IN OUR EYES

Visualizing Community Development

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Community development is a long-term, value-based process, aimed at improving communities' abilities to shape their own futures. In today's world, due to inequalities and power structures, many people and communities lack access to opportunities to improve their lives. These excluded communities can be found in every society around the world, and are becoming increasingly vulnerable.

Community development is about enhancing and channeling the community's own knowledge and experience to change their reality, confronting the underlying causes of inequality and creating a reality in which individuals and communities have the ability to make their own choices.

As students of Community Development, we believe that individuals need basic dignity to be able to learn and share in order to find their own voices - thus becoming resilient communities.

Dignity signifies our innate right as beings to basic living conditions and ethical care. Dignity is where our freedom to choose and act begins, while also imposing moral requirements on us to assist each other to achieve and maintain our quality of life. Dignity is where community development starts: from acknowledging the challenge of vulnerable communities to ensure their minimal necessities for survival, all the way to encouraging them to act independently, fulfill their rights and maintain their well-being.

The transformative power of water

Angot Village, South Gondar, Ethiopia
2012
Amy Cowen

"Improved access to water can transform the life of a woman. It could be through the extra time and subsequent opportunities that become available when women and girls no longer have to trek long, treacherous distances to collect water... Beyond these evident benefits, improved access to water can have subtle but no less powerful effects on social dynamics within the home and on a woman's or girl's feelings of self-worth, status, and confidence". CARE Report, May 2011

Right to food

Udainagar, India
2012
Sabita Deshemaru

"I cook in school to give breakfast and lunch to the students because it is important for me that children get food on time- they should not be hungry while getting education." Mangu bai, Self Help Group member, Udainagar.

Fresh foods for a fresh life

Deir al Balah, Gaza
2012
CARE Photographer

"The food basket gave us mercy, it helps us to survive. But I hope that one day we will not need it anymore and hopefully our dreams of having a good, secure life will come true." Sanyora Mohamed Abu Grab (Mother of boy in picture).

Welcome to our bakery

Mugara, Bururi province, Burundi
2012
Tal Ben-Jaaqov

"At the center of VHW's economic development department are four women's cooperatives. This was my first visit to our baking cooperative which turned out to be a personal favorite." Tal Ben-Jaaqov, Intern, VHW.

Floods or not, children are children!

Guérotounga-Karimama, Northern Benin near Niger border 2012
Anne-Sophie Cardinal

"I participated in the field mission of CARE Benin-Togo following the flooding of the Niger River, in Northern Benin. My task was to assist in documenting the situation and assessing the most pressing needs of 5 communities affected by the floods. Crops, homes, entire communities were destroyed. Thousands of people were forced to seek refuge in nearby villages. Food security was threatened and there was no access to safe-drinking water or medical care. Yet, everyone I met seemed incredibly calm, serene and wise. A few "camp babies" were born while I was there, and children were playing around as if nothing had shaken their community." Anne-Sophie Cardinal, Intern, CARE Benin-Togo.

Portrait of mother and child standing strong

Guérotunga-Karimama, North of Benin near Niger border
2012
Anne-Sophie Cardinal

"In times of disasters, women and children are the most vulnerable. Constrained mobility, greater need for food and water during pregnancy and lactation, longer lifespan, lack of access to credit, high illiteracy rates and limited access to decision- making power structures make for their greater vulnerability. In its intervention in 10,000 households affected by floods in Northern Benin in 2012, the INGO CARE Benin-Togo targeted poor and low income-earning women in rural or semiurban areas. Women were the gatekeepers of the assistance received for their household." Anne-Sophie Cardinal, Intern, CARE Benin-Togo.

In the kitchen

Kalebera Village, Bugembe, Uganda
2012
Arnona Oren

"A special meal is being made for us, as guests from far away. The women have been preparing all day as we enjoy their laughter coming from the kitchen." Maya Oren, Intern, BRAC Uganda.

Child eating

IDP Camp, Guérotounga, Malanville, Northern Benin
October 2012

"A child eating is a universal image that symbolizes basic care of children within a given society. No parent wants to see his/her child go hungry. Yet, every year, under-nutrition contributes to 2.6 million deaths of children under five - one third of the global total (Unicef, 2011). This affects 297 children every hour. In this camp for internally displaced persons (IDP) in Northern Benin, solidarity between community members is what ensured that each child had the chance to eat something every day, however small, despite the scarcity of resources and the challenges of the floods." Anne-Sophie Cardinal, intern, CARE Benin-Togo.

Learning is a choice, ability and catalyst for enduring change. Learning can range from acquiring new or modifying existing knowledge and skills, all the way to the reshaping of our behaviors, values and identities. By recognizing learning as a process in motion that should be stimulated rather than organized, we expand the definitions of experts and expertise to include both local and traditional knowledge, enabling communities and individuals around the world to think and rethink, to adjust and preserve, and to shape the future they seek.

Tea garden

Kalbari village, Assam, India
2012
Deelip Patir

"I don't have the tools necessary to gather the tea leaves. If I'll have the tools and knowledge to raise good crops I'll become a successful man." A youth of the Mising tribe.

Long-term solutions

Salmora village, Assam, India
2012
Dhoneswar Chinte

"Bamboo Bridge is a symbol of our tribe's dependence on temporary solutions. We should invest in children's education so that they will bring long-lasting solutions and develop our tribe." A youth of the Mising tribe.

Company job

Vjani village, Assam, India
2012
Manuj Mili

"Knowing computers is a must for finding good job in the city. When you have good job in the city you can save money and become successful man." A youth of the Mising tribe.

Well-educated children

Borgarah village, Assam, India
2012
Pradeep Mili

"We don't have money for books or pencils, we don't have chairs or tables, and teachers in our village are not committed to their work but, we can spend time with small children and teach them what we know, so that they will have better chances than ours". A youth of the Mising Tribe.

Reproductive health awareness project

Ratatalai, Udainagar, India
2012
Jyotsna Triky

"I am glad to learn about the uterus prolapsed complications, I had that problem and as a result had my uterus removed. Now I am aware of this and will teach other women so they do not suffer like I did." ¯ Hira Bai, 36, participant in the Reproductive Health Project.

The colors of youth

Kigutu, Bururi province, Burundi
2012
Tal Ben-Jaaqov

"Students taking part in the after-school program participate in art classes and sports, which are not offered at the local school. Through these activities students are developing problem solving and critical thinking skills and exercising their creativity." Tal Ben-Jaaqov, intern, VHW.

Johnny reading the bible after Sunday church

Kasulu, Tanzania
2012
Maayan Frenkel

"Me and my brother live at 'our brother James' home. We have ten sisters and brothers so it is not quiet at home and no electricity. We need the light as the final exams are coming and we need to study." Maayan Frenkel, intern, Women's Legal Aid Center (WLAC)"

Reading is a right

Kigutu, Bururi province, Burundi
2012
Tal Ben-Jaaqov

"Next to VHW's clinic, the Kigutu Primary School has been in operation for over 18 years and no student has passed the test to continue studies at state-funded boarding schools or lycées. Given the low level of students in the key subjects of Math, French and English, VHW is focusing on these subjects as part of the after school program that includes 4th, 5th and 6th graders." Tal Ben-Jaaqov, Intern, VHW.

Sharing is the most remarkable of all components of human interaction. By sharing, we acknowledge the finite world, and we grow to become a part of it. By understanding the essence of community, we join humanity's joint struggle for a better future. We share our economic activities, the knowledge we have accumulated, and our beliefs and cultures, but perhaps the most extraordinary happens when we decide to share ourselves: our worries and dreams, our feelings and unforgettable moments, our skills and time, transcending beyond our self-interests and differences and coming together to overcome the challenges in our path.

Holding hands around Kigutu

Kigutu, Bururi province, Burundi
2012
Tal Ben-Jaaqov

"Village Health Works (VHW) is a community-based organization in every possible sense and engages the people of Kigutu and the surrounding area in a myriad of ways. It doesn't simply work with the community; it is an integral part of it." Tal Ben-Jaaqov, Intern, VHW.

Religious leaders giving a hand for peace

Trincomalee, Sri Lanka
2012
Oriah Bleiweiss

"Throughout our mutual meeting we have developed our mentality and attitude to give equal rights and status to others. We were able to forgive and to sense the pain of the others." Participant of Shanthi Sena project, Sarvodaya.

Hindu, Muslim and Christian women are weaving a way for peace and development

Batticalloa, Sri Lanka
2012
Yaara Katan

"Before the Palmyra project we didn't had any relationships with other faith not even inside the village. Only when we joined this project we got to know the people who are living among us." Participant of the Palmyra project, Sarvodaya.

Sharing the moment

Kalebera Village, Bugembe, Uganda
2012
Arnona Oren

"Three-year old Nora joined us from Kampala, and despite the language barrier quickly made friends with the village girls." Maya Oren, Intern, BRAC Uganda.

Nature knows no borders

Arava Alumni at TAEQ
Sakhnin, Israel
2013
Rina Kedem

"We work together in order to improve the well-being of communities and the environment around the Middle East. Our personal relationships and continuation are keys of succeeding. I will keep coming as long as I can get the permit..." Arava Alumni, Hebron, Palestine.

Last day of Peace

Camp Ashville, North Carolina
2009
Meredith Rothbart

"During an activity where the youth have to represent peace, they joined together to make a giant peace sign using all of their bodies together in one symbol. "Meredith Rothbart, Intern, Kids4Peace, Beit Hanina, Israel.

Reproductive health awareness project

Kamalapur, Bagli, India
2012
Jyotsna Triky

"Contraceptives are easy to use but takes years to convince a couple (in many cases a family with parents and in-laws) to use it. A setting like India is self-limiting in the sense that one would give birth to many children without concerning their future. Now, we know how we can convince people to think for our children's bright future and to do family planning. This will lead us to healthy, prosperous happy life." Salma bi, 21.

Voice is our primary way to survive. From infancy our cry connects us to the outer world. As we grow, we become talented storytellers, shaping our own understandings and realities and inspiring others. However, in a world of growing gaps, the dominant stories tend to be narrated by the powerful and influential among us, creating distorted and biased realities. By enhancing the ability of individuals and communities to express their own voice, we are creating space for the untold stories to shift our joint realities creating a more vibrant and just future.

Portrait of Salamatu Ibrahim in her home in an internally displaced persons camp

Benitunga-Karimama, North of Benin near Niger border
2012
Anne-Sophie Cardinal

"I was born in Benitunga village. I have always lived here, with my 8 children, but the last time I saw so much flooding was when I was a little girl. Two months ago, during the night, I was woken up by the sound of water. Water from the Niger River, suddenly rising in all rooms in my house. Children and villagers started crying and no one knew what to do. My house collapsed, but I managed to get out before it happened. I lost everything I owned. We ran to a nearby village. I am thankful to be alive, and all I have left is my soul. I hope that even though all crops have been destroyed and income-generating activities are now dysfunctional, my community will be able to rebuild itself soon and start over. If the men decide to go back and build in the old location, we women will not agree." Salamatu Ibrahim, 2012.

The power of religion

Kanat Village, South Gondar, Ethiopia
2012
Amy Cowen

"Due to the predominance of Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity in the region, religious leaders use Biblical concepts to effectively promote personal and communal hygiene and sanitation. Kes (Priest) Telehun Wendemegan explains that he correlates personal hygiene and cleanliness to the image of angels and the notion of righteousness and purity found implicit throughout the Bible." Amy Cowen, Intern, CARE Ethiopia.

Daring to defy child marriage

Amijaye Village, South Gondar Ethiopia
2012
Amy Cowen

"Married off by her family without her knowledge as a child bride at the age of eight to a 22 year old man, Belet shares her story of escaping the confines of forced early marriage to transform her life by continuing her education, empowering other girls and combating child marriage within her community." Amy Cowen, Intern, CARE Ethiopia.

When the stick hits the leather

Kigutu, Bururi province, Burundi
2012
Tal Ben-Jaaqov

"A part of VHW's community development program is a department devoted to sports and culture. Twice a week, two separate groups of children from the nearby school come to the compound to learn and practice traditional Burundian song, dance and drumming." Tal Ben-Jaaqov, Intern, VHW.

Bringing hope back To life

Khan Younis, Gaza
2012
Alison Bakserville

"I feel stable and powerful. I don't need any more emergency projects to help me. Now I can expand my farm activities and rely on myself to take care of my children. This project brings my hope back to life. "Fadwa Hassan Al Shawaf, livestock farmer and entrepreneur.

What have we learned?

Kirungu, Bururi province, Burundi
2012
Tal Ben-Jaaqov

"It was the first of a series of arduous walks to neighboring hills, the first of many meetings with different stakeholders in the tangled Burundian coffee sector. We finally have some idea of how we can make a change but we are still learning how long and winding the road to this change will be."
Tal Ben-Jaaqov, Intern, VHW

Experiencing resilience in the field

Koukatounga-Karimama, Northern Benin near Niger border 2012
Anne-Sophie Cardinal

"What makes a community resilient to shocks? What makes a person stand strong in the face of incredible challenges that come his/her way? Resilience is about being able to pick ourselves up again and start over. It is about acceptance of the past, coping with the present struggle and fighting for the future. My time among floods-affected communities has taught me a lot about resilience, human strength and pure solidarity." Anne-Sophie Cardinal, Intern, CARE Benin-Togo.

Two 15 years old pregnant girls standing at the door

Kasulu, Tanzanua
2012
Maayan Frenkel

"You can see how poor is this place. Those girls families have no money, men come here they promise they will marry them, they promise they will give them money. Off course they run away or deny anything to do with them when they get pregnant. They have no sense of responsibly for their children, they can't or won't provide for the mother and the baby. Abortions in Tanzania is illegal business, one can risk herself but it will cost around 50,000 TSH, an unrealistic amount of money for these girls, so they deliver the baby and go on, what other option do they have?" Lydia, UNHCR.

Lillian at her home salon weaving braids with her eight month old daughter

Kasulu, Tanzania
2012
Maayan Frenkel

"Lillian works at her home salon. She is taking care of her children (3,8 months) and of her sister's son (2). Her sister like many other in Kasulu had to leave to find a living." Maayan, Intern Women's Legal Aid Center (WLAC), Tanzania.

The well being of the human and ecological systems of Al Batouf (Beit Netufa Valley) is in question

Al Batouf, Lower Galilee Israel
2013
Yeela Gundar

"When development and especially in agriculture, follows a political agenda in this country, we the Arab farmers are left behind, and without water and electricity." Farmer in Al Batouf.

Presented by: The students of the Glocal Community-Development MA program, following their internships with development organizations in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

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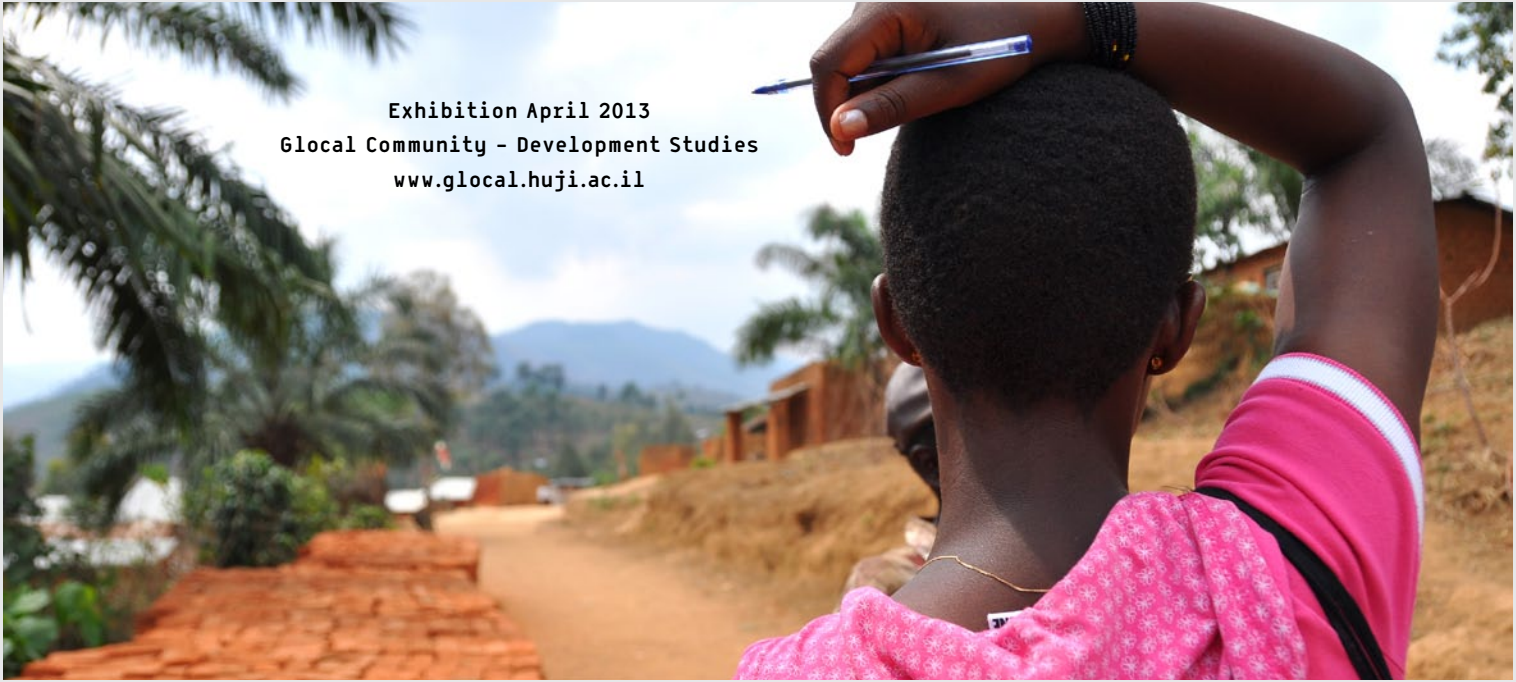

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