (Patricia Rodriguez UNAL & Raul Mejia UDistrital) significantly contributed towards this understanding.

Despite the limited time, the inclusion of field visits to two sites where UI’s two mentors had been undertaking field study was inspiring, as well as informative to participants, such that they can begin to appreciate what is expected of them.

Logistics, administrative coordination, and related matters were well done; some suggestions for further consideration will be addressed in a later section.

The trainer team felt satisfied with the residency, as a launch for this batch of participants, as well as its strategic value in the inauguration of the three-year project of capacity strengthening in CBPR.

**2. *Participants***

The first batch of participants numbered 23 out of which 13 were tutors of P&R program and rest professors from various faculties. This mix of learners produced some exciting learning opportunities and some pedagogical challenges. For P&R tutors, residency was compulsory and was clearly linked to the expectations of their roles in supporting students to undertake field projects with community partners. Their regular attendance and their active participation in all the sessions of the residency is an indication of the same.

However, for the professors, it was somewhat unclear why they should be learning CBPR, and how it fits with the design of the transformation taking place in UI. They frequently missed sessions everyday, in order to fulfil their other academic commitments.

Given the design of the residency, it obviously affected their own learning. But, with participatory methods in use, it also affected the learning process of others who were regular in attendance.

Our suggestion is that senior leadership of UI (perhaps the Rector himself) should explain how the current transformation of UI and its future directions requires capacity-strengthening in CBPR, one of many such interventions over the next few years.

In addition, some administrative decisions need to be reinforced to enable all participants to spend required time in learning, not just during the residency, but also online in every module during the entire course, and intensive field work as an integral part of the pedagogy.

**3*. Language***

The everyday language of participants and UI is Spanish. While many individuals understand English reasonably well, and several can speak in English in small groups or one-on-one, large group deliberations needed interpretation.

For the trainer team, this challenge is especially acute for the two UNESCO Co-Chairs, as they have limited (and none in one case) capacity to speak or understand Spanish. In the residency, this was ably facilitated by other members of the trainer team…Irma, Monica, Darlene.

The issue of language is not just limited to the residency. The overall MTP design includes presentations by other international experts on zoom, reading materials in English and opportunity for online conversations with fellow participants and trainer team.

While larger question of ‘access’ to English language is a matter of UI policy/strategy, for the current batch of MTP, we suggest deployment of an interpreter oral in residency & zoom), but also perhaps in written online deliberations and conversations on field studies.

**4. *Strengthening Training Capacity***

The current team of trainers led by two UNESCO Co-Chairs (Budd & Rajesh) has been very competently supported by Irma and Monica since the project began in summer of 2022. They were both excellent co-facilitators during the residency. Additional support during the residency came from Prof Darlene Clover (in addition to her expertise on arts-based methods). The presentations made by other mentors (especially the three who could communicate very well in English…Lady, Natalia, Paula) further strengthened the training capacity, especially during field visits.

We are, therefore, confident that a strong base for deepening theoretical and professional (competencies in designing & facilitating pedagogically) capacity already exists in UI. We suggest a special effort by us to support further development of their competencies through special inputs by UNESCO Co-Chairs.

To do so, it may be helpful to identify this group and clarify their future roles in this regard so that they are clear and motivated towards becoming more competent designers & facilitators.

**5. *Implications of Restructuring***

Finally, it is perhaps important for all units/departments of UI to become clear about the nature, meaning and implications of current restructuring in UI towards becoming the ‘Necessary University’.

In conversations with some of the participants about their field study, it became clear to us that tutors of P&R department need to reorient their roles towards a more intellectual work with communities, than is presently done. The restructuring of P&R department and orientation/roles of its tutors in the next several weeks may support them to ‘practice’ their new roles within this MTP, especially the design and implementation of their field studies.

Likewise, the roles of professors in the new system of Research Institutes (Centres) and its research and innovation program in a societally engaged approach need some clarification early on. This may help them to select field studies in ways that align with their new roles and expected competencies. This may also create possibilities for field studies under MTP to be done in partnership with tutors, establishing the practice of the new approach envisioned.