This past winter I was afforded the opportunity to live on the north coast of Honduras for three and a half weeks. While in Ciriboya, Iriona, Colón, locally known by its Garifuna name Mañali, not only was I able to participate in traditional Garifuna holiday celebrations, but I was also able to conduct a research study focused on youth perceptions of their community. Mañali is a beautiful village, rich in culture and community, and although it is part of a larger framework, being one of 11 Garifuna villages in the vicinity, Mañali preserves its unique aura and steady pulse.

While in Mañali, I provided 15 people, between the ages of 10 and 32, with disposable cameras. Along with the camera, simple instructions were given: (1) Take pictures of things you consider “good” and “bad” about Mañali. (2) Start off with the bad. (3) When your camera has 13 exposures left, take pictures of the good. The instructions were intentionally vague, and even when asked for clarification, no further direction was given. Strong emphasis was placed on the individual and the logic of the individual, and on some of the pages that the youth used to write descriptions of their photos, items were crossed off and moved from bad to good and vice versa. Some of the youth had never worked a disposable camera before and needed to be instructed before the exercise commenced.

The following day we met up and had a discussion about the village, issues faced by the youth in Mañali, and thoughts and fears as the young become the old. The acute social and spatial consciousness these youth possess is more than commendable. I have been to Mañali a total of 7 times over a span of 13 years but I never realized how dense and intricate the village is. Informality thrives as government, both national and regional, intervention is slow and fleeting. As I walked the village daily, I continued to receive unsolicited answers to questions I hadn’t even thought to ask. Through this study I was able to peer into the collective dream of urbanity that these youth shared as we discussed both strengths and limitations of the village in its current state. Some of the topics of conversation included the lack of electricity, home ownership, teen pregnancy, apathy, and the need for more organization in the community.

Moving forward, I plan to analyze these images and the content in them to determine the data layers of the geographic information system I will build of and for Mañali during my last three semesters as an undergraduate here at UC Berkeley. I want to thank: Ela, Wany, Isany, Darina, Gladys, David, Gabriel, Gerson, Kenny, Edwin, Nusly, Joel, Charol, Patrick, Yohaira and Tesla for taking photos for this study and for their contributions in the discussion. I also want to thank Eniola and Julio for assisting in the field; the success of the exercise is largely due to their role in translation and co-facilitation. Lastly, I would like to thank the Judith Lee Stronach foundation and the nominating committee for the financial resources that made this research possible. I am truly grateful to all those who contributed to the planning of this project and its implementation. My prayer is that this exercise in research will encourage the youth of Mañali to continue to discuss not only the issues they face but also their possible solutions as they demand participation in the decisions that affect their lives and their community.
Cameras were given to 15 youth in Mañali to take photos of “good” and “bad” things. **Photo by Rajan.**

Alfredo Norales and I walking in Mañali, he attended medical school in Cuba. **Photo by Eniola.**
Photo by Charol age 18.

“Proyectos Casaberos” Photo by Isany age 10
“La Iglesia” Photo by David age 15.

“Cancha de Basquetbol” Photo by David age 15.
“Playa sucia” Photo by Edwin age 14.

“Basura en los patios” Photo by Wany age 17.
Ereba is a Garifuna bread and food staple made of yuca. Photo by Gabriel age 13.

Youth of Mañali meet to discuss strengths and weaknesses and the future of Mañali. Photo by Rajan.