

FutureGenerations

Empowering Communities to Shape Their Futures

Newsletter - Autumn 2013



The Inaugural Kathryn W. Davis Master's Class in Applied Community Change and Peacebuilding graduated on October 11, 2013 and joined a growing community of Alumni from 33 countries. More photos inside.

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Something Different

"I joined Future Generations, and call on others to join the Future Generations movement, for three reasons – agreement with the values and concepts on which it is based, its achievements backed by dedication to verification and learning, and for the wonderful opportunity it represents to make a positive difference around the world," said Everett Ressler, new President of Future Generations.

"In a world in which women, men, and children everywhere face more fragile environments, struggling systems, poverty, hardship, and threat of violence, the reasons for supporting equitable community change are compelling. Pessimism and cynicism have no place.

"We deeply believe that individuals can make a difference, that change begins with human spirit, and that the most successful changes are likely to arise from within communities themselves. In situation after situation – in India, China, Peru, Haiti, Afghanistan, and rural America – the power and creativity of community-led efforts to bring about more equitable change is being demonstrated. Among several innovative approaches to have emerged from Future Generations work, the concept of 'success mapping' is good common sense – identify successes and support community efforts in scaling them up to be more effective for a greater number of people, in conservation, peacebuilding, public health, women and children's efforts, and in other fields too.

"Future Generations aim of helping to identify and support 100 community change initiatives around the world is a wonderful and doable goal," says Ressler. "And when 100 communities are working on change initiatives we will expand the vision. This is a goal we can all join."

Continue >>

Introducing President, Everett Ressler



...Something Different continued

“‘Future Generations is something different,’ I was told by my friend Nigel Fisher now the United Nations Assistant Secretary General and Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria. ‘We have seen many schools and NGOs before,’ he said. ‘This organization starts with the positive and tries to solve problems and learn in a different way.’ Our way is rooted in mobilizing the strengths found in every community.

“As President since September 2, 2013, each time I listen to our partners and alumni, I hear more examples of how this organization’s efforts begins with a trust in the capacities of local people, opens new opportunities for learning across cultures and enables community-to-community connections that spread good ideas. This newsletter introduces a few of these ideas.

“An alumnus, Kelly Brown of the Heiltsuk Nation, recently shared the story of the Heiltsuks, who have partnered with nine other coastal first nations to gain Canadian support for managing their historic lands. For Kelly and his people, the actions they take are for the next 2,000 years, and beyond.

“As our organization moves forward beyond its own 20 year anniversary, we join many others worldwide with a commitment to future generations and with a core operating principle that people are the solution.”

Everett Ressler
President
Future Generations &
Future Generations Graduate School

Everett Ressler brings a strong and diverse background working in countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America in the areas of international development, human response to crises, organizational effectiveness, and capacity building. His range of experience is rooted in practice but includes academic affiliations.

For 14 years, Everett worked with UNICEF as the global head of the Preparedness and Early Warning Unit (Geneva), as Regional Emergency Advisor for Eastern and Southern Africa (Nairobi), and as Senior Advisor (Rwanda). Since 2008, he worked globally with the Konterra Group doing research and evaluations on organizational effectiveness in the development and humanitarian fields for UN agencies and civil society organizations.

Early in his career he served as Regional Representative for the Norwegian Save the Children organization – Redd Barna (Bangkok) setting up rural and urban development and humanitarian programs in Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar. Between 1985-1989 he helped establish and was the Program Coordinator for a training program on emergencies at the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (Bangkok) for participants from across Asia. His work in the humanitarian field has included supportive roles in emergencies in Africa, Asia, and Central America.

Prior to working internationally, he helped establish and lead community programs in Virginia that assisted low-income families with housing, supported children in difficult circumstances, and provided crisis intervention services.

He has researched and authored papers and reports on a wide range of topics, including organizational change, accountability, early warning and response, the care and protection of children in war and refugee situations, internal displacement, preparedness, and contingency planning. He led teams and coauthored several foundational studies and policy papers.

Everett is married and has two married daughters. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Eastern Mennonite University, a Master’s degree from James Madison University, and completed a doctoral program (all but dissertation) at the University of Delaware.

Welcome Trustee, Deepak Gopalakrishna



Deepak Gopalakrishna grew up in Hyderabad, India and now lives in Washington D.C. A civil engineer by training, he is a Senior Program Manager dealing with surface transportation issues at Battelle, a nonprofit research and development organization that is involved in applying science and technology to

today's problems. He is also an adjunct faculty with Department of Geography at George Washington University in DC, teaching a course on transportation systems and networks. Deepak's involvement with Future Generations started about 10 months ago and has deepened over the course of interactions with staff, country partners, faculty, and alumni. He continues to be inspired by the ability of the Graduate School to support nodes of change all over the world with its unique practicum and residentials. The real and lasting community change achieved by country partners has increased his appreciation of the potential of human energy, and as a board member he hopes to bring a similar energy to ensuring the sustainability and continued scaling up of Future Generations.

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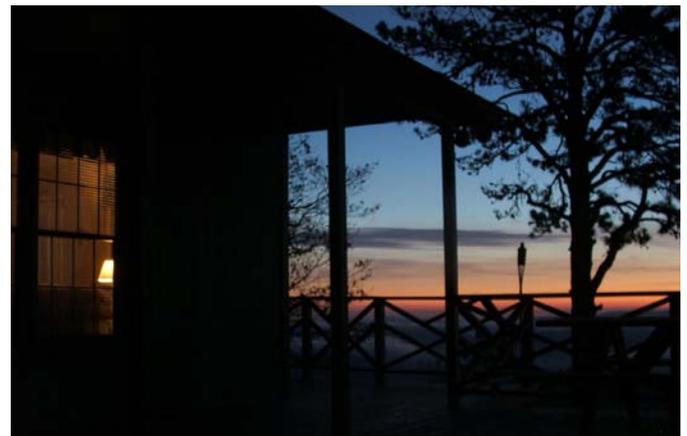
A Little Office with a Big View

Just a three-hour drive west of Washington, DC, you'll find a rural community nestled in the heart of the Appalachian mountains. Future Generations located in Pendleton County, West Virginia in 1992 to be connected to the realities of rural communities and to enjoy the benefits of clean air and water. Our office and campus are located on North Mountain, overlooking family farms and the diverse habitats of the Monongahela National Forest. We're happy to be the first organization in West Virginia to negotiate a net-metering wind energy contract that allows us to cost-effectively meet our electricity needs with a 10 kwh wind generator. And, with a 100 foot tower, a two-way radio company uses the tower in exchange for free wireless internet that allows us to connect with partners, staff, and alumni worldwide. Our little office is small and efficient, but has a big view for inspiring creativity and community connections.

Also, we have a guest lodge - known as ShangriLodge - that is open from May to October. We welcome visitors, so please visit us at 390 Road Less Traveled.



View from North Mountain



ShangriLodge

Dean's Corner



Big news here at Future Generations Graduate School. We just celebrated the graduation of the inaugural Kathryn W. Davis Peacebuilding Class of 2013. Seventeen students from 12 countries now join a growing alumni community of graduates who continue to facilitate positive community change in 33 countries.

Momentum continues to grow as we are now running two classes simultaneously and graduating a new class every year. Both cohorts are enrolled in a Master's Degree program in Applied Community Change, but take different concentrations, one in peacebuilding and the other in conservation.

The Conservation Class of 2014 joins faculty this November in Namibia for their Term II field residential. Why Namibia? Namibia has become a global role model in integrating nature conservation with sustainable livelihoods. National legislation has decentralized the management of wildlife and tourism to community conservancies, allowing Namibia's poorest communities to benefit directly from conservation. The result has been a dramatic recovery of wildlife populations outside of national parks and improved livelihoods. Students see these initiatives at work, meet with communities, and experience first-hand the network of lodges and campsites established by the Communal Conservancy Tourism Sector.

As the Conservation class meets with faculty in Namibia, the next Peacebuilding class prepares to begin Term I in December, with their first field residential scheduled for India in February.

Our students are working community-change practitioners from countries and communities with low-incomes. To be involved and support our student scholarship funds, please reach out to me directly at: mike@future.edu.

Alumni Community News

Future Generations alumni, from five graduating classes representing 33 countries, are reaching a critical mass for effective collaboration. Over the last few years, three regional alumni planning teams have met in Thailand, Kenya, and most recently in the USA to shape the future of the alumni community. Emerging from this dialogue is a clearer vision for the alumni community, which aims to disseminate a collective evidence base of successes rooted in community realities to influence global practice.

To coordinate activities of the Alumni Community, each region will nominate and elect a representative to serve on an Alumni Task Force. The Task Force will facilitate opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, working groups, and joint-projects.

A few alumni collaborations are already underway:

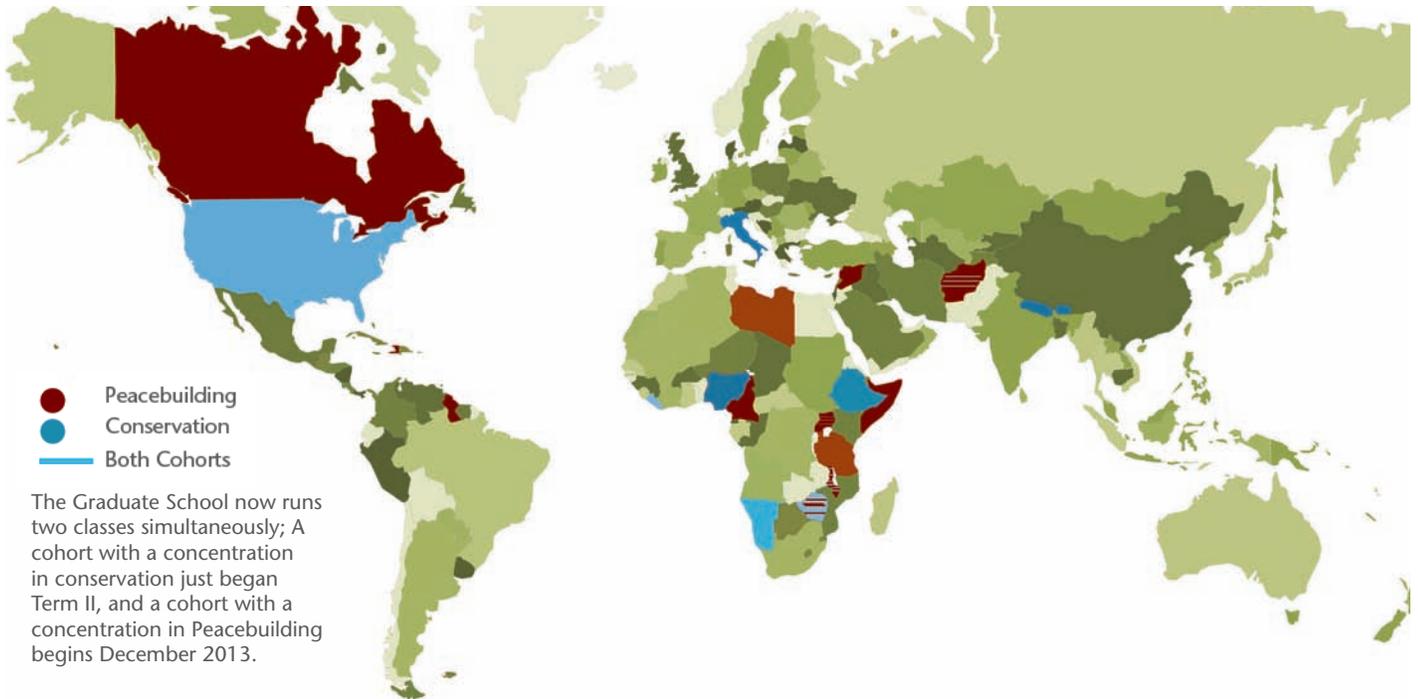
Jarka Lamacova of the Czech Republic has joined her classmate, **Tshering Lhamtshok**, in Bhutan for one year to share educational techniques as part of an effort to create new community-oriented early childhood development programs for pre-school students. Together, they are re-imagining day care with more active parental and community involvement.

Three alumni from the most recent graduating class, **Savela Jacques**, **Robi Robillard**, and **Sabina Carlson Robillard**, are co-workers with Future Generations Haiti. They recruited two Haitian students to join the next peacebuilding class.

Two alumni recently teamed up to represent Future Generations Graduate School as part of the Young African Scholars Conference organized by the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation. Alumni, **Gil Mulhovo** (Mozambique) and **Ikwo Udoh** (Nigeria), presented on strategies to engage street youth of Mozambique using reality television and to build partnerships among health centers and prisons in Nigeria.

Kelly Brown and **Mavis Windsor** of the Heiltsuk Nation both use their skills to strengthen partnerships and open new opportunities for strengthening cultural traditions among youth while managing their lands and water.

Locations of Conservation Class of 2014 and Peacebuilding Class of 2015



Meet Chido Madiwa, Conservation Class of 2014, Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, my goal is to restore biodiversity, transform drought-affected areas into grasslands, and address poverty and hunger. As Provincial Development Officer for the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender, and Community Development, I am dedicated to working in rural communities.

I have implemented such projects as the Holistic Management Programme, enabling communities to manage relationships among land, grazing animals, and water. Holistic Management promotes proper management and controlled grazing, which results in communities' abilities to reverse desertification, sequester massive amounts of carbon, prevent wildfires, increase plant diversity, improve water and mineral cycling, create topsoil, and feed a hungry nation.

Over the past decade, subsistence agriculture has continued to decline due to frequent droughts in my area and this has forced many households to pan gold along the Odzi river which feeds into the Save river. The unskilled and under-equipped artisanal gold miners use mercury for blending as it is easy, inexpensive, fast, and effective. While this activity provides employment and livelihoods for many, it also poses ecological problems. Rivers have been badly damaged.

To respond to this problem, I have helped teach my community environmentally friendly mining methods. I have also helped establish community-based groups to advocate for environmental rights and advance decision-making processes that hold village leaders more accountable.

This Master's program strengthens my work as it provides a solid grounding in development concepts, theories, and approaches. I feel that by graduation I will be equipped with the analytical and practical skills that I need to critically engage in development issues and debates from an interdisciplinary perspective and to work across broad areas of development and conservation in my country.



Inaugural Kathryn W. Davis Peacebuilding Class



"You are change agents, and you are the seeds of change, and you are the people who will change your communities, and your world...if ever the world needed you it's today."
Commencement Speaker
Nigel Fisher, Assistant Secretary General and Regional Humanitarian Coordinator, Syria



Graduation Ceremony, October 11, 2013



"I come with a different background; Everything was a big surprise for me; this Master's degree I can say was a challenge for me; I found that it connected me with the people and helped me feel how people are living in different countries."
Maryam Safi,
Afghanistan



"I am ready to apply my learning. I know exactly what I am going to do in my community...staying in the community while we study is such a deep part of this experience."
Savela Jacques, Haiti



"I think most of us have had this experience where the professors and the books have the knowledge; here the community has the knowledge; even from our own communities we realize they have more capacity than we thought before."
Stanley Nderitu, Kenya



Haiti, Success Mapping & Peer Exchanges



Haiti is often categorized as “the poorest”, or “the most vulnerable”, or “the most dependent of nations.” This single negative narrative obscures Haitian resilience and innovation, and creates a seemingly default preference, even among Haitians, for outside solutions and innovations.

With widely-respected development practices such as Asset-Based Community Development, and the first principle of SEED-SCALE which focuses on building on success, as well as the application of learning from “positive deviance,” evidence shows that local solutions can be efficient, effective, and sustainable.

With the evidence that many Haitian communities had succeeded in initiating their own locally-born development solutions, in 2012 Future Generations Haiti (FGH) created a “success-mapping initiative.” The aim of success-mapping was to identify and share examples of locally-led solutions. The initiative, in partnership with UNCVR, was dubbed *Wozo Ayiti*, which means “the reeds of Haiti” after a Haitian peasants’ song that celebrated Haitians as being like reeds that bend in the wind but never break.

A team of 10 field researchers identified 71 strong Haitian communities across four departments that were successfully driving their own development. The experience of these communities were documented and shared on an online map

(www.wozoayiti.org). Following this initial mapping, FGH convened a series of regional and national workshops, from which arose a strong interest for peer exchanges.

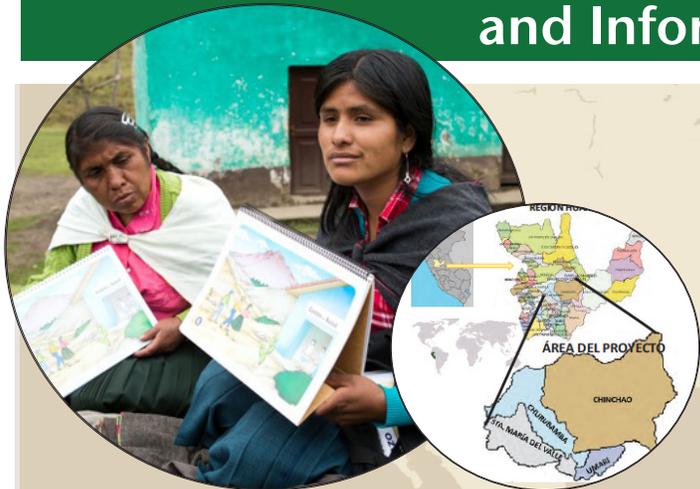
With support from Humanity United and Hawaii Community Foundation, FGH facilitated a series of community exchanges to share practical skills brought forward through the success-mapping process. The exchanges offered a space for communities to train communities and impart the “can do” inspiration that comes when one sees how their neighbors can accomplish something with resources that are not too different from their own, helping to make the goal more accessible.

More than 200 people participated directly in these exchanges, which have touched more than 35 organizations from 21 different communities. Training topics have included:

- Tree nursery management
- Grafting
- Transforming rice and corn into wine
- Improved rice planting techniques
- Community micro-finance methods
- Alternative, ecological construction

Communities that learned from their peers tended to share and apply what they had learned at home rapidly, and some even continued to train others surrounding communities.

Peru, A Partnership-based Approach Improving Health and Informing Health Policy



Another major impact was a shift in regional health policy. The Regional Health Office (DIRESA) of Huánuco recently added a new strategy, known as “sectorization,” to their official policy for strengthening all of Huánuco’s 253 primary health care facilities. The “sectorization strategy” organizes outreach from primary health care facilities to communities. Women Leaders are each responsible for a sector of households to ensure that all pregnant women and at-risk patients have a direct link to the primary health care center. Women Leaders receive direct support and mentoring from Community Facilitators, who are trained in health prevention, promotion, and referrals. As a result of these improved management practices, the Huánuco DIRESA recently received first place in a national competition for “Good Practices in Public Management.”

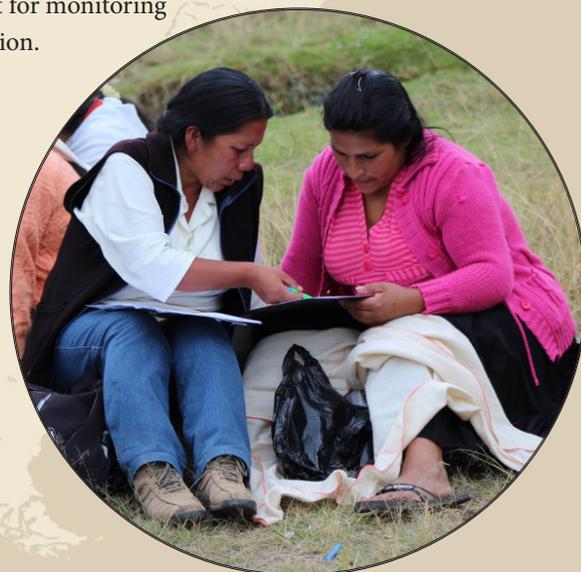
Since 2010, four remote districts in the Amazonian region of Huánuco, Peru have been organizing new partnerships for health with well defined roles for community members, health personnel, municipalities, and the regional health ministry.

With training and technical support from Future Generations Peru and funds from the USAID Child Survival Health Grants Program, this partnership has grown to include more than 180 government officials and community leaders, 42 Community Facilitators, and 700 Women Leaders who serve as community health agents. These community-based partners ensure that mothers and at-risk community members improve their health knowledge and practices and are fully connected to the region’s 26 primary health care centers. Other critical partners are the Regional Ministry of Health, four municipalities, and four Community Health Administration Committees (CLAS).

Future Generations Peru published the mid-term evaluation of this partnership in July 2013 with encouraging evidence of the impact across four primary health indicators. Results included a reduction of chronic malnutrition in children 0-23 months from 34.4% to 27.9% and an increase of exclusive breast feeding of infants 0-6 months from 71.8% - 95.3%.

In addition to health impacts, the report also tracked such outcomes as the role of local government in investing in health and nutrition and in strengthening community development. From 2011-2013, the region’s four municipal partners invested \$405,153 USD in health facilities, health personnel, health promotion, and incentives for Women Leaders, who serve as volunteer community health agents.

The mid-term evaluation highlighted four innovative practices: 1) A new role for primary health staff as tutors in the promotion of primary health; 2) The introduction of trained “Community Facilitators” to link health services with communities and local government funding; 3) A new empowerment-based participatory training methodology for adult women leaders and community facilitators; and 4) A modular training package including seven educational flipcharts for mothers; nine facilitators manuals; formats, guidelines, and checklist for monitoring and supervision.



West Virginia, Veteran Friendly Communities



Approximately one in every ten West Virginians is a veteran. This population is a tremendous asset to the state, with numerous technical and leadership skills. Yet, rural vets face many challenges. To better understand the challenges and opportunities before veterans, in 2012, Future Generations convened a statewide Veterans Summit.

At the state level, the West Virginia Governor's Task Force on Veterans Affairs and the WV Veterans Coalition have begun to strengthen the coordination of existing services, but a significant challenge has been to improve access in rural counties. One idea that emerged from the Veterans Summit is the concept of a "Veteran Friendly Community," described as one that:

- Embraces a local veterans center (such as the one in Logan that provides space for both volunteer-led and government-funded services)
- Builds partnership among local, state, and federal agencies
- Mobilizes a civilian volunteer network that provides 24/7 support to their local veteran population, and has volunteers who are trained and certified to help vets file claims
- Embraces a veterans education curriculum in schools
- Offers telemedicine options
- Has a well organized veterans transportation service
- Maintains and respects veterans memorials
- Engages veterans for their knowledge and skills as assets within the community

Future Generations aims to work with others toward a vision of a statewide network of Veteran Friendly Communities. The county of Logan already stands out as an exceptional role model with the potential to serve as a regional learning center that demonstrates and spreads good practices.

Based in a retrofitted public school in Henlawson, the "Logan Veterans Center" offers both volunteer-led and government support services for rural veterans across four rural counties. Existing services include transportation, mental health counseling, telemedicine, claims-filing technical assistance, community veterans events, and support groups. Andrew Clark and Rudy Varner of the Vietnam Veterans Chapter (Norman R. Miller Chapter 308, Inc) provide the heart-and-soul volunteer leadership of the Center.

In October 2013, Future Generations partnered with the "Logan Veterans Center" to further extend their services based on priority needs. Future Generations set up a computer center in the facility, and now provides services to veterans and their families who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

James McCormick, Chairman of West Virginia Veterans Coalition, says, "Logan Veterans Center is doing something really special here. This computer lab and all the Center's largely volunteer services are part of a larger vision and approach of Logan to be a Veteran Friendly Community. This is an idea that Logan can share with others across the state."

India, Women Lead Self-Help Groups

“First, we were thinking this idea was not possible, then we started hoping and we learned new ideas and skills that we are now applying.”

Mrs. K Yam, one of the first volunteers, a founder of a women’s group, and more recently a founder and member of a Self-Help Group.

Future Generations has a theory that once communities succeed in using their own energies to create a change that they continue to aspire. This is true in the tribal communities at the base of the Himalayas in Arunachal Pradesh, India. Fifteen years ago, women’s groups organized actions to improve health. Today, these groups are thriving. Women, empowered with the skills to prevent children from dying, sought other improvements and formed Self-Help Groups that offer micro-loans for small businesses. These Self-Help Groups (SHG) became more sophisticated, getting government contracts to fix roads and sew uniforms. Today, with support from Future Generations Arunachal, more than 67 SHGs across seven districts are organizing a network of community cooperatives, supported by a Self-Help Group Federation (SHGF).

Nawang Singh Gurung, working with Future Generations since 1997, works every day with women’s groups and government agencies in Arunachal Pradesh to formalize a network of registered and well-trained SHGs. “Momentum that began 15 years ago,” he says, “provides us with the learning and experience to take a new direction from health to economic development with a vision toward self-reliance.”

Currently the entrepreneurs are selling garden produce and fruit from their orchards directly to local markets. “Being lost,” says Gurung, “is the potential of wholesale marketing to the larger urban markets of India and storage facilities that allow for higher off-season profit margins.”

Plans are underway for SHGs to produce spices, organic vegetables, and organic tea, harvest non-timber forest products (mushrooms and herbal medicine), and raise pigs and chickens. Many of these products will then be stored in



a central storage facility and sold in bulk to larger markets by the SHGF, managed by a central coordinating committee.

“This economic development strategy,” says Gurung, “will parallel the existing social development work of women’s groups. It offers a sustainable business model to support community development.” Even further, he says, “this strategy will allow social change to reach more villages because communities will realize both the social benefits as well as increased incomes and financial momentum.”

Future Generations Graduate School endowed faculty member, Daniel Taylor, describes this process as the “revolution of rising aspirations.” Momentum that began with health 15 years ago has expanded to income generation. As a result, benefits are expected to expand to more communities and districts. This expansion in participation will lead to new aspirations and even more communities that are exploring new ideas and opening access to more opportunities and a rising quality of life.

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Communities in Action



Photos top to bottom, left to right

Peru: Women Leaders (community health workers) meet with mothers and children as part of routine checkups to share good health practices and better connect homes with the primary health care center.

Haiti: www.wozoayiti.org features a map of community-led solutions. Many examples come from Cite Soleil, where neighborhood groups organize gardening, sports, street cleanups, and peace activities.

China: Community leaders from the Taoyuan Model Eco-Community in Hunan Province visit Yunnan to learn practices in organizing eco-tourism initiatives.

Rural America: Five community-based organizations in southern West Virginia have joined a learning group that trains and supports Community Health Workers as they implement action plans to address local health priorities.