



Can Disasters Open Pathways to Social Change?

Investigating community development
through participatory methodologies
and qualitative longitudinal research

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Plan for talk

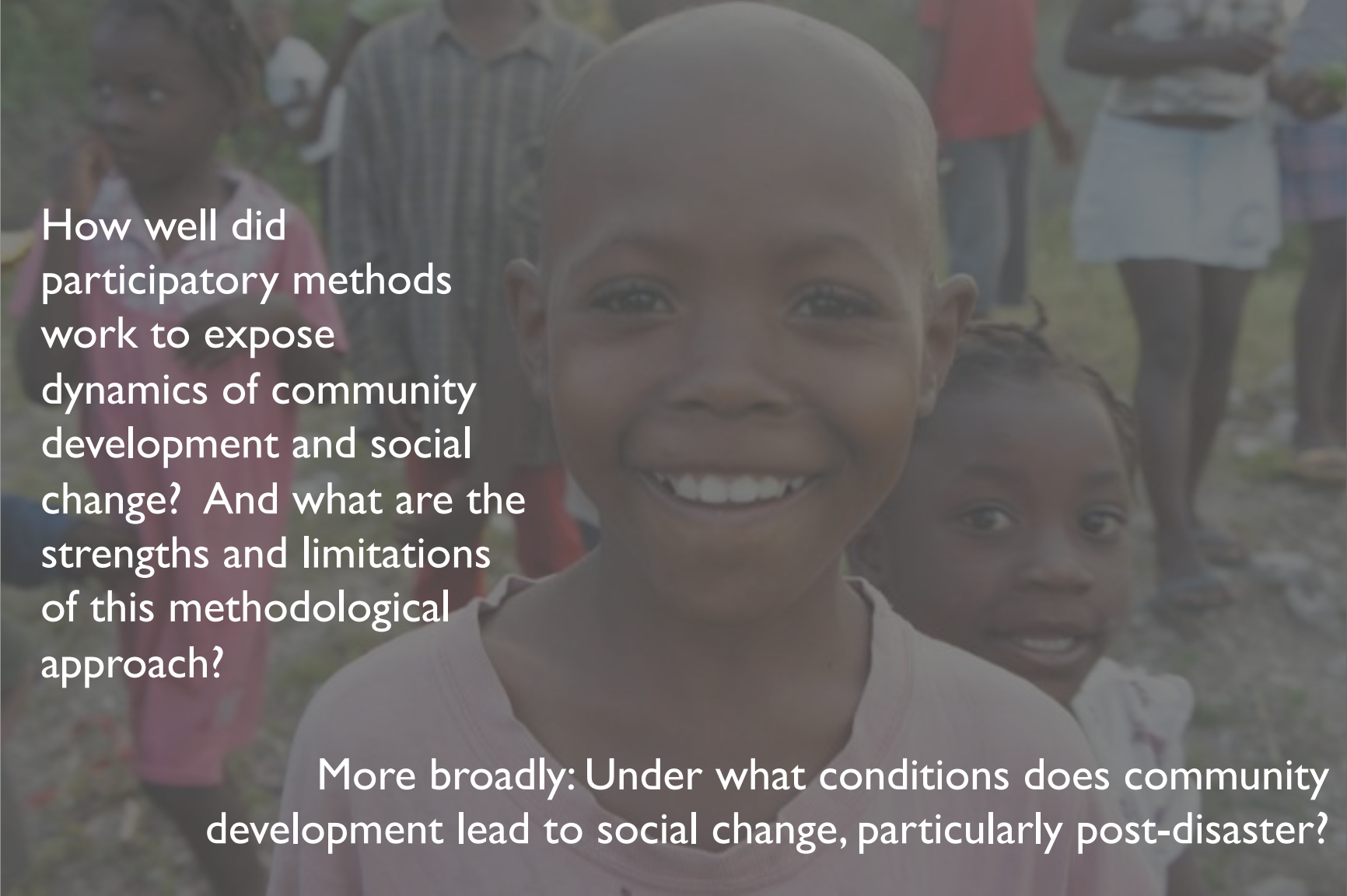
1. Context: Studying community development and social change in the (re)construction of Haiti post-disaster
2. Research questions: this article + broader research
3. Field setting and researcher positionality
4. Methodology + Methods: focus on participatory photography and participatory mapping
5. Making sense of the data: What has been exposed (*from* the methods and *about* the methods)? What are implications? What next?

Photo: Jacques



Haiti 2010 earthquake

Research questions

A photograph of a group of children in a community setting. In the foreground, a young girl with a shaved head is smiling broadly at the camera. Behind her, another child is partially visible, also looking towards the camera. In the background, several other children are standing, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. The scene appears to be outdoors, possibly in a rural or developing area.

How well did participatory methods work to expose dynamics of community development and social change? And what are the strengths and limitations of this methodological approach?

More broadly: Under what conditions does community development lead to social change, particularly post-disaster?

Field setting and my positionality





Community challenges:

poverty, malnutrition, violence, transport,
roads, water, ecology, electricity

Collaborators: local residents, Haiti Partners,
Yunus Social Business, Give Love,
Architecture for Humanity, Extollo
Construction, AMURT education, Haiti Clinic

BELLEVUE-LAMONTAGNE, PÉTIONVILLE





Site Legend

- 1. Entry Courtyard
- 2. Security
- 3. Sales
- 4. Admin
- 5. Library
- 6. Outdoor Room
- 7. Pre-School
- 8. Elementary School
- 9. Middle School
- 10. High School
- 11. Auditorium
- 12. Garden
- 13. Restroom
- 14. Offices
- 15. Dining
- 16. 2 Level Gymnasium
- 17. Amphitheater
- 18. Conference Room
- 19. Clinic



Establishing a practice and culture of participatory community development

Example: Open Space meeting on the role of education in community development, 300 participants, Dec. 2011

'What do we think of Haiti's educational system?'

'What's the role of family and parents in education of a child?'

'How will we make sure that we have the type of education here that really helps our community develop?'

'Can children learn if they go to school hungry?'

'What type of education do we want at the school for young people and adults?'

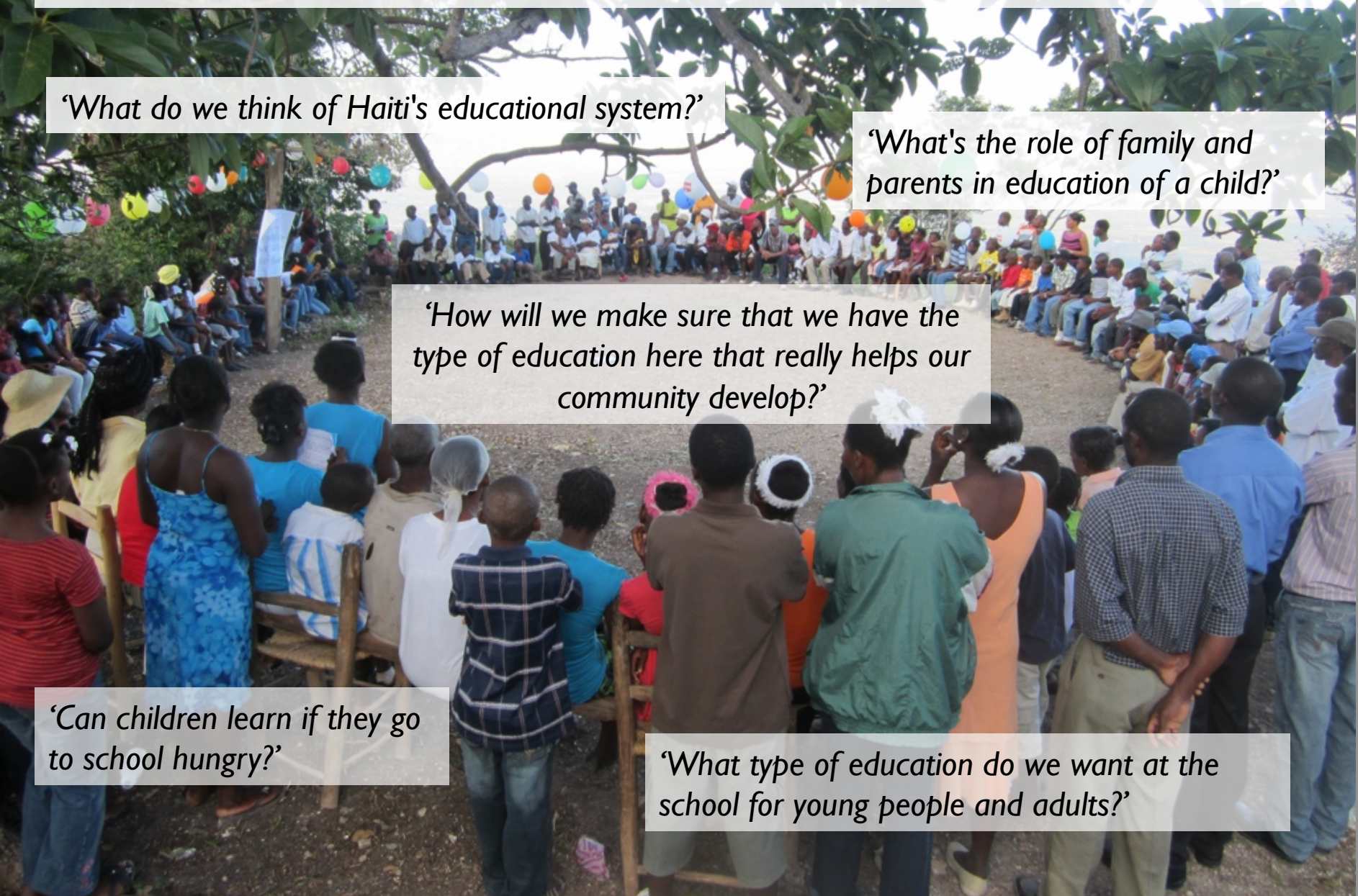




Photo Forum participants
July 2012

Methodological approach

Case study + interviews + observation + documents

Participatory methods

Participatory photography

Elements:

- Photo training & taking
- Dialogue circles
- Probe interviews
- Communicating outside

Participatory mapping

Types:

- 1) Mobility
- 2) Places
- 3) Actors

Perspective: Qualitative Longitudinal Research (QLR)

Overview: Participatory Photography and Mapping

- ★ Sample: size and strategy (social learning: 12)
- ★ Timing: 3 phases in the field 2011-2013
- ★ Research collaborators: beyond translation
- ★ Flexible, adaptive in research design and fieldwork
- ★ Multiple methods for triangulation of data and analysis and deeper understanding
 - Why important? traditional (survey) methods often don't expose deeper individual and systemic issues, e.g. 'How many children do you have?' quant. answer eludes nuanced reality)

Photo: Patrickson

Participatory photography elements

Photo Dialogue participatory process: emphasis on stories & narrative inquiry



1. Of what stories do I (we) find myself (ourselves) a part?

2. Where are we going as a community?

3. Is it desirable?

4. Who wins & who loses and by what mechanisms of power?

5. What, if anything, do we want to do?

Participatory photography theme 1: Post-earthquake housing challenges



Participatory photography theme 2:

Fragility of life / a 'forgotten' place and people; stigma as a 'backward', violent community



Photo: Patrickson



Photo: Yolande



Participatory photography theme 3: Everyday life challenges and change



Photo: Jacques



Photo: Sherlyne



Photo: Sherlyne



Photo: Yolande

Participatory photography theme 4:
New hope and pride with school and community development projects



Participatory
photography theme 5:
Livelihoods challenges
and opportunities



Photo: Profet

Photo: Marie-Ange

Participatory photography theme 6: Multiple and conflicting views on spirituality, religion, rituals and entertainment



Photo: Mesilus



Photo: Patrickson



Participatory mapping: 3 types

Individual and collective mapping processes to represent relationships & significance

Mobility

Individual depiction of daily trips and connections elsewhere in Haiti and rest of world

Places

Spatial map of community indicating most important places and trajectories for community walking tours

Collectively drawn on concrete floor and transposed to paper for smaller group analysis

Actors

Identification of all organizations and agencies working in the community in sectors of: education, health, environment, finance, and spirituality

Collective assessment of each organization's importance for the community and effectiveness in its work

Finance



Participatory mapping: Actors

Education



Health



Spiritual



key interpretations

Learning **about** the methods

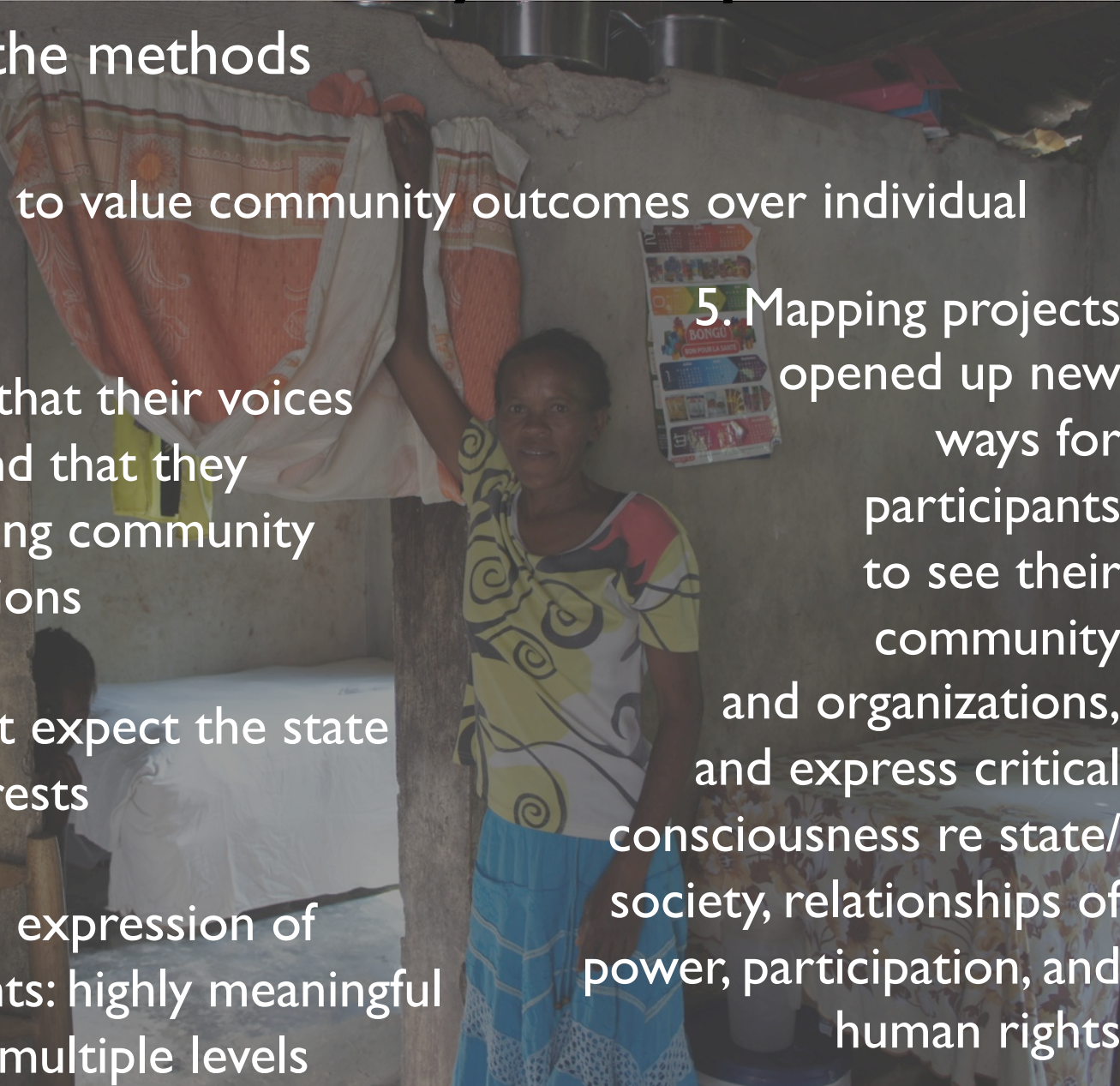
1. Multiple field visits over time (& communications in between):

- Allowed for reflection, testing, analysis, and adaptive learning to inform an iterative design of research and methods
- Helped to strengthen relationships and trust

2. Multiple participatory methods enabled deeper dialogue and triangulation by participants and researchers; themes revealed early on could be re-visited from different perspectives (e.g. state/society relations came up explicitly only in actor mapping, but it brought together various strands which had been raised earlier)

key interpretations

Learning *from* the methods

1. Participants tend to value community outcomes over individual well-being
 2. Participants feel that their voices have been heard and that they contribute to shaping community development decisions
 3. Participants don't expect the state to act in their interests
 4. Photography and expression of stories/views/insights: highly meaningful to local people on multiple levels
 5. Mapping projects opened up new ways for participants to see their community and organizations, and express critical consciousness re state/society, relationships of power, participation, and human rights
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- A photograph of a woman standing in a room. She is wearing a yellow and black patterned shirt and a blue skirt. She is holding a white cloth with orange patterns. In the background, there is a bed with white sheets and a poster on the wall. The poster has the word 'BONGU' and some other text. The room appears to be a simple living space.

key interpretations

‘Community Core Story’ or meta narrative

- ✧ Stigma: ‘Forgotten’ place / ‘backward’ community / violence
- ✧ 1950s-1980s: ‘Good years’: nostalgia for Duvaliers (low prices, secure in part because of local *tonton macoutes*)
- ✧ 1990s: Democracy transition – Aristide, coups d’états, violence, insecurity, high food prices, little opportunity to improve livelihoods, education; water piped to community by German government
- ✧ 2000s: increasing poverty, lack of connections to outside, disaster setbacks: hurricanes increasing frequency and intensity
- ✧ 2010 Earthquake: huge losses, setback, increased uncertainty
- ✧ Post-disaster community development: sense of pride and hope
 - Everyday life and livelihoods: challenges and possibilities
 - Values of education, collective well-being, voice, connectedness
 - State / society relationships (in evolution)
 - ✓ No expectations of state to act in people’s interests
 - ✓ No human rights / no right to human flourishing
 - ✓ Violence seen as necessary: ‘People need food, drink, entertainment, beating [from the state]’

What will the community look like in 5, 10 years, and how can/will local people and participatory processes shape its evolution?

What agency do people have to improve state/society relations and effect levers of change re systemic challenges in Haiti?

How will the QLR (qualitative longitudinal research) be carried out longer term and how can learning from it have an impact?
[tool: mobile DC tech]

How to contribute to social change and better community development outcomes through participatory practice and research?

looking forward

MÈSI ANPIL!

All comments and questions welcome!

Please see our video about this work:
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