Global Service Learning and the Politics of Help in Ghana – Summer 2019. By Cynthia Anderson, CHID Academic Counselor

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What moves you to help others? Many of us care about social justice, equity, gender equity, and human rights. This helpful spirit certainly comes from a good place but we have to also be asking critical questions of our good intentions and what “help” means to people in the global south especially when it’s coming from those from the global north.

These discussions are more important than ever in our complex and unequal world and these are the conversations we had while in Ghana this last summer.

This program offered students service-learning opportunities with two well-established NGO organizations who are having conversations on identity, power, privilege, access, race, gender, and global ethics while working with volunteers and colleagues from around the globe.

My participation on this program allowed me to learn alongside the students and I practiced new ways to hold space for conversations before, during, and after tense learning experiences. I was able to have the thrill, instability, discomfort, and rewards of being in a new environment. Throughout this program, I was asked to stretch my ways of knowing which widened my understanding.

CHID will no doubt change in many exciting ways as we are now a Department. There will be new expectations for many of us. But one thing I’m sure of is that we will continue to learn together as staff, faculty, instructors, and students. Learning with and from each other and remembering that “the questions are the content.”