The PhotoVoice Manual
A guide to designing and running participatory photography projects
“At the beginning I thought photography was magic, now I am a photographer myself and I can train others in photography. I will never forget this training and what it has done for me. Even if I die tomorrow I die knowing that I have been able to document my life through photography.”

**Part Two: Delivering and facilitating your project**

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This manual has been produced in response to the hundreds of enquiries we have received at PhotoVoice, requesting advice on how to set up and run participatory photography projects. We are pleased and proud to say that we are now friends with – and have partnered with – many who have contacted us in this way, from across the world. But we are also aware that because of our limited time and resources we are not always able to respond as adequately as we would like.

The manual is intended to give an introduction to the power of participatory photography as a tool for social change for marginalised groups. We hope readers will learn about the considerable benefits that projects can bring to participants, whether they be, for example, HIV-positive women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or young unaccompanied refugees in London.

From our experience of developing over 21 projects across four continents over the last eight years we offer tips to consider from the outset, suggestions on how to structure workshops, and guidelines on how to promote the work produced.

We hope those of you embarking on new projects, whether in partnership with PhotoVoice or not, will gain an insight into how best you can develop your projects, so that they have positive, sustainable and far-reaching impact. We hope those of you looking to work as facilitators on participatory photography projects will gain key insights from this manual into how to deliver workshops effectively.

Some of the ideas and guidelines in this manual are owed to other project and development practitioners whom we have worked with and learnt from, many of whom are mentioned in this guide. All of them owe much to the remarkable men, women and children who have picked up the camera during PhotoVoice workshops and with open minds and hearts have used it to tell their story.

Anna Blackman and Tiffany Fairey
Co-founders, PhotoVoice
This manual is aimed at a range of people, including:

- existing practitioners of participatory photography
- individual photographers interested in PhotoVoice methodology
- community arts practitioners
- NGOs and small community and grassroots organisations
- freelance project facilitators working on PhotoVoice projects
- anyone seeking new ways to work with and engage marginalised groups

For ease of use the manual has been divided into two main parts:

**Part One**
provides an insight into the objectives of PhotoVoice projects and explains how to plan and design a project from the outset. This will be relevant to project managers, non-profit organisations, or individuals initiating new projects.

Due to the breadth of audience, the manual assumes neither knowledge of international development nor extensive photographic expertise. It is organised so that you can dip in and out of sections relevant to you, to complement your existing knowledge. Each chapter ends with a summary of key points.

The accompanying resource DVD features slideshows and digital stories from many PhotoVoice projects for your own inspiration or to show to participants in your own workshops. Also included on the DVD is a printable pdf exhibition of photographs and photographer profiles from five PhotoVoice projects. To view and print the exhibition, access the folder located on the root of the DVD using your computer.

**Part Two**
is geared specifically towards the workshops and those individuals who will work directly with project participants throughout the project.

The manual is not a blueprint for setting up projects; nor does it explain all the intricacies involved. Those wanting to go into more depth, or seeking advice on specific issues, are encouraged to look at the PhotoVoice website or to contact us for details of the training courses we run from time to time.

Our website also has further details on the PhotoVoice Network and how you can join. This unique international network brings together participatory photography projects, their practitioners and beneficiaries, from across the world. If you are already running a project, or if this manual encourages you to set up a new project, we would love to hear from you.

**PhotoVoice**
working with positive negatives
www.photovoice.org
**Introduction: PhotoVoice and participatory photography**

PhotoVoice seeks to bring about positive social change in marginalised and minority communities by providing photographic training through which project participants can advocate and improve the quality of their lives.

To date PhotoVoice has worked across four continents, in partnership with local and international organisations; its projects have had a direct impact on over 1,000 participants including refugees, HIV-positive women, sex workers, teenagers infected or affected by HIV, street and working children, young people with disabilities, and adults with mental health needs. Images and words from PhotoVoice projects are exhibited and disseminated locally, nationally and internationally via press and media, the internet, publications, exhibitions and events, and multi-media outlets, in order to challenge stigma and stereotyping, raise awareness and effect change. In 2003 the organisation set up the PhotoVoice Network, the first international network for participatory photography projects and their practitioners.

PhotoVoice believes in the fundamental right of all individuals, irrespective of age, gender, race or wealth, ability, religion or political affiliations to be able to access tools and skills through which they can find strength in their own voice and the means to represent themselves to the outside world. PhotoVoice believes in strong partnerships, working with local partners on every project.

**PhotoVoice’s philosophy**

Today, more than at any other time in history, images bombard and envelop us. Television, print and the internet unceasingly present images of people to emulate or help, historical icons to remember; products we ‘need’. It is within this world of constant visual imagery that photography today must compete, to make a single image stand out and to get us to take the image – and what it is depicting – seriously.

No picture, of course, depicts ‘truth’. A photo simply reflects reality – a moment in time, bordered and framed, shot by one individual and singled out by another. PhotoVoice projects enable people in need to document their own lives, as only they can really know them. In this way the projects channel the unique subjectivity of the participants into a direct and powerful form of human communication.

PhotoVoice projects enlarge the lives of their participants and ours, too. Through witnessing the daily challenges of select groups as they see them, we get closer to truly understanding their lives and needs, and are perhaps moved ourselves to help bring about change.

The images produced by PhotoVoice groups offer extraordinary insights into ways of life, captured by the very people who live, fight and challenge them daily.

**PhotoVoice methodology**

Over the last eight years, since PhotoVoice’s inception, there has been a huge surge in the number of practitioners and projects training marginalised groups in photography, all with varying aims and timescales. Increasing numbers of professional photographers are also engaging with participatory and collaborative methods. However, there is little consistent understanding as to what ‘participatory photography’ actually consists of.

This section describes the context of ‘participatory photography’ projects as PhotoVoice defines the term and outlines the development of the methodology.

PhotoVoice methodology is rooted in both photojournalism and international development. All PhotoVoice projects focus on a specific issue and aim to bring lasting change to participants, empowering them to inform others and to be actively involved in decisions that affect their own lives and their community’s development.

PhotoVoice projects also work to invert the power paradigm of traditional photojournalism which, although seeking to raise awareness in order to effect change, is still a process enacted more often than not by ‘outsiders’. By contrast, PhotoVoice projects enable participants to document their own lives from the inside and to represent themselves to the outside world. However, PhotoVoice projects also aim – as photojournalism does – to generate income for participants through the use and sale of the imagery produced.

PhotoVoice methodology is strongly rooted in the notion of ‘participation’, which derives in large measure from the work of Robert Chambers and his championing of Participatory Rural Appraisal. At the heart of the participatory approach is the aim of increasing the involvement of marginalised groups in decision-making that affects their own lives.

The concept of participation and its associated methodologies have now gained so much currency that few development projects are launched without addressing such issues. A range of participatory art approaches has been developed, involving the use of drama, circus arts, painting and other media, as well as entire participatory approaches to education such as Reflect, developed by Action Aid.

**Why photography?**

This is one of the most common questions PhotoVoice is asked. The reasons are to do with:

- the power of the still image to communicate and leave a lasting impression
- the power of photography to shed light on and raise awareness of important social and global issues
- the power of photojournalism to galvanise a call for action and impel change
- the fun and magic of photography
- the relative simplicity of taking a photo as opposed to some other art forms
- the accessibility of photography to all ages, cultures and skillsets
- the increasing technical and digital access to photography worldwide
- the ability of photography to cross cultural and linguistic barriers
- the ease of sharing images and their potential to generate open dialogue and discussion
- the relatively low cost of photography compared with, for example, film-making
- the vast variety of ways in which photographs can be reproduced and disseminated
- the dual nature of photography as a tool to record fact and as a creative art form

**A brief history of participatory methodologies in film and photography**

It was video, not photography, that a few development practitioners embracing the participatory approach first turned to as a tool through which individuals and communities could present their needs and views. This took hold in the 1980s, notably through the work of...
Su Braden in Vietnam. Her use of participatory video had been preceded by the work of Sol Worth and John Adar who, in 1972, wrote Through Navajo Eyes, a record of how they had trained Navajo Indians (although not in a wholly ‘participatory’ manner) to film their social world, as well as the work of Don Snowden, a Canadian who developed the ‘Fogo Process’, probably the earliest form of participatory video, when working with a small fishing village community in Newfoundland in 1967.

Participatory video is increasingly used today with communities across the world and continues to be developed as a valuable form of research and empowerment by practitioners such as Insight.

Participatory photography has much in common with participatory video. Some of the first use of participatory photography for development research took place between 1992 and 1996 in Yunnan Province, China, where Caroline C. Wang and Mary Anne Burris of the University of Michigan set up a project called ‘Photovoice’ with the Yunnan Women’s Reproductive Health and Development Program. Wang and Burris went on to coin the word ‘Photovoice’ as a methodology, defining it as follows:

“[It] is a process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique. It entrusts cameras to the hands of people to enable them to act as recorders, and potential catalysts for social action and change, in their own communities. It uses the immediacy of the visual image and accompanying stories to furnish evidence and to promote an effective, participatory means of sharing expertise to create healthful public policy.”

PhotoVoice (UK) and Photovoice (USA)

When the UK organisation PhotoVoice came into being and set up its website PhotoVoice.org, the founders were unaware of the existence of the US-based organisation (whose website is Photovoice.com) and of the coincidence in the names.

Today the two bodies remain distinct. PhotoVoice works more towards income-generating opportunities within the photographic and media industry and establishing partnership projects with other international and community organisations, and Photovoice (USA) remains more grounded in academic and policy research. But there are, of course, some strong similarities: PhotoVoice grew out of academic roots, and a number of its projects have policy change as their core objective.

PhotoVoice of course recognises much ground-breaking work by Wang and Burris in this field.

This manual refers exclusively to the work of PhotoVoice (UK).

Examples of what we now term ‘participatory photography’ also emerged in Latin America with initiatives such as TAFOS (Talleres de Fotografia Social). Founded by Tomás Muller; TAFOS armed largely illiterate peasants with cameras so that they could document their lives during the time of the peasant revolt in Peru from the mid-1980s to 1997. Wendy Ewald began her work exploring visual literacy and the relationship between photographer and subject, in particular between adult and child, in 1975 when she founded the Mountain Photography Workshop with children between the ages of six and 14 in Appalachia, Kentucky. Over the last 30 years Ewald has worked across the world, practising what she calls ‘collaborative photography’ with children – handing the camera over and co-creating images that explore children’s dreams and visions. Today she is the director of the Literacy Through Photography programme at Duke University, North Carolina. In recent decades, a handful of professional photographers and photojournalists, often in the course of pursuing their own work documenting the lives of marginalised people, have seen the potential of participatory photography.

In the 1980s, Washington Post and Newsweek photographer Jim Hubbard began documenting the lives of homeless people in Washington. Over time, he found that whenever he took pictures of the families, the children wanted to hold and look through his camera. This curiosity and enthusiasm inspired Hubbard to establish a programme that would enable homeless children to learn photographic skills and document their world. In 1989 he set up the Shooting Back project.

In 1991 in Guatemala City, Reuters photographer Nancy McGirr was documenting the families living on the city’s rubbish tip. Like Hubbard in Washington, she was struck by the children’s curiosity and interest in her camera; she started giving them photography lessons and inadvertently began the first international participatory photography programme that PhotoVoice knows of.

Similarly, in 2000 (not long after the founding PhotoVoice projects Street Vision and the Rose Class began), British photographer Lana Wong initiated a project entitled ‘Shoot Back’ with children living in the...
slums of Nairobi, Kenya. Another British photographer, Pete Fryer from Newcastle, ran workshops from 1999 to 2002 (the Eye-to-Eye project) in the West Bank for Palestinian refugee children in conjunction with Save the Children.

Shinpei Takeda and Warren Ogden co-founded the AJA project, which runs participatory photography programmes on the Burma/Thailand border and in Colombia. Shahidul Alam of DRIK, Bangladesh, established the Out of Focus group enabling eight children from poor backgrounds to document their lives through photographs. A number of the participants are now working in the industry and PhotoVoice was assisted by two of them on the Our Voices project, working with disabled groups in Bangladesh.

From these early roots an increasing number of initiatives have emerged around the world, including many more PhotoVoice projects and the Kids with Cameras project, again established by a professional photographer, Zana Briski, about which the documentary Born into Brothels won an Oscar in 2005.

Participatory photography continues to gain recognition. The first festival of photography coming out of the shanty towns in Brazil was held there in 2005, and in December 2006 the conference ‘Visible Rights: Photography for and by Youth’ was held in São Paulo, Brazil, attracting practitioners from around the world.

Today PhotoVoice hears every week about new projects being planned or established in every corner of the world, whether by community arts practitioners, professional photographers, anthropologists, NGOs or concerned individuals with a passion for photography.

It has been PhotoVoice’s long-term ambition to bring together as many as possible of these practitioners—all of whom we have come across over the last eight years of specialism in this field. It is our hope that the PhotoVoice Network will continue to achieve this, bringing greater credibility and recognition to the methodology and increasing awareness of the work and issues raised in each of these projects.

=> Appx. A for info on organisations mentioned in this section.
=> Appx. B for more info on PhotoVoice and PhotoVoice project list.
=> Appx. C for info on the PhotoVoice Network.
I want to tell children who don’t have parents that if there are no parents in the house don’t make the wrong decisions just because you don’t have someone to show you the right way in life. You have to respect yourself to show people that you love yourself and respect other people. You must not let yourself down. Do good things and just face this cruel world to make your future bright.

Isaac, Youth Photo-Reflect project, South Africa, 2007.
What PhotoVoice projects are about

PhotoVoice projects have three broad aims:

> Making voices heard
> Encouraging self-development
> Providing the means to generate income

Most PhotoVoice projects have objectives that work towards a combination of these aims.

This chapter looks at each of these aims in some detail, using project case studies. It also explores how projects often balance different aims and objectives, and how aims and objectives may change over time.

Making voices heard

Many people PhotoVoice works with have little or no opportunity to express their views in their own communities or to influence decisions that may affect their lives. Some, such as street children, homeless people or those living with HIV, are subject to stereotyping and discrimination, and are widely misunderstood and misrepresented by others. Such misrepresentation is often perpetuated by the media.

The work created by participants of PhotoVoice projects can challenge commonly held assumptions. The projects enable participants to raise awareness of the issues they face, advocate for their rights and exchange information.

This is achieved through:

> holding events and exhibitions
> issuing press releases and holding press conferences
> targeting key decision makers
> disseminating images and writing to the media, on the web, in newsletters, leaflets, publications and through multi-media
> encouraging exchange of images and words within and between projects
> using work from PhotoVoice projects in educational resources

Raising awareness

PhotoVoice projects develop participants’ photographic and communication skills so that they can draw attention to the reality of their lives. Enabling self-expression and visual literacy is at the core of PhotoVoice projects and will be explored throughout this manual.

PhotoVoice projects can promote better understanding of the lives of individuals and the issues they face, whether this is, for example, disability or HIV/AIDS or civil war. PhotoVoice works to raise awareness and change opinions both locally and at the international level. The latter is very important when the situation of particular groups or populations receives very little international attention as is the case, for example, with the 100,000-strong Bhutanese refugee population living in Nepal, with whom PhotoVoice is running the Children’s Forum Project.

Advocacy and self-advocacy

Projects and dissemination strategies can be designed to target key decision makers or those with influence, advocating specific changes in policy at national and international levels. This is distinct from general awareness-raising. Such projects need careful research and strategic planning, in consultation with the participants themselves. In many cases it will be the photographers or project participants themselves who use their work to put forward a point of view, generate discussion and potentially affect policy; this is termed self-advocacy.

Exchange, dialogue and education

Dialogue may be a central focus in some projects. For example, PhotoVoice’s Side-by-Side project works to enable Israeli and Palestinian teenagers, who know little about each other’s day-to-day reality, to communicate with each other through the images they take. This involves actual meetings as well as exchange of work on the internet.

Project terminology

It is important that everyone involved in planning a project has a common understanding of standard terminology.

Overall aim

The broad area of change that the project will contribute to. Example: To provide safe houses, food and education for all street children in Mexico City.

Specific aims

The specific ways in which the project contributes to achieving the overall aim. They should be achievable within the life of the project. Example: To enable street children to lobby government members directly, through their photographs. To raise awareness, among the general population of Mexico City, of the lives and issues affecting street children.

Objectives

How you are going to achieve your aims. Example: To run a series of 20 workshops for 15 street children. To run a press and media campaign using the children’s photographs. To hold an exhibition outside the city hall with a private view for politicians. To improve the confidence and self-belief of street and working children.

Stakeholders

The persons and/or organisations/groups that have an interest in the project. Example: Project staff, 15 participants, the public, politicians, project funders, the press.

Inputs

The material, equipment, financial and human resources that are needed to carry out the activities of the project. Example: One project manager, two volunteer project facilitators, training venue, 15 cameras, £5000 for workshop expenses, donation of exhibition space.

Outputs

All the detailed activities, services and products of the project. Example: Workshops, photographs and writing, an exhibition, targeted press campaign, opening night.

Activities

The actual tasks required to produce the desired outputs. Example: Workshop delivery and staff recruitment, exhibition planning and preparation.

Outcomes

All the changes, benefits, learning or other effects that happen as a result of your activities. Example: Three politicians attended a press conference with the project staff and eight of the young photographers. The exhibition will tour to Washington DC after Mexico.

Indicators

Quantitative and qualitative ways of measuring progress and whether project outputs, objectives and aims have been met. Example: Number of press articles about the project, number of people reached through the exhibition/newspaper articles, political stance of newspapers publishing articles.
“Since a young age kids are introduced to the subject of grief even if they don’t know or understand yet what grief is or what it means. It could be that these kids didn’t know the one that was killed, like I didn’t personally know my uncle Eli who was killed in the Yom Kippur war (1973).”


“In my opinion, by taking pictures we can learn a lot about people and their lifestyles and about the differences and similarities between Palestinian and Israeli culture. I believe and hope that photography can minimise the gap.”

Noram Oran, 14 years, participant on the Side-by-Side project

Images from Save the Children and Pete Fryer’s Eye-to-Eye project with Palestinian refugee children have been used extensively on the web as a form of dialogue - children around the world can post up comments alongside the images by the Palestinian children, creating a fantastic educational resource.

The images and writing produced through projects also create a wonderful resource to use in educational work and to further cross-cultural understanding.

**Working with the media**

By running press and media campaigns around projects, you can reach and influence a much wider audience. Press and media work, like all dissemination strategies, can be strategic, targeted, general, aimed at a local audience or can raise awareness nationally or internationally.

> Ch. 4 & Ch. 12 for more info on the role of the media in furthering the objectives of PhotoVoice projects and the importance of exhibitions, events and dissemination.

**Transparency – Living without borders**

Photography by unaccompanied young refugees, London, UK, 2002

Project partner: Trinity Community Centre, East Ham, London
Funders: The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund and the Baring Foundation

The participants of Transparency were 13 unaccompanied young refugees, between the ages of 11 and 18, from 11 different countries including Romania, Iraq and Nigeria, who had sought asylum in the UK. The needs, experiences and situations of the young people were diverse. Some had been in the country for a matter of weeks, others had been living in the UK for over a year. Some were living with foster families, others in hostel accommodation. Some were in full-time education, others were waiting places at colleges or schools. Levels of English varied greatly. The one thing they all had in common is that they had arrived in the UK alone. Workshops took place two to three times a week in East Ham at Trinity Community Centre over a three-month period. Participants started using automatic cameras and progressed on to SLRs.

At that time there was a great deal of negative press coverage about asylum-seekers and refugees in the UK. One of the main aims of the project was to enable young refugees to speak about their lives and views, challenge inaccurate media stereotypes and present an alternative perspective. To this end, a major exhibition was held at Spitz gallery in London, from 17-30 June as part of Refugee Week 2002. This was a high-profile event and received considerable press coverage. The show went on to travel around the UK and has continued to tour to this day with continued interest from the press and media.

The main advocacy and awareness-raising outcomes of the Transparency project were:

- **Opening exhibition:** Press night and exhibition attended by over 1200 people
- **Exhibitions:** 17 solo and over 25 group exhibitions in four countries, including at the European Parliament and the National Portrait Gallery
- **Press and media:** Coverage of the project and the participants’ work in six local newspapers, 15 national newspapers, 10 online publications, three radio features, and five television channels including CNN, Channel 4 and BBC News 24
- **Paid commissions:** One participant commissioned by BBC News Online to produce images for Refugee Week 2003, one participant commissioned to produce an exhibition of refugee portraits for Refugee Week 2005. Solo exhibition held in London, June 05
- **Conferences:** Project used as a case study at high-profile conferences and in good practice manuals including ‘A Sense of Place’ (British Council), ‘Refugees and Photography, (The Photographer’s Gallery), ‘A Sense of Belonging’ (Creative Exchange/Home Office).
- **Education:** Images and stories from the project featured in educational resources on refugee issues including BBC Schools

A number of participants also received ongoing support from PhotoVoice and have successfully undertaken further training. Transparency won the Arts, Culture and Heritage category of the Charity Awards 2003.

“The main advocacy and awareness-raising outcomes of the Transparency project were:

> Opening exhibition: Press night and exhibition attended by over 1200 people
> Exhibitions: 17 solo and over 25 group exhibitions in four countries, including at the European Parliament and the National Portrait Gallery
> Press and media: Coverage of the project and the participants’ work in six local newspapers, 15 national newspapers, 10 online publications, three radio features, and five television channels including CNN, Channel 4 and BBC News 24
> Paid commissions: One participant commissioned by BBC News Online to produce images for Refugee Week 2003, one participant commissioned to produce an exhibition of refugee portraits for Refugee Week 2005. Solo exhibition held in London, June 05
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> Education: Images and stories from the project featured in educational resources on refugee issues including BBC Schools

“Negative portrayals of refugees and asylum seekers are being challenged.”

Visitors’ comments at the Transparency exhibition, Spitz Gallery:
“The images grabbed me first, then the photographers’ stories. I was just amazed by the work, and these young people. I can honestly say that this has made a difference to the way I think.”

“Countered all the negative responses of the British government to refugees.”

Participants on self-advocacy
“With PhotoVoice I made my first steps – the project helped me to learn not just photography but many other things. We got the chance to express ourselves and to tell people what it is like to be a young refugee. I had something I wanted to tell to English people. I wanted them to put themselves in my position. With PhotoVoice we had the chance to tell this message and let English people understand about our problems.”


“I want people looking at my photographs to put the idea of refugee out of their mind and think about humanity first.”


“I know nothing about peace. Since I have been aware of who I am there has been fighting. We can show people in our pictures that war is very bad because we lost our mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, aunts, hands, legs, arms, heads - everything. Peace is the most important thing.”


“When I grow up I want to be a journalist. My photos show tsunami victims. I hope these photographs will help the tsunami victims. I wish to thank all those who helped us. Until now I thought foreigners were people who came to damage our country.”


“I expect that my photos will be a mirror of my life in Nablus, our problems. I hope that this project can connect our lives with the world. Maybe the others can understand our life.”


“In my photographs I try to express my desire for a better life for unlucky children who have to work hard or who are beggars. I wish they could go to school and would have a place to live. Besides that, I dream of becoming a spaceman. I would look for new planets for human beings and for Vietnamese people especially.”


Participants on awareness and advocacy:
“My hope was to be able to express disabled people’s thoughts and wishes to society but I never got this chance until I joined the SARPV photography programme. I am very interested in this work and in taking pictures of disabled people. I will feel so proud if disabled people can get their rights.”


“Total Exhaustion; Maximum Compliance. Because of the legal procedure and its complications, you are expected to comply completely: do what you are told and on time. One day I went to collect my ID card and was directed to the wrong floor by one officer. She said she couldn’t be bothered to explain to me the ‘right’ floor. We spent so long waiting there. I was totally exhausted by the end.”

Self-development
PhotoVoice projects empower individuals, in many cases those who are marginalised or ignored, to take control of their lives and to become actively engaged in helping themselves.

Confidence
PhotoVoice projects can have a profound effect on participants, helping them gain confidence in their capabilities and their role in society. For people who may have been denied opportunities throughout their lives being equipped with cameras, and having the time and opportunity to express themselves within a safe, secure and caring environment, can be an incredibly empowering experience. In many cases PhotoVoice has worked with individuals who have not been listened to before, or had any form of creative outlet. As participants develop their skills and take images which they are proud of, so also their self-belief grows. Even if tentative at first, participants also gain confidence as they see that people are actually interested in what they have to say and in viewing their work at exhibitions or events. Participants begin to believe that their view counts and also, very importantly, that they themselves can make a difference and be active agents in their lives.

Skills
As will be seen in more detail in Chapters 8 and 9, PhotoVoice projects provide training not just in technical photographic skills but also in visual literacy, communication, leadership and life skills. Many of the technical photographic skills but also in visual literacy, PhotoVoice projects provide training not just in

Skills gained through PhotoVoice projects can include:

- Thinking skills: self-awareness, social awareness, goal-setting, problem solving and decision-making
- Social skills: appreciating and validating others, working with others and understanding their roles, building positive relationships with friends and family, listening and communicating effectively, taking responsibility and coping with stress
- Negotiation and decision-making skills

These women – for the most part rejected, scorned, ridiculed by those that know them – are now among the very few women photographers this country has. From now on they have more than just the means to earn a living, they have a tool which allows them to express their ideas and their feelings in an artistic way. In brief, they can now contribute to the reconstruction of this country, their country, by educating the population through images that they themselves have produced. During the training course, I saw the dull faces of the women light up. I saw women who were often coming for medical help come to life and stay the whole three weeks without being ill. I saw women who had given up on their appearance start paying attention to the way they look again. This project signifies that the women have not only found a joy in living but also hope – hope that this apprenticeship will give them a helping hand towards reintegrating into society, a way towards valuing themselves, a way towards the transformation from failure to victory."


Therapeutic benefits
In nearly all cases participants will gain self-esteem. In some cases, particularly with vulnerable groups, projects can also be beneficial in deeper therapeutic ways. The process of taking photographs and working with images can enable individuals to work through trauma they may have experienced and to share complex emotions with others. PhotoVoice has conducted some preliminary research, with the input of art therapists and psychotherapists, into the possible therapeutic benefits of participatory photography. The concept of ‘phototherapy’ was developed by Jo Spence from 1977 onwards. Her work related to therapeutic benefits of participatory photography. The concept of ‘phototherapy’ was developed by Jo Spence from 1977 onwards. Her work related to psychotherapeutic issues these bring to light.”

However, PhotoVoice facilitators are not trained therapists and it is very important when working towards therapeutic objectives that you ensure you have sufficient knowledge, expertise and professional support to be able to do so.

© Christian Aid / PhotoVoice / Annie

"The death of a social worker at Fondation Femme Plus. She was HIV positive. Here her bereaved friends burst into tears.”

“Personal snapshots permanently record important daily moments (and the associated emotions unconsciously embedded within them), they can serve as natural bridges for accessing, exploring, and communicating about feelings and memories (including deeply-buried or long-forgotten ones), along with any psychotherapeutic issues these bring to light.”

© Christian Aid / PhotoVoice / Annie

"In order to make something of ourselves we need a little bit of help – that help has meant a lot to me. That help makes a huge difference between being an outsider or being like everyone else.” Tatiana, participant on the Transparency project, London, UK, 2002.

Skills
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Case study: Therapeutic benefits

Mental Wealth
Photography by adults with special mental health needs, UK, 2005
Project partner and funder: United Response

Seven participants with special mental health needs took part in this short-term project which ran for six weeks in spring 2005 and resulted in unforeseen therapeutic benefits.

The participants were encouraged to produce images that explored both the stigma of living with a special mental health need and the positive aspects of their lives. Each participant worked on a self-portrait, which afforded an opportunity for self-reflection and increased self-awareness.

The purpose of the project and related exhibition was to raise awareness of the issues faced by people with special mental health needs, particularly targeting the MPs and policy makers who were debating new mental health legislation at the time. While this was achieved it was some of the unexpected ‘soft outcomes’ of the project that had a very profound effect on the participants. The participants gained vital life skills during the course of the project, which opened up other opportunities and in some cases led to lasting changes in their lives.

Some tangible indicators of these changes were:
- Five participants reported increased confidence and self-esteem. They saw the project as having a far more positive effect on their confidence and self-esteem than counselling or medication.
- One participant gained an improved perception of his own body image, his personal hygiene improved significantly and he travelled alone on a bus for the first time to deliver a presentation to the trustees of United Response on the value of the project.
- One participant used photography as a tool to overcome his agoraphobia, travelling on public transport and going to the supermarket unsupported for the first time in years.
- Five participants enrolled in further photography classes.
- One participant made the decision to return to employment and enrolled in a catering course.

“I was totally shocked at how a photograph in a person’s hand would enable someone who finds public speaking impossible to stand in front of a group and speak confidently about their very personal fight with the illness that they have.”

Philip Stone, United Response Support Worker.
Providing the means to generate income

PhotoVoice projects can increase the capacity of participants to generate income in a number of ways, both direct and indirect.

Expanded career and vocational training options

The skills that participants gain during projects expand their career and training options. In some cases, these options may be in fields related to photography but the life skills and associated confidence and self-esteem they gain are transferable, and relevant to any kind of employment or training. Participants also acquire organisational and administrative skills through assisting in organising exhibitions or other project events.

Participants often discover they have career options they never previously considered open to them. These are not limited to careers as photographers, which in itself presents a diverse range of possibilities, but includes other careers in media and communications, such as print journalism, film and design.

Vocational objectives are rarely the main aim at the beginning of a project but participants often express an interest and desire to try and generate income through their newfound skill. It is always very important not to raise participants’ expectations unless this can definitely be delivered. Wherever possible PhotoVoice works with partners to make this a reality, while being very careful not to promise too much. Projects with an initial advocacy phase may become more focused on income generation at a later stage.

Bursaries, work placements and mentoring

PhotoVoice provides ongoing mentoring and support to certain individuals who have been participants of projects and who choose to pursue careers in photography or media. Some projects incorporate a formal mentoring programme while, in others, support is negotiated on an individual basis.

Today 50% of the students on the Street Vision project in Vietnam go on every year to do work placements, apprenticeships and find jobs within the professional photographic industry. One of the first ever students from the project had great early success, holding her own solo photography exhibition in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Positive Negatives project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo enabled many of the women to earn money by taking pictures at weddings, NGO meetings and special events after the training period. In a country where there are few cameras and even fewer photographers the woman had a skill that was in demand.

Five students from the Khmeye project in Cambodia continued to undertake placements with magazines and newspapers in Phnom Penh where they earned some money after the photography course. In Nepal, the Children’s Forum students earn money within the refugee camps through wedding and portrait photography and are now establishing a photo centre in the camps. One previous student now also has his own press association based in Kathmandu committed to communicating about Bhutanese issues.

In London one of the students from the Transparency project is now completing a degree in photography at the London College of Communication. After the initial project PhotoVoice helped her develop her own portfolio and assisted her in applying for a scholarship for the course, which she won. Another graduate from Transparency has been supported to pursue his interest in film-making and now runs his own production company.
Case study: Vocational training

Street Vision
Photography by Street and Working Children, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam 1998 – present
Project partner and funder: Ho Chi Minh Child Welfare Foundation.

Every year Street Vision provides training in photography and documentary skills for over 30 young people living and/or working on the city streets. Participation in the project provides a valuable educational opportunity to children who have little access to formal education.

The Street Vision project was first and foremost established as an advocacy project aimed at giving some of the 15,000 street and working children in the city in 1998 the opportunity to put forward their views, thoughts and feelings to the general public and to policy makers.

From the outset, though, it was also clear that the project had the potential to generate income and make a real difference to the lives of the participants. As street and working children the priority for many of them was to gain the skills from which they could earn money in the future. Although PhotoVoice ensured that all the children taking part in the project were no longer living on the streets, were attending school and had their basic needs met, many of them were sending money to their families in the country on a regular basis.

The project manager therefore ensured that a number of partnerships and procedures were put in place to ensure a degree of income generation for the project and further training.

Increasingly over the years, due to the wishes of the young people themselves, and as the situation of street and working children in the city has improved, the focus has been on vocational training. Due to the popularity of photography in the city and the growing tourist market the schemes have been successful. This change in focus has of course affected the images being generated in the project. Although the aim is still partly to create images for advocacy, the focus is increasingly on landscape and portrait photography – which has greater commercial potential.

Income-generation and vocational schemes on the Street Vision programme include:

- a bursary scheme with the Ho Chi Minh Photographic Association (HOPA) for six graduating students each year to undertake an advanced professional photography training course (1998 onwards)
- establishment of the Street Vision Club, a mentoring programme for Street Vision students by professional Vietnamese photographers (1999 onwards)
- postcard, greetings card and prints sales – print sales have been incredibly successful, with over 100 prints selling at every annual exhibition to expatriates and wealthy Vietnamese, generating considerable funds which go back into the project (1998 onwards)
- work placement schemes with labs, studios and magazine publishers in the city (formally established 2001)
- establishment of a Photoshop studio and course for graduates of the introductory course
- support for individuals to pursue photography careers and for one to hold a solo show in Geneva

In 2005, 13 children from the beginners’ photography course (32 students) graduated onto the Photoshop course, two months in length. All 13 have now found stable jobs with photo studios in the city. That year Street Vision also helped a further 29 graduates of the beginners’ course to find photographic jobs and placements. This figure does not include those early students now totally self-sufficient through photography.
In almost every PhotoVoice project there are two or three students who really stand out and want to take their photography to the next level, whether to study advanced photography, to undertake a work placement in their home town or to carry on creating photography that can be used for advocacy. In many cases, especially in urban areas in developing countries, owning or having access to a camera and the knowledge of how to take pictures can become a realistic form of income generation.

Direct income generation: publications and merchandise
Images are reproducible in many forms, including in photographic books, calendars and postcards. All of these can potentially generate income for the project and the participants. Remember though, that profit margins on such goods can be very low. In countries where printing costs are reasonably low, or where there is a demand for such items, selling images in this way can be worth considering.

Direct income generation: print sales and photo use
The proceeds from the sale of photographs produced in PhotoVoice projects can contribute to the continuation and expansion of the projects or generate income for the photographers. Proceeds either go to the project partner (in all cases when participants are under 16 years of age) or to individual photographers. It is important for the group to come to a consensus about whether proceeds should go to everyone or just the person whose image was sold, so that conflict about one person earning more than another can be avoided.

Balancing different objectives and changes over time
As these case studies show, even at the outset a project may have a number of specific aims and multiple objectives. There are a number of important points to remember:

- Identify the primary aim and ensure that project objectives contribute to it. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary aim</th>
<th>Key project objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change a key policy</td>
<td>Provide participants with the means to communicate key messages to decision-makers (advocacy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help participants recover from traumatic experiences</td>
<td>Provide a safe secure space in which to express themselves (therapeutic benefits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable an impoverished group to earn a living</td>
<td>Provide vocational training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Projects can have a number of key objectives and the overall aim can be wider than the examples cited above. But remember to be realistic about what the project can achieve and to ensure the objectives serve your primary aim.

Ensure that outputs are appropriate. For example, in projects with a therapeutic aim the emphasis is much more on process than product; exhibitions and press attention in such projects may be detrimental rather than beneficial.

Remember that project aims and objectives can change over time. For example:

- The Mental Wealth project originally had advocacy objectives, because of the unexpected outcomes in the first phase, the second phase is now being designed primarily with therapeutic objectives.
- The Street Vision project has changed significantly over eight years; its primary objective in the first phase was advocacy, while it now has strong vocational objectives.
- As a project enters its second phase a greater emphasis on income generation is not unusual. This is often due to the wishes of participants.

Balancing the objectives of different stakeholders
It is crucial to be aware that in any project different stakeholders will have different priorities. There may be many agendas at play, including those of:

- the participants (as a group and as individuals)
- the project manager
- sponsors or funders
- local partner organisations
- the media

The project manager is ultimately accountable for the whole project and must be aware of all the interested parties and the power dynamics that exist. It is also necessary to constantly balance the different needs of the various stakeholders, while ensuring that the project remains participatory and that all of the objectives agreed upon are achieved.

Important things to remember:

- Different objectives may be more or less important to individual participants within the same project.
- In a participatory project, the participants’ objectives should be paramount (Ch. 8 for more guidance on this but in reality other stakeholders, particularly staff, may have a very strong influence.
- You may have a greater personal investment in some outputs and objectives than others. This is normal, but you will need to recognise any personal preferences and make sure they do not jeopardise other important outputs.

Differing priorities held by different project stakeholders may lead to serious tensions arising in a project:

- In advocacy projects, in particular, it is important to ascertain that the participants are interested in being involved in advocacy work and also that they are not compelled to produce images with a certain message. This of course would not be a participatory project.
- There may be a lot of pressure, perhaps from the partner organisation, to meet certain deadlines for press or media reasons – often this may come from staff further up in the partner organisation rather than those you are working with. Such deadlines can undermine the benefits of a participatory project.
- Exhibitions can also be an ethical minefield – for example, an interest in producing and editing aesthetically pleasing ‘exhibition quality’ photos can potentially undermine what the participants themselves really want to say (Ch. 11 for more details).

Balancing the various stakeholders’ objectives is not a simple job but the project manager must ensure that the project is not compromised by any one party.
Key points

- PhotoVoice has identified three broad aims for its projects: making voices heard, encouraging self-development, and providing the means to generate income.

- Each aim can be broken down into a number of different objectives.

- It is important to establish your project’s overall goal (what it is contributing to) and its specific aims.

- Think carefully about the ‘how’ – the activities through which these aims can be achieved.

- Aims and objectives may change over time, especially in the case of long-term projects, which may place more emphasis on income generation.

- Ensure you balance the different objectives of different stakeholders.

“In England I don’t know who I am. I know my name and other things but I do not know what I am doing here. In my own language I could tell you many things about myself but I find it hard to speak in English.”

Florian, Transparency project, UK 2002.
Project research and planning

This chapter gives an overview of the major areas that need to be considered to ensure a project’s success.

Who and where?
PhotoVoice works with marginalised and vulnerable groups of people. However, participatory photography could be used in almost any context. Deciding what issue, and therefore who will be the focus of the project, is the normal starting-point of any project.

If the project is initiated by you, then who you work with will be motivated by your personal interest in a particular issue or region. However, if the project is initiated by another organisation, or you are employed by PhotoVoice to facilitate an existing project, there will almost certainly already be strong ideas about the focus of the project.

PhotoVoice works in the UK and in developing countries – often in areas that are affected by poverty, conflict, HIV/AIDS, natural disasters or social unrest. Marginalised groups can of course be found in any country in the world. There is no limit as to where participatory photography projects can take place.

Aims and objectives
Establishing clear, concrete aims and objectives is essential to the success of a project. 

It is also important to set what are called SMART objectives at the beginning of a project.

SMART
Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Timebound

An example of SMART objectives:

> To work with 15 participants to produce an exhibition of 50 images, over a period of three months, on the subject of living as an HIV-positive person.

> The exhibition will be opened on World Aids Day and attended by 200 guests, including 50 health professionals and 10 Members of Parliament.

By thinking carefully about details, numbers and dates you will be able to gauge how realistic a project is and also be able to evaluate its impact much more precisely.

Timeframe
The timeframe is to a degree constrained by the financial and other resources available for the project and determines the viability of achieving different objectives. Projects with vocational objectives often require a timeframe of more than a year. Where the main goal is making voices heard or self-development, projects may be able to achieve their objectives within a much shorter time frame. Often objectives change with a second round of funding. 

Research
It is essential to carry out adequate research before embarking on the project, especially when working with socially marginalised groups where there may be complicated and challenging issues to be faced.

Potential sources of information include the internet, libraries, specialist groups and organisations, embassies, and of course the participants and local partner organisations themselves.

When going overseas obtain as much information as possible about the country you will be working in. This information should encompass deeper issues such as the political situation, social structure and cultural norms of the society, as well as more practical details such as food, climate, health and security risks, and transport, which will affect your personal comfort and well-being.

Funds and budgeting
The scope of a project is constrained by the resources available, in terms of organisational capacity, staff and money. Be realistic about the resources available and design a project that is coherent and viable so that promises are not unfulfilled.

It is all too easy to underestimate what resources, especially time, will be required. Remember also that even if you may be willing to work on a voluntary basis, local staff will rarely be in a position to do so. It is very important to draw up a detailed budget for your project. A simple budget may look something like the following:

PhotoVoice projects to date have lasted anything between two days and eight years – the latter obviously with separate rounds of successful funding. The degree of technical expertise that participants gain in photographic skills, and the kind of equipment used, will also vary depending on the time available. Once the timeframe is known it will be possible to establish a workshop timetable.

PhotoVoice’s partner organisations range from grassroots community groups to large international organisations. PhotoVoice provides expertise and training on how to run participatory photography projects and the partner organisation provides local knowledge, connections with potential participants and logistical support. The local partner often provides the venue and support staff, such as translators. In nearly all PhotoVoice projects the local partner has provided specific expertise and knowledge on working with a particular group. The importance of this support and expertise to the success of the project cannot be overstated, especially when working with vulnerable groups.

The crucial element in successful partnerships is absolute clarity in the objectives, expectations and responsibilities of the respective partner organisations according to the timescales, as well as mutual respect and open communication. It is also often important to invest time in getting the partner staff on board to ensure a feeling of shared ownership and responsibility for the project and to enable objectives and methods to be agreed between you.

Working with partners
PhotoVoice is committed to working in partnership with other organisations. The success of these partnerships is essential to the overall success of a project.

PhotoVoice Manual
Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is essential in every project in order to gauge its impact and to learn key lessons which can inform future work. Designing the M&E framework should be considered during the initial stages of planning and design.

Funding bodies will almost invariably require an end-of-project report and often request details of how the project will be monitored and evaluated in the initial application for funds. Larger funding bodies – especially when making substantial grants – may insist that independent evaluators carry out the M&E. This will have a significant impact on the budget as professional M&E experts come at a price. In smaller projects it can be a good idea to get someone who hasn’t been fully involved in the project to carry out a separate M&E study to ensure objectivity.

Ch. 7 for further guidelines on designing your M&E framework.

Fundraising

The main opportunities for fundraising for projects can be divided into the following categories:

> Individual donations
> Local company support
> Fundraising events
> Trusts and foundations
> Government bodies
> Corporate fundraising

The most suitable method depends on your project budget, the timescale available for fundraising, and your existing contacts and knowledge.

```
On the Bus. I do not want to wear a burqa. I will wear hajab [a head scarf] because that is what it says in Islam. It is important for women not to be seen by other men apart from their husbands – this is what is said by Islam. Women have to do exactly the same as men, the same amount of work, but they are not treated the same.”
Khatera, Bibin project, Afghanistan, 2002.
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### Planning for Monitoring and Evaluation

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<td><strong>Participants</strong></td>
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<tr>
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* Exhibition costs can be further broken down into costs of prints, frames, equipment (eg. hire of digital projector), venue hire, opening night costs, etc.

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If your project budget is relatively small (i.e. less than £7,500) it may be suitable to tap into your existing contacts and local companies in the area where you are planning for the project to take place. The following are some ideas of how you can raise money in this way:

> **Write an appeal letter** and send it out to carefully chosen individuals and companies. Include a brief covering letter, a brief synopsis of the project (including any photos and design ideas that may make it more eye-catching) and a short budget.

> **Ask for donations or discounts in kind** from local companies, e.g. camera shops, photo labs (printing and processing), printers, courier companies, travel companies. Offer them visibility in the form of a logo on any project material and within any exhibitions, events or press releases that may be associated with the event. Any existing contacts that you have with these companies can be invaluable.

> **Run an auction or sell photos/goods.** Selling something unique or linked to the project you are planning can be particularly effective. A very successful small fundraising initiative PhotoVoice ran was to sell burqhas from Afghanistan. This clothing, which became an icon of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, was acquired by PhotoVoice facilitators in the field and sold under silent bid to a network of interested and wealthy contacts in the UK.

> **Organise a sponsored event.** A walk, cycle ride, swim, run, climb, silence… Hold a talk on the event in advance to engage any potential sponsors.

> **Organise a fundraising event.** This could be a talk, a private gig, a club night, a party, a slideshow. Send out invitations through e-mail and flyers to your friends/contacts to rally support. Charge on the door and/or sell items at the event.

If you need to fundraise yourself for a project, be realistic about how long this will take. Fundraising can be a long and arduous process. If you are seeking larger funds through applying to trusts and foundations you should be aware that results can take six months to a year to come through, that fundraising can be highly competitive and often you will need to be affiliated to an organisation that applies on your behalf.

If fundraising on this scale you will need to write a detailed project proposal. Needs vary between different funders but the proposal will usually need to include a description of the project and its aims and objectives, details of the beneficiaries, details on staff and partner organisations, a timeline, the budget and a section on monitoring and evaluation.

> Appx. A for links and references to further fundraising resources and reading.

The PhotoVoice Network also offers some advice and opportunities to its members in relation to project fundraising. > Appx. C

### Sustainability

Enabling projects to continue beyond the first phase of funding is one of PhotoVoice’s core aims. Providing ongoing support for individual students to continue their work is one aspect of this; equally important is transferring skills, knowledge and equipment so that local partner organisations can continue the project, in a cost-effective way, and train new participants.

To help ensure sustainability consider the following from the outset:

> building training workshops for the partner organisation staff into the project design

> training and working alongside local facilitators who can continue the project after you leave the project locality => Ch. 3

> researching whether the partner organisation has the capacity and interest in continuing the project in the long term

> researching whether there are long-term vocational opportunities for participants locally

> building a local network of project mentors within the local photographic industry, local business and organisations

> ensuring participants have ongoing access to equipment after the project ends

> budgeting for project continuation. Consider enabling participants to continue their work, perhaps by covering ongoing printing or travel costs after the project end, or by having a project continuation budget line which can be used as decided in the M&E study

> designing the M&E framework so that it asks key questions about project sustainability and continuation => Ch. 7

> Here two physically handicapped people are doing sport while sitting in their wheelchairs at a training ground. They have much more power in their chests than their legs, which are handicapped. The more powerful one pushes the other away.”

Adolf, Able Voices project, Cameroon, 2005.
Vijaya, who is transgender, follows prospective clients from a discreet distance so as not to attract unwanted attention.”


Key points

> After establishing your primary project aims and objectives develop SMART objectives.

> Think carefully and realistically about the timeframe needed and available to you.

> Carry out in-depth research into the location, group and issue you will be working with.

> Think carefully and be realistic about what you will need in terms of resources and money for the project.

> Develop a detailed budget.

> Think about how you can raise money simply and effectively through your existing contacts.

> Be realistic about how long it might take to raise funds.

> Plan monitoring and evaluation from the outset.

> PhotoVoice always works with local partner organisations. Consider doing so if you have not done so already.

> Consider the long-term sustainability of the project and work towards this wherever possible.
Designing an appropriate project structure – the project timescale, timetable, level and intensity of the workshops and the project team – is essential to the success of a project.

**Questions to consider**
When you design the project there are many questions to consider in relation to the country and society in which you will be working. The answers to these will affect preparations and logistics as well as more in-depth workshop design and facilitation.

**Personal and social commitments**
- What are the school, work and family commitments of the participants?
- What are the dates of local holidays, religious festivals, etc?

**Government and bureaucracy**
- Will you need specific permits for the project? How long will these take to get?
- Are you likely to have any problems with the local authorities? Is bribery common? What is your own/the project’s stance on paying bribes?
- Will you need local authority approval to show the photographs publicly?

**Language and literacy**
- Can the participants read and write? If not, how might this affect your method of facilitation and evaluation?
- What language, or combination of languages, do the participants speak? Will you need translators?
- How many of the participants might speak English?

**Existing skills and knowledge**
- What level of education do the participants have?
- Are previous educational experiences likely to have been positive or negative?
- Are participants likely to have been encouraged to think for and express themselves or will their education have involved much learning by rote?
- Are participants likely to be self-confident or under-confident?
- Have participants taken part in any previous advocacy projects or acted as community leaders?
- What arts activities (drama, art, photography and video) may participants have taken part in before?
- Is the skills level of the group mixed? How is it possible to cater for different people with different skills within the project?

**Technology and visual literacy**
- Are the participants likely to be familiar with relevant technology? Are they computer-literate?
- Do they have access to the internet?
- Will participants have had access to cameras before?
- Will they have photographs at home?
- Will they have experienced any trauma or witnessed violence or death?

**Economic factors**
- Can the participants afford to take part? Would they normally be engaged in activities that generate income at the time that the workshops will take place?
- Will they have experienced any trauma or witnessed violence or death?
- Will they miss out on a meal that they can't afford to replace?

**Location and security issues**
- Do the participants know the area that the project is taking place in? Will staff be needed to familiarise participants with the location?
- Is getting to and from the workshops safe (for women and children as well as men)?
- Will the project need to organise special transport for the participants?

**Abilities and health issues**
- Will the participants’ medical needs affect how workshops should be structured?
- Is poor health likely to lead to absences and drop-outs? How will this affect the project’s objectives?
- Will some participants have particular difficulty with some activities or excursions? How can this be accommodated?
- What level of concentration can reasonably be expected of the participants?
- Do participants have specific psychological needs? Have they experienced any trauma or witnessed violence or death?

**Project design**
Two boys, Dina and Piseth, playing volleyball in Kien Klang orphanage, Cambodia.

Soren, Khmeye project, Cambodia, 2004
“It’s all still a bit confusing — I don’t know why I ended up where I am today. I’m not sure what the future is but I’m not using drugs anymore. Not knowing the future is difficult and it brings up difficult feelings. Sometimes, I can’t see the way ahead and I think about stopping trying but, if I stick to today and being clean, I can get there.”

**Climate**

> How might weather affect the project? When is the rainy season? Is the area subject to flooding? Does it normally rain at a particular time of day?

> What times of day/year are likely to be too hot to work effectively?

> Are the participants involved in work that has particular seasonal demands?

**Infrastructure and access to services**

> Is it possible/cheaper to buy photographic equipment in the project country?

> Are photographic processing facilities available locally? How accessible are they and how long do they take? What is the quality of their work?

> What other resources will you need for the project? Are they easily accessible? Does the local partner have them?

> Is there a reliable transport system?

**Project team and local facilitators**

In most situations you will be working on a project as part of a team (this is always the case with PhotoVoice projects). Depending on the scale of the project, the team may include a project director; project manager; facilitators; translators; co-facilitators; assistants; staff from the local partner organisation; volunteers and even psychologists or other specialist consultants; one person will also need to take on the crucial role of exhibition co-ordinator. It is very important to identify and distinguish between these different roles and to ensure that the responsibilities of each team member are clear.

Be careful not to underestimate the size of the team you will need or the time each team member will need to work on the project. This is particularly important if you are planning to do a lot of the work yourself. Think realistically about how long the work will take and ensure there are other team members to delegate to and share the workload with. This becomes crucial when unexpected problems or complications arise — which they always do. It is important that the composition of the team takes into account any particular social issues that will influence interactions in the workshops or the internal dynamics of the team. For example, the gender make-up of the team may determine what participants are willing or able, to discuss in the workshops; in some cases it may be appropriate to employ only male or only female facilitators.

**Recruiting local facilitators**

In PhotoVoice projects the local facilitator plays a crucial role. He or she is often a photographer or member of the partner organisation who lives locally. The ability and commitment of a local facilitator can have a profound effect on the potential of a project to continue in the long term. In nearly all PhotoVoice projects, managers and facilitators work together to train local staff in project methodology. As well as ensuring long-term sustainability, this can also ensure lower costs for the project.

When recruiting a local facilitator, consider the following skills and qualities:

> photographic knowledge and skills

> experience in working with vulnerable people and dealing with sensitive issues

> experience of teaching

> enthusiasm and flexibility

> willingness to put the students’ photographic work before his/her own

> ability to speak local dialects as well as other languages necessary for communicating with all team members

Don’t rush the recruitment of local facilitators. If the partner organisation does not know anyone who can obviously fulfil this role, you may need to advertise and interview for the position. Leave time for enough contact with this individual before the workshops begin to ensure proper understanding and sharing of project goals and objectives.

**Timetabling**

The success of the workshops and the project as a whole relates to the structure provided by the workshop timetable. Consider the timetable as early in the design process as possible, referring back to the overall timeframe and the key objectives of the project. The amount of time that participants have available, and details and timings of their other responsibilities, will strongly influence the timetable, along with other logistical issues such as transport and venues.

When working out a timetable:

> Be realistic; start with practicalities.

> Build in flexibility to accommodate unforeseen circumstances and the particular needs of the group.

> Allow adequate time at the beginning of the project to discuss the objectives and for participants to acclimatise to each other.

> Think through the balance of time needed for:

> acquiring practical skills; outshoot; discussion and editing of images; writing of captions and stories.

> Think about any preparation needed for outshoots — you may need to arrange transport, contact locations and engage extra support staff,

> Timetabling ideal times for outshoots will help with this planning. With a detailed timetable it may also be necessary to determine when you may need any additional translation support.

> Schedule adequate editing and discussion time after each outshoot. To plan this it may be necessary to research turn-around times at local labs.

> Try to allow time for some evaluation workshops at the beginning, end and — depending on the length of the project — half-way through the project.

> Consider any planned project outputs, such as exhibition edits, and how the timetable will work towards meeting these in a participatory way.

> Allow time for staff debriefing in the schedule.

> Make time for a party or celebration or special trip at the end of the project.

> Ch. 9 & 10 for more info relevant to detailed timetabling.
Selecting participants
Criteria for selecting participants must be consistent with the project's aims and objectives. In PhotoVoice projects, participants are often selected by the partner NGO, so it is vital that the partner organisation fully understands what the project involves and what will be expected of participants. For example, in a project with a strong advocacy objective, participants need to be willing to show their work in the public arena (even if anonymously) and take part in activities that may involve the press and publicity.

If a project is advertised and more people than required apply, it may be necessary to conduct interviews. You may want to ask applicants:
> why they want to learn photography
> what they would like to photograph
> what messages they would like to send to their local community, the public in another country or their government.

Their answers to these questions may enable you to glean how serious they are about wanting to learn photography and how imaginatively they may approach the workshops. If many more suitable participants wish to join the course than you can accommodate, try to ensure you have a system for managing disappointment. You can, for example, ensure all the participants' details are recorded so they can be contacted if and when the workshops are repeated.

Group size
The ideal workshop group size depends on the project's objectives, timeframe and equipment as well as staff numbers and team capacity. With their emphasis on individual personal growth and group dialogue, PhotoVoice projects tend to work with a maximum of 15 participants and have worked with as few as five or six. Special need or vulnerable groups may require a lot more one-on-one facilitation.

Most PhotoVoice projects work with a set group of participants over a given timeframe, but this is not always possible. Successful projects have been run with more transient groups.

PhotoVoice on the Move
This project, which was run from a mobile van in central London every Saturday during summer 2003, provided introductory drop-in workshops to homeless adults. Volunteers worked with one or two homeless people each. Over the weeks dozens of people came through the project but interestingly a core group formed through a process of self-selection. This consisted of six young men who returned every week, keen to get their hands on a camera again, and who ended up organising an exhibition of the work with PhotoVoice volunteers.

In projects with street children, working children or adults with a transient lifestyle, it is realistic to expect some participants to drop out, probably quite early on. Some may not take to photography; some may find a job they have to take; some may simply forget to attend workshops or have other priorities. It may be worth considering starting with, say, 18 students, knowing the number is likely to decrease to about 15. Even so, try to follow up with individuals who don't make it to workshops and find out the reasons.

Some longer-term PhotoVoice projects have worked with a group of 12 to 15 participants in the first stage of the project, from which six to eight are selected, on the basis of aptitude and commitment, to go on to a second stage that introduces more technically demanding equipment and concepts. However, this selection process can cause tension between participants and disappointment for some. Any selection process of this kind should be made very clear at the outset and the project designed accordingly.

Gender issues
Gender-related issues will always be present in a project, implicitly or explicitly. In some circumstances the target group may be single-sex rather than mixed. Increasingly, in the design of ‘development’ projects, funding bodies and policy makers require the different needs of women and men to be explicitly addressed.

Important points to remember:
> Projects must be designed in conjunction with local partner organisations that fully understand the local social context.
> The ways in which gender stereotypes are challenged should never put participants at risk.

In a mixed workshop group staff will need to be aware of how gender politics can affect the dynamics of participation. In cultures where women traditionally play a less vocal role in community affairs, boys/men may well take centre stage and do most of the talking; in some contexts this scenario may be reversed. In many cultures, both women and men will feel uncomfortable speaking about certain issues in front of the opposite sex. Gender issues may influence participants’ interaction and ensure there is space within the workshops for both women and men to express themselves freely.
**Key points**

> Research local social, cultural and economic issues in order to design a project appropriately.

> Consult with project participants and local partners when developing a project structure.

> Ensure you have a large enough and committed project team.

> Don’t try to do everything yourself and work within your capacity and remit at all times.

> Wherever possible work with and train up local facilitators.

> When drawing up a project timetable, ensure a balance between technical training, outshoot, discussion, editing and writing about images.

> Allow enough time for easy-to-forget items such as translation and transcribing, processing and printing, and logistical preparation for outshoots in timetabling.

> Timetable in games, evaluation exercises at suitable points throughout the project and an end-of-project celebration.

> Ensure participants are selected fairly.

> Unless it is a single-sex project try to ensure a gender balance.

“This is me and all I have got. How far do you think I will get?”

Every PhotoVoice project to date has resulted in local exhibitions, big or small, attended by the project participants and their friends and families. Image dissemination among the public and decision-making bodies is also nearly always a crucial final output. This usually involves exhibitions, with accompanying press and media coverage, but this chapter will also look briefly at alternative means of dissemination which are becoming increasingly possible.

Since 1998, PhotoVoice has organised or been involved in over 80 exhibitions. There have been exhibitions in the restaurant of the local NGO in Kinshasa, Congo, in tents in the Bhutanese refugee camps in lowland Nepal, at the University of Oxford during Refugee Week, in the offices of investment banks in the City of London, and high-profile exhibitions in New York organised in association with the UN Special Session on the Rights of the Child.

PhotoVoice works to disseminate participants’ images locally and then works on behalf of the participants to raise awareness and funds amongst the international community. The involvement of participants in making key decisions and helping produce the exhibition is crucial. Make sure sufficient time is included in the project timetable for this and that the temptation for facilitators to do everything quickly rather than involving participants is avoided.

It is essential that a team member is clearly designated as exhibition co-ordinator – in many cases this person may be one of the facilitators. He or she may choose to delegate tasks but will be responsible for planning and, ultimately, for making sure that everything is done.

Dissemination strategy and project objectives

The type, size, venue and target audience of exhibitions or any other type of image dissemination will vary with the overall project aim and project objectives.

Advocacy projects

Where changing perception, raising awareness, or undermining stereotypes is a central objective it is appropriate to open the exhibition to the general public. It is worth going one step further and thinking about where stereotypes are perpetuated, and by whom, and trying to get particular people to the exhibition – for example, MPs involved in the issue, or correspondents reviewers from newspapers who might normally be unsympathetic to the issue. This can be a hard task but is worth pursuing.

Often the local exhibition is the most important means of raising awareness and undermining stereotyped perceptions. For example, the first Street Vision exhibition in Vietnam was held in a cultural centre, frequented by hundreds of Vietnamese every day. In the late 1990s street children in the city were highly stigmatised, there was no welfare support available for them and many people viewed them as thieves and/or thugs. Changing local perceptions of these children was therefore very important; the comment book recorded a marked change in the attitudes of some visitors.

If the project has a stronger advocacy objective, such as influencing a particular bill being debated in parliament, this will affect both the venue and the audience. For example, the Mental Wealth project in the UK, which worked in association with the NGO United Response, held its final exhibition in the House of Commons at the time when the Mental Health Bill was being debated (June 2005); most invitees were people working in the mental health field or MPs who would be voting on the bill.

Advocacy-focused projects can also include dissemination of work within the project. For example, in 2001 the Street Vision students made booklets of their words and images, focusing on the lives of street and working children living in Ho Chi Minh City and presented these booklets personally to government ministers in Hanoi as they were preparing for a review of Vietnam’s implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

If a project has a very strong, focused and clear advocacy objective the output of the work and images will be planned from the beginning and will be a key part of the project. The impact of this output will of course need to be evaluated in order to gauge the success of the project. (Ch. 7)

Projects focusing on self-development and the therapeutic process

If self-development and the therapeutic process is the most important aspect of a project, a final exhibition may not play a major part and press coverage may not be appropriate. For example, in the case of PhotoVoice’s current project (as of August 2007) working with female sex workers in London, many of the participants are highly vulnerable, and one of the key objectives is to create a safe and secure space in which the women can use the photographic medium and share their views, thoughts and feelings with each other and with a counsellor. A small private exhibition will probably be important for the women and contribute...
significantly to their self-confidence and self-esteem. But unless the participants decide they want to ‘speak out’, and adequate support is provided, a high-profile exhibition could be damaging rather than beneficial.

Vocational projects

In vocationally orientated projects an exhibition or other forms of public outlet for their work can be very important in giving the participants credibility and valuable experience. The images presented may well be more commercial than those produced for advocacy projects. There may also be other very valuable ways of disseminating images in vocational projects, such as creating portfolios or slideshows on CDs for each individual participant to circulate among prospective employers. Also consider selling merchandise.

When to hold an exhibition

Pulling off a successful exhibition is a complex, labour-intensive and often a stressful process, requiring the juggling of several variables so that everything is sorted out to coincide at a single point in time: the opening.

Don’t underestimate what’s involved in putting on an exhibition and allow enough time between the end of a project phase to plan and produce the exhibition. Failing to do so can put an incredible amount of pressure on participants, which can have serious repercussions.

If you are trying to generate significant attention and press coverage try to consider from the outset, linking the event or press drive to a wider event or focus of attention. For example, PhotoVoice’s Positive Negatives exhibition was held on World AIDS Day and the work produced by young refugees in London has regularly been displayed during Refugee Week. With some issues, this may be the one day or week in the year when your project will have a chance of being covered by the national press. Other issues may be very current in the news and therefore likely to generate more press coverage – for example, PhotoVoice’s project with Arab and Israeli children is much more likely to generate national coverage, due to the ongoing coverage of the Middle East conflict, than, for example, its project with Bhutanese refugees in Nepal, a very unreported issue.

Press and media

The media is an extremely powerful tool both to publicise an event or exhibition and to further the objectives of a project by raising awareness among a wider public. PhotoVoice projects have gained significant press coverage over the years both in dozens of local project countries and in renowned publications such as the Guardian and The Times in the UK, and the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times in the US. Projects have also been covered on local and national television, including Vietnamese TV (featuring a piece shot by Reuters), CNN, BBC1 and the National Geographic channel.

“...the exhibition offered us, adults, an opportunity to realize that we, ourselves, should view life from another angle.”

“The pictures draw us into their world. We cannot sit back. We are forced to enter it.”

“It’s like a Fellini film, all this despair, and at the end, this sense of optimism.”

Many questions need to be asked if you are trying to generate press coverage. For example:

> What are the main objectives in generating press coverage?
> What type of media is relevant – TV, radio, print or web-based?
> Is international, national or local media coverage more relevant/realistic?
> What demographic audience is the project trying to reach (age, gender, political stance)?
> What existing contacts do you have, whose help you could enlist?
> Which media would participants like to reach? What might be relevant to their peers?

Press media and web-based media

Print media, national and local, newspapers and specialist magazines are some of the most obvious outlets for generating awareness, particularly those with a strong visual focus. These outlets are also very relevant for advertising events in listings.

Radio and TV

Don’t overlook the potential of radio, which is excellent for getting across ideas and information about issues and specific events to a large number of people — indeed, across large swathes of the developing world, radio reaches millions more people than television does. PhotoVoice staff members have previously been interviewed on radio, and despite initial scepticism in some cases have come to realise how vividly photographs can be described on the radio. Getting television coverage at the national level can be challenging but local TV news programmes, for example, are often interested in an event or exhibition around a relevant issue.

With all media outlets you should research both the demographic audience and the readership or audience figures for each. This will help you estimate the impact of the project and provide valuable quantifiable data.

Web, multimedia and new media

The web is of course much more unrestricted in amount and type of content than print media, radio and television. It is also user-driven, and represents unparalleled access globally.

On the internet, work can be distributed as stills, in slide shows, as podcasts, or exchanged on interactive platforms between participants as a form of dialogue as it was in PhotoVoice’s Side-by-Side project with Israeli and Palestinian teenagers.

There may well be cases where a static photographic exhibition is not the best way of disseminating participants’ work. In some locations flying, handing out leaflets or distributing images by mobile phone may be able to reach far greater numbers of people. CD-Roms and DVDs can also be distributed or screenings held in cinemas or open-air venues.

You will need to work out the most relevant method of distribution depending on the local situation and the project objectives.
Key points

> Exhibiting and disseminating work produced is a key output of PhotoVoice projects.

> Dissemination of participants’ work, type of exhibition/event should be designed according to project objectives and target audiences.

> Maximise the impact of your exhibition by thinking carefully about when and where to hold it.

> Link the exhibition to wider relevant events wherever possible.

> Advocacy projects should target decision-makers or those in power through their dissemination strategy.

> Consider at the project design phase which media and press you want to target.

> The web and new technologies offer many alternative ways of disseminating work to traditional print exhibitions.

> Do not underestimate the time and effort involved in putting on an exhibition – plan and budget carefully.

> Leave ample time between the end of a project phase and the planned exhibition date.
What type of cameras to use
At the design stage it is necessary to consider what cameras to use in a project as your choice will affect both budgets and timetable. The decision will also depend on the main project objectives, the overall timeframe and the intended use of the photographs. Any type of camera can be used in participatory photographic training – disposable cameras, simple automatic point-and-shoot cameras, manual single-lens reflex cameras (SLRs) and film or digital cameras.

Digital versus film
The affordability and predominance of digital technology means that sooner rather than later all participatory photography projects are likely to become digital. PhotoVoice now mainly uses digital cameras from the outset of a project. Historically, however; PhotoVoice has often initially used simple automatic film cameras to familiarise participants with the fundamental concepts of photography, such as composition and colour, and participants have later moved on to working with film SLR cameras.

In the digital age, film cameras are now becoming harder to buy new. PhotoVoice has, however, built up a stock of second-hand film point-and-shoots and SLRs through its Cameras for Charity scheme. These are still used on a number of projects.

But there are still pros and cons to working with digital technology. These need to be weighed up at the design stage of the project.

Advantages of digital cameras:
> Participants can view their images straightaway and learn quickly from their mistakes or shoot their picture again.
> A lot of material can be shot at no extra cost.
> In the long run digital cameras are more cost-effective than film cameras – there will be no film or processing costs, and only edited pictures need to be printed.
> Working from a digital projector can be exciting and offer its own opportunities – images can be projected much larger than print size and discussed easily in a group.
> Participants can get CDs of their images burnt and prints made at labs in most countries around the world.
> Images are immediately digitised and do not need to be scanned.
> There are no negatives to get damaged or scratched and no ‘ownership’ issue over negatives.
> There is a natural progression towards introducing computer training and photoshop skills into the workshops, which can be hugely beneficial to participants.

Some disadvantages:
> Being able to shoot more can mean less thought and care given to each individual shot – which could be valued less by the participant.
> The ability to delete images immediately can mean the loss of interesting or good shots if participants haven’t mastered editing their own work. It is possible to tape up the delete buttons but this of course means memory cards will be used up more quickly.
> Unless prints are made after each outshoot, the process of discussing and editing the images will require a laptop and, ideally – for the whole group to view them together – a digital projector.
> It can be frustrating for participants who are not technologically experienced or computer-literate to have to rely on the facilitators to operate the equipment.
> Participants who are not computer-literate or do not have access to computers will not be able to work with, store and edit their images digitally themselves.
> Memory cards can also be used up quickly because it is important to shoot images at the highest possible resolution. Throughout a project you will never know where ‘exhibition quality’ images will be shot, so everything has to be shot at a resolution that will allow an exhibition print (minimum 12”x16”) to be reproduced.
> Many digital cameras consume batteries at a vast rate. Even rechargeable batteries have to be replaced often and each participant will need spare batteries and their own recharger.
> Digital SLRs are too expensive (and often too complicated) to use on projects. Being restricted to automatic cameras can be creatively limiting.
> In some locations expensive digital equipment may simply be logistically impossible – for example in refugee camps with no electricity.
> Digital cameras may be culturally inappropriate – for example, when you are working with particularly impoverished or remote groups who have had little exposure to new-age technologies.

It should also be acknowledged that with the rapid advances in digital photography, digital cameras will continue to increase in quality, affordability and efficiency, so the disadvantages will be fewer.

The risk of theft
In the course of training over 1,000 participants PhotoVoice has only had two cameras stolen by participants. Most feel responsibility to the group as a whole and value the opportunity presented to them too much to jeopardise it – but it is still important to remember that in many developing countries some photographic equipment is worth several months’ wages.

Single lens reflex cameras
Larger projects allow the possibility of introducing the use of SLRs. By using manual SLRs with better quality and more versatile lenses students are able to develop a wider understanding of the principles and potential of photography and gain greater creative control over their pictures. Using SLRs means that the photos produced can be of a standard where they are taken seriously in the professional photographic community and by the media. In projects where vocational training or income generation through photography is a potential outcome this is particularly important.

Disposable cameras
Although PhotoVoice knows of many projects which have used disposable cameras, these have never been used in a PhotoVoice project. Apart from the obvious quality issues, disposable cameras limit options for the long-term sustainability of the project – participants will not have access to any equipment after the disposables are used up and they will gain few skills and little understanding of the photographic process. The throw-away nature of disposable cameras can threaten the integrity of the project – using them can border on tokenism, especially if the images are used for publicity or media purposes without the students having any real control over them. However, disposable cameras can be fun, can have surprisingly good results and are the most likely equipment to be given away free by camera companies.
Number of cameras
It is strongly recommended that, whenever possible, enough cameras are available for each participant to have exclusive access to a camera for the duration of the project. This is the simplest way of avoiding confusion about authorship of photos.

It is also very helpful in the first stage of a project if all the cameras in the workshop are the same. It can be very confusing teaching participants with different cameras (some with zoom, or aperture priority, or flash, some without these features). In a long-term project, if you have introduced different types of cameras, participants can select what they are most comfortable working with.

In nearly all PhotoVoice projects cameras are bought specifically for the project and are left in the field beyond the stay of the trainers and co-ordinators. This is a really important part of the sustainability of the project. In most cases the cameras are given to the project and local partner — this way they can be shared with more people if the project continues or works with other groups. But in some circumstances it may be more suitable to leave them with the individuals.

Printing and processing
Research the local processing or printing facilities well before the workshops start. Try to establish a relationship with one lab for the duration of the project. Even if working only with digital it is often more cost and time-effective to get prints made at local labs than for the project to use its own printers, even if working only with digital it is often more cost and time-effective to get prints made at local labs than for the project to use its own printers. The concept of copyright may be quite foreign in some cultures and needs to be carefully explained in terms that participants can understand.

PhotoVoice shares copyright of all images taken during the course of a project with the photographer. In some circumstances partner organisations will also hold copyright of images. Intended use of images should be discussed fully with both participants and partner organisations and a clear consistent formula for crediting the images agreed upon.

PhotoVoice project photographs are usually credited as follows:
© Photographer / Partner Organisation / PhotoVoice

It is also very important to sign separate agreements with photographers and partner organisations if the images are to be used by any partner to generate income. How any proceeds will be divided and who has rights to sell the work needs to be set out clearly in the form of an agreement.

Model release
In some situations people must give formal permission for a photographic image of them to be used for public display. A model release is essentially a formal written contract between the photographer and the subject which details the ways in which the photograph can be used, including any financial transactions.

Laws vary considerably between countries (for example, the USA and some European countries have much more stringent laws on model release than countries in Africa) and depend on the circumstances in which the photograph was taken. You will need to allow time to research any relevant laws and commonly accepted practice in the particular location and situation of the project.

Some general points about model release:
> Photographs taken in a public place are not subject to as many restrictions as those taken in private situations.
> Publication or exhibition of photographs of people who were not aware that they were being photographed or that the photo was intended for public display can be seen as a breach of confidence.
> A close-up portrait of someone is much more likely to require model release than a picture of a carnival float with a sea of faces, most of them not very recognisable.

It would be a near impossibility and a logistical nightmare to insist that participants on a project get all their subjects to sign model release forms.

Some important ground rules:
> Participants need to understand the importance of explaining to subjects why they are taking photographs and what the intended use of these photos might be.
> They should explain that the photos are not being used for commercial gain, if this is the case.
> They should acquire verbal consent wherever possible.

If carrying out a reportage study on one person — i.e. taking many pictures of the same person — they must get the subject’s written consent.

It can be really useful to ensure all participants have a letter outlining the project, which they can present to people who will be recognisable in photographs.

In the PhotoVoice on the Move project, which worked with homeless adults, a portrait of a homeless man was used in the posters advertising the project exhibition. The man in question saw them and complained — he had never been made aware that his photo could be used publicly and had not given permission. All the posters had to be withdrawn.

Ethical issues are just as important as legal stipulations. Remember that if you are working with sensitive issues, such as homelessness or HIV and AIDS, people may have very good reasons for not wanting to be named or depicted in association with the project. Everybody is entitled to this privacy and to be made aware of what they are being associated with.

© Transparency / PhotoVoice
Key points

- Consider what equipment you will be using early on in the project, and particularly whether to use film or digital cameras.
- Try to ensure there is one camera per participant and that initially, wherever possible, all cameras are the same.
- Research necessary processing and/or printing facilities before the project begins.
- Consider copyright issues, agree these with partners and participants at the beginning of the project and ensure written agreements are signed.
- Research local laws on model release and photographing in public.
Managing the project and team

Training trainers
Local partner organisation staff, local photographers and volunteers often have limited knowledge of participatory photography or PhotoVoice methodology. Imparting this knowledge is essential for the long-term sustainability of the project. Lead facilitators or project managers will be responsible for providing team members with an adequate understanding and training them in the basic concepts of participatory photography. Participatory approaches can be very alien in some cultures and societies, and training of trainers and staff can require persistence and patience, and may well need to continue throughout the workshop period.

Working with volunteers
Volunteers need to be made aware that taking part in a project is a serious commitment and that the success of the project will partly depend on them. Like paid staff, they should sign contractual agreements that commit them to the project. Equally, the project manager needs to give appropriate credit to volunteers for their work, be willing to listen to them, and acknowledge their input and ideas.

Working with translators
Translators may be necessary, both to translate verbally in workshops and to translate or transcribe written work or interviews. In a number of projects, PhotoVoice’s key local facilitator has played the role of translator in workshops initially and later, after training, facilitates the workshops alone. If this is the case, ensure you also have additional translators who can assist with all the project’s translation needs.

Remember:
> Working with translators in workshops inevitably slows down the teaching and learning process and can be frustrating.
> When a facilitator acts as translator their primary role as facilitator may compromise their neutrality as translator.
> Translating written work and transcribing interviews can be very time-consuming and costly.
> You will need to establish clear lines of communication and a good degree of trust with any translators you work with.
> Often it is important that translators have experience of working within the development sector or with vulnerable people due to their central role as a communicator in the project.
> Wherever time allows, interview and select translators carefully or ask the local partner organisation to source reliable translators.

Cultural sensitivity
Be aware of cultural differences. Learn as much as you can about the culture you are working in and modify your own behaviour appropriately. Many things such as dress, ways of speaking and body language have the potential to offend or confuse. Remember that the role of imagery and photography in some cultures may affect the project. In the Side-by-Side project in Palestine, for example, families do not allow images depicting female family members to be seen or shared with others, and in a number of tribal cultures photography is thought to ‘steal the soul’.

The importance of cultural sensitivity and respect for difference cannot be overstated. Do not assume your point of view or knowledge is superior.

Establishing a team framework
Communication is key to working effectively as a team:
> Ensure that the team meets before workshops begin, to share knowledge and expertise, clarify the roles and responsibilities of individual team members and identify potential problems.
> Schedule regular meetings throughout the project to review progress, identify any logistical issues as well as any difficulties that particular participants may be facing, and decide on strategies to resolve problems.
> Be sensitive to team dynamics, be aware of privacy issues and remain approachable to all members of staff.

Looking after yourself and your team
Participatory photography projects can be immensely demanding – emotionally, mentally and physically – not just for the participants but also for project managers and facilitators. When running a project that you care deeply about it is hard not to become over-involved both with the participants and the desire for the project to be a success. In PhotoVoice’s experience many project managers and facilitators can run themselves into the ground.

It is important to put the following structures in place to ensure that the project does not become overwhelming:
> Allow time for writing notes after each workshop, and record participants’ interactions and any emotional changes going on. This process also allows staff to ‘leave’ the content of the workshops at work. The notes are also very useful when monitoring and evaluating a project. So much happens during participatory photography workshops that if issues are not recorded the same day, they can become forgotten and valuable lessons are lost.
> Hold briefing and debriefing sessions at the start and end of the project or individual workshops to discuss the emotional issues or challenges that arise during the project for team members. Also ensure designated time for peer-to-peer debriefing, in the
field. Different team members can take it in turns to lead and record these sessions.

> Make time for personal processing day-to-day, maybe in the form of a diary, your own photography or a video journal.

> Where possible work with other staff and organisations and identify referral systems for participants who require additional support, particularly when this involves the meeting of basic needs such as food, medicine, shelter or professional psychological support. In most cases the partner organisation should be in a position to provide this support.

> Ensure all members of the team have time off!

Child protection
Most organisations working with children have a formal Child Protection Policy that outlines the organisational norms that govern good practice when working with children and the correct procedures to follow in response to different circumstances. Potential employees, partners or contractors must agree to, and abide by, the organisation’s Child Protection Policy.

All UK-based organisations require a disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) before allowing people to work in direct contact with children. Currently, it is not possible to apply for a CRB disclosure as an individual or self-employed person. An organisation, such as PhotoVoice, must apply on their behalf. The process, from submission, takes a minimum of three weeks.

When working with children and adolescents, it is necessary to get written permission from parents or guardians for them to participate in the project and, additionally, to attend any excursions and outshoots. The specific responsibilities of project staff for minors on excursions and outshoots should be discussed. Remember children under the age of 16 are unable to sign legal documents.

Insurance
Liability for the safety of everyone involved in the project, whether staff or participants, must be considered. In the UK, organisations that work with the public must have public liability insurance that extends to participants and staff of a project held on their premises. In many developing countries, insurance policies hardly exist.

The security of equipment used is also important and, if necessary, insurance should be budgeted for. However, the cost of insurance for camera equipment, particularly in post-conflict situations or where there is persistent social unrest, can be prohibitive. Alternative strategies to ensure the security of equipment should be thoroughly investigated.

Also ensure that all members of the project team have adequate insurance to cover any health emergencies and loss of, or damage to, their personal belongings.

Health and Safety
There are many health and safety issues to consider. For example:

> who, if anyone, is competent to provide first aid
> what special support may be needed for people with particular mental or physical health needs
> the specific dangers posed by the physical environment
> safety issues specific to photography

In some countries health and safety issues are unfamiliar concepts that partner organisations and participants may not take seriously.

When working overseas, it is important to be aware of any associated health risks:

> Ensure that you have all appropriate vaccinations, anti-malarials, etc.
> Take supplies of any medicines you may not be able to find locally.
> Make sure you understand the risks associated with water and food supplies.

> participants’ safety on their way to and from workshops

“These dolls were the only things they saved. In the same way that the tsunami took all their belongings it also broke their spirit.”

© Dhanuka Sandanuwana Madhushanka / Save the Children / PhotoVoice
Figure in the Ruins. I cannot remember a peaceful time but my mother tells us stories about how Afghanistan used to be - people used to have a good life and all they could eat.” Anayta, Bibin project, Afghanistan, 2002.

Key points

> Ensure all staff have Criminal Records Bureau checks or equivalent when working with minors.

> Don’t forget about insurance for staff, equipment and public liability.

> Check out health and safety needs, including any necessary vaccinations and anti-malarials.

> Be aware of and respect cultural differences.

> Remember team communication is essential to the success of the project.

> Write notes at the end of each project day.

> Timetable in slots for briefing and debriefing sessions with staff.

> Ensure referral systems are in place for participants causing concern.
Monitoring and evaluation

What is M&E?
At its most basic, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is the collection of data and information around a project and its activities, effects and impact. It is a crucial process which not only measures but contributes to success.

The purpose of monitoring and evaluation is:
- to ensure accountability to funders and other stakeholders
- to demonstrate outcomes and impacts
- to ensure efficient use of resources
- to enable learning; to identify successes and challenges or areas for improvement
- to facilitate exchange between projects and across time in the same project
- to build organisational memory and the confidence of partner organisations
- to ensure the contribution of everyone involved is acknowledged
- to assist in securing future funding

Monitoring is a process of continuously assessing information in order to make judgements about the effectiveness and impact of a project and the extent to which project goals and objectives have been met. It may be carried out only at specific milestones or project points such as the mid-point or project end. Evaluation can use elements of self-evaluation by the participants as well as external, independent evaluation.

We can make useful distinctions between monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring is a process of continuously assessing whether a project is on-track to meet its goals and objectives. It is part of the ongoing day-to-day project management.

It helps us keep track of successes, problems and difficulties. In particular, it enables us to see:
- whether the project is being implemented as planned
- whether the project is on course to meet its objectives
- whether any of the assumptions made in the planning phase are no longer valid
- whether the project continues to be relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries

Evaluation uses the monitoring data and other information in order to make judgements about the success and realistic time frames must be set.

Qualitative and quantitative data
Qualitative and quantitative refer to the two different types of data that can be collected during the M&E process. It is important to gather both types of data.

Quantitative data is data measurable by quantity and expressed in numbers. Examples include statistical information, charts, graphs, percentages and numerical spreadsheets.

Qualitative data cannot be summarised in numerical form and may be recorded through observation, interviews, participatory exercises in workshops and in workshop notes. It can describe people’s knowledge, attitudes or behaviours.

Outcomes are often divided into so-called hard outcomes and soft outcomes. Hard outcomes relate to the quantitative tangible outputs such as the number of people trained, the level of skills gained, the number of people attending the exhibition, etc. Soft outcomes relate to less tangible qualitative outputs such as increases in confidence and self-esteem.

Important points about M&E
- M&E outcomes should be measured against the original project aims and objectives.
- The specific project evaluation questions, indicators of success and realistic time frames must be set from the outset of a project. You need to think about monitoring and evaluation and build the process in from the start.

> The people and groups most directly involved should decide what constitutes success.
> M&E should be relevant to all stakeholders and value the contribution of everyone involved.
> Remember, though, that different stakeholders are often interested in different results.
> Resources for evaluation may be limited. The quality of information collected, not the amount, is the most important factor in evaluation.

Key M&E challenges
- Evaluating soft outcomes such as self-esteem is difficult. They are hard to define as well as measure.
- You need to be careful about attributing change to the project.
- Arts projects evolve organically and do not work like production lines to produce fixed, predictable outcomes.
- Linking outcomes to wider impact can be difficult.

What is monitored and evaluated?
This is determined by the aims and objectives of the project – its intended effect and impact. ‘What’ is monitored and evaluated also depends on how complex the project is and how available skills and resources are, including time and money.

The following is a list of key questions that might be asked and answered through the M&E process:
- Has the project done what it intended to?
- What worked and what didn’t work? What can be learnt from this?
- What could have been done differently?
- How can M&E findings be acted upon?
- What changed for whom as a result of the project?
- Were there any unexpected changes?

What evidence is there that such changes are due to the project?
- What external factors might have contributed to these changes?
- Did new partnerships or relationships form or develop?
- Is this model or approach transferable to other communities?
- What more effective methods for achieving the objectives emerged from the work?
- What additional knowledge or support might be required to improve this project?

A good starting point is to take the project aims and objectives and determine the questions that will help assess to what degree aims and objectives have been achieved.

For example, if one of the key objectives was to encourage self-development you might ask:
- Has the participants’ self-esteem or self-confidence increased?
- Has the participants’ ability to express themselves and communicate increased?
- Has the mental health of the participants improved?
- Has the participants’ sense of belonging increased?
- What skills have the participants’ gained and to what degree?

It is then necessary to set a framework for collecting data throughout the project, including conducting a study at the beginning of the project against which changes can be gauged – this is called the baseline study. This M&E framework throughout the project should involve carrying out M&E exercises with all the stakeholders.
These may be:

- participants
- participants’ friends, family, teachers or carers
- workshop facilitators: local and international
- translators
- partner organisation’s staff
- exhibition audiences
- media professionals
- other project staff
- stakeholders from within the local community

Participants are central to the monitoring and evaluation process as it is they who can best define what impact the project has had on their lives. Monitoring and evaluation sessions should be built into the workshop process. Time should be given to outlining expectations and goals at the outset of the project and these should be returned to and reflected on at the end of the project, and often at a mid-term point, using participatory evaluation tools (see below). Other key moments for M&E may be around the end of the project, and these should be return to and reflected on at the end of the project, and often at a mid-term point, using participatory evaluation tools (see below). Other key moments for M&E may be around the

A potential timeframe for collecting data from participants

M&E tools

Below is a list of some of the tools and exercises you may use both with participants and other stakeholders.

- Goal-setting – with all stakeholders at the beginning of the project and at other key stages
- Informal interviews – with individual participants or other stakeholders
- Semi-structured interviews – conducted with open-ended pre-listed questions
- Focus groups – discussion groups with small numbers of people
- Community interviews – conducted with the wider community
- Participant observation – observing and recording changes in participants
- Skills inventory – a list of relevant technical and other skills, graded by the participants themselves
- Peer evaluations: Participants evaluate each other or may interview each other
- Participant-led evaluation – Participants themselves determine how they want to evaluate the project
- Questionnaires – These seem straightforward but much care should be taken over what questions to ask (ones requiring simple ‘yes’/ ‘no’ answers can be limiting and inaccurate)
- Anecdotal evidence – for example, visitor feedback from an exhibition
- Project/participant diaries – written by a member of staff or a participant
- Video – use video to capture the live feedback of the participants, perhaps at different points.
- Photography – Participants could be invited to use their photography as a means to describe their progression or involvement with the project.
- Timelines – Participants can draw a line that represents the duration of the project on which they pick out three key moments, or partners, facilitators and other relevant groups can craft a time line of the project from their perspective, perhaps in relation to workload, relationship building, increased confidence or use of resources.

- ‘Most significant change’ method – Ask participants the question, “During the last month, in your opinion, what do you think was the most significant change that took place in the lives of people participating in the project?” => Appx. A for a link to this increasingly popular tool.
- Mapping/flow chart – diagrams which illustrate key project relationships in a visual format either as a ‘map’ of the project or a more linear linkage diagram.
- Other quantitative records – such as attendance records, records of expenditure, numbers of participants, or people indirectly affected, exhibition visitors or amount of media coverage.

=> Appx. A for more on M&E tools.

Sound M&E practices should:

- address predicted outcomes
- identify unexpected outcomes
- acknowledge both successes and failures

Reporting

At the end of the project the data collected through the course of the project is collated and analysed in a final report. If this is being done internally, time must be allocated for it. Reports are often presented with various appendices which detail data collected during the course of the project.

Reports are prepared for a number of reasons: for internal learning; for sharing with all the project stakeholders, and to report back to funders.

Reports may include the following:

- summary of the project timeline – outlines number of workshops / outshoots, etc.
- overview of activities
- key outputs
- successes and challenges
- sustainability issues / recommendations for project continuation
- key lessons learnt
- copies of important M&E data
- copies of press and media coverage

Acknowledging problems does not necessarily compromise ongoing relationships with funders or partner organisations. Failures often provide very useful lessons for future work, which should be shared.

PhotoVoice is committed to developing and sharing new methods of monitoring and evaluating projects and new research into the impact of participatory photography projects through the PhotoVoice Network.

“I was at my friend’s house and they put on Turkish music and she started to dance. I like the expression of dreaming on her face.”
Florian, Transparency project, UK, 2002.
Key points

> Understand the distinction between monitoring and evaluating and use both in your M&E framework.

> The M&E framework needs to be designed to run throughout the project with evaluation taking place at strategic points.

> Carry out M&E in relation to the original aims and objectives of the project.

> It is important to measure both intended and unintended project outcomes.

> Ensure you collect both qualitative and quantitative data.

> Develop a set of key questions through which you will be able to gauge the successes and key learning points of the project.

> Involve all project stakeholders including, very importantly, the participants.

> Decide which M&E tools are most appropriate and insightful for your project.

> Analyse all data collected and feed this into a Project Report to share with all stakeholders.
Workshop content: introduction

The four strands of workshop content
PhotoVoice has not developed a set curriculum as every project group has different needs, expectations and priorities. Although it has key elements and principles the PhotoVoice workshop process is in essence a flexible methodology which should be re-considered and re-negotiated in every new context.

The PhotoVoice workshop process has, for clarity, been broken down into four strands, with key activities in each. It is not a linear process and the various elements will feed back into each other. Whether a project lasts two days or two years nearly all these elements will be introduced. What will differ is the depth of coverage.

The four strands of workshop content are:
1. Establishing the group dynamic and goals
2. Introduction to photography
3. ‘Speaking out’ through photography
4. Strengthening and personalising the message

Strand 1: Establishing the group dynamic and goals
Agreeing project objectives with participants
The facilitator’s first responsibility is to ensure that participants understand and agree with the project’s overall concept. Ideally, project design will have involved potential beneficiaries. In any case, it is important to re-evaluate project objectives with participants at the beginning of the workshop. You could ask participants what they would like to do with photography before discussing the objectives as written up. From this beginning the group can draw up new objectives. This not only gives participants a sense of ownership over the project but also serves as a useful reference for participatory evaluation at the end of the project.

In the Side-by-Side project the Israeli and Palestinian teenagers identified the following goals for the project:
> to enable us to all come together
> to find a solution to the war between us
> to create dialogue between ourselves
> to improve our lives
> to become friends with each other and to make new friends
> to start thinking about ways to take and use pictures
> to understand the differences and similarities between us through photography

These can be compared with the objectives for the project as outlined at the project design phase:
> to teach transferable photographic and IT skills to participants
> to give participants an opportunity to document their own lives and experiences

Not raising false hopes
Make sure you don’t give the impression that the workshop training will generate income or lead to accredited vocational training unless this is a researched and trusted reality. Generating income is understandably very important to a lot of groups that PhotoVoice works with and, where possible, projects will work towards this goal. But be aware that raising false hopes can have an incredibly detrimental effect, and don’t overpromise.

Setting ground rules
At the outset it is useful for the group – participants and staff – to set some ground rules by consensus. These provide a basis for everyone’s expectations throughout the project, and setting them can be a useful group-building exercise.

Ground rules usually cover basic issues such as:
> attendance
> punctuality
> turn-taking
> listening to other people when they are speaking
> respecting each other
> acceptable language use
> use of mobile phones

Ground rules can be especially important in a diverse group where participants may have very different ways of thinking and working.

Ensure that participants understand that taking part in the project entails responsibility and serious commitment, and that they agree to attend all scheduled workshops.
Breaking the ice

‘Ice-breaker’ games are useful in encouraging positive and creative group interaction. The best interactive games:

> have simple, clear instructions
> are fast-moving
> use skills that everyone in the group has
> involve everyone but get each person to do something (speak or move or whatever) independently and spontaneously
> have some connection with the main theme of the project (adapt them to suit)

Different games serve different purposes. Games can be used for introductions, to focus or energise the group, to generate and share ideas, and simply to have fun. It is a good idea, as a facilitator, to build up a collection of games that can be used with different groups of people, depending on their interests, abilities, age, cultural situation, etc.

**Tried and tested ice-breakers**

### Name Game: Sparkle

Stand in a circle. Say your name when you clap your hands. Pass a clap around the circle one way. When it gets back to the beginning, pass it back the other way. Then pass a clap randomly across the circle to a person by saying their name.

### Get-to-know-you game: Birthday partner

Everyone in the group walks around and talks with others. The aim is to find the person whose birthday (not the year, just the date) is closest to your own. When you’ve found them, talk until you find two other things that you have in common. Report back to the group as a whole.

**Energy Game: “Go if you…”**

Everyone is seated on chairs in a circle except for one person who stands in the middle. That person says, “Go if you like the colour red” or “Go if you ate breakfast this morning” or whatever they think of. The only stipulation is that the statement must be true for the person in the middle – for example, you can’t say “Go if you’re wearing jeans” if you’re wearing a skirt yourself. Everyone that the statement is true for must get up and find a new seat. The person in the middle tries to beat someone to a seat and whoever is left standing stays in the middle. The game is energetic and fun and also reveals a little about people. But everyone can choose whether or not to divulge anything personal.

**Energy Game: “Boo!”**

Silly but fun. Stand in a circle. Everybody looks at the ground. At an agreed signal everybody raises their heads and looks into the face of someone else in the circle. If two people are looking at each other, they yell “Boo!” and drop to the ground. Repeat until everyone is out.

### Concentration Game: Count to 10

Sit in a circle. Start counting from 1 to 10. The facilitator starts at “1”. Anybody else in the group can say “2”, and then “3”, and so on. If more than one person speaks at the same time, the group has to start again from 1. The aim is to get to 10 without two people speaking at once. If the group finds this easy, you could try to get to 15 or 20. Or for a much bigger challenge, try it with eyes closed.

> Appx A for more ice-breaker ideas.

**Strand 2: Introduction to photography**

### Visual literacy

Before teaching any photography it can be a very valuable exercise to ask participants what their understanding of photography is and to get them to think about how and where photographs are used in their culture or society. This will enable you to gauge the ‘visual literacy’ of the group and will encourage participants to begin to look out for photographs. Ask them to bring in some photos to discuss – either ones from home or ones they find in magazines or books, etc. Introductory discussions can then be held around the photographs and people’s likes and dislikes. Find out what participants’ previous experience of photography may be. Often there will be a range of experience in the group.

### The camera and camera care

In many cases, the project may be the first time that participants have used, held, or even seen a camera.

Ensure that participants:

> can identify different parts of the camera
> understand the functions of different parts of the camera
> understand the basics of photographic theory
> can load and unload film correctly and/or take flash cards in and out
> know how to load and unload batteries and – where necessary – charge batteries
> know how to hold the camera correctly
> understand how to care for the camera properly and have appropriate bags, cases, lens covers, etc., to protect it

*It can be interesting and important for participants to understand how the photographic film process works, even if working with digital. Finding out how light is*
channelled through a camera, how it affects the light-sensitive film inside and how a print is made somehow makes the magic of photography more exciting and accessible.

One fun way to introduce how photography works is to run a pinhole photography workshop. Pinhole cameras can be made from materials such as tins or cans, collected by the participants. In its simplest form, a pinhole camera consists of a light-tight box with a pinhole (0.5mm or less in diameter) in one end, which forms the aperture, and a piece of film or photographic paper in the other. A piece of cardboard can be attached as a shutter:

When the shutter is lifted the light passing through the hole produces the image. Pinhole photography requires long exposure times and producing images takes some practice but this exercise can be a lot of fun.

Key elements of a good photograph
This section outlines some of the key technical aspects of photography that PhotoVoice projects build into the timetable. How much detail to go into depends on the objectives of the project, the equipment available and the participants’ enthusiasm and interest. Some elements will not be relevant in some projects; some projects will include many more elements, such as use of tripods or filters or learning about film speeds; some facilitators may not want to do any technical training and may prefer to see what participants do with the camera naturally.

In teaching any of these elements, use examples from other photographers’ work from books and magazines and from the photos that participants take throughout the project.

Composition
Composition is fundamental in photography. It takes time, effort, practice, and sometimes luck, to achieve a well-composed photograph.

It can be a good idea, especially when participants have never taken photographs before, to spend some time at the beginning playing with composition and framing without actually taking pictures. A very simple exercise is to ask participants to make a rectangle with the thumbs and forefingers of both hands. Held up to the eye, this will form a viewfinder which can be moved in and out by moving one’s arms forward and backward. Alternatively, use empty slide mounts – or indeed the camera without the film or flashcard loaded.

When introducing composition get students to look at the following elements:
> Foreground and background – what is the relationship between them?
> The main subject or focal point – where should it be placed within the frame?
> Cropping within the frame – do you want to include all of the main subject?
> The basic shapes in the picture
> The effect of dividing the frame diagonally
> Creating space between objects
> Proximity or distance from the main subject

Remember:
“If your pictures aren’t good enough, you’re not close enough.”
Robert Capa

Holding the camera still
Encouraging participants to support the camera, to ensure no blur is vital.

Camera angle / point of view
These affect both the composition and the emotional feel of a photograph. Play around with looking down on people and looking up. Encourage participants to use their bodies and their imagination – to crouch, or to stand on chairs, for example. If you are working with children, remember they will always have a different perspective on the world – which can be very interesting.

Landscape and portrait
Make sure participants know that the camera can be held in different ways.

Colour / black and white
The role of colour in photography – for example, the ability of colours to enhance and complement each other – is very important. Colour is often very vibrant in Latin America, Asia and Africa, for example in clothes and food.

Many PhotoVoice projects also use black and white film, especially when students are working on the photo essay. Indeed, many groups don’t like black and white – for example, most participants on PhotoVoice’s Positive Negatives project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo felt that colour was ‘more advanced’, and younger groups have felt that black and white photography is ‘old-fashioned’. But individuals – and often those interested in shooting serious subjects – have taken to the simplicity of black and white. Of course, with digital, black and white photography can also be taught but it makes sense for participants to shoot everything in colour, so that black and white is an option rather than the only possibility.

Movement
A sense of movement can often make a picture. Composition plays a role here, as the position of a moving subject will influence how it is read. Is the subject moving into or out of the picture? Explain how different shutter speeds can be used to capture movement, and encourage the participants to experiment with panning. Look at sport photography as an example – get participants to experiment.

The decisive moment
This, in a sense, is the essence of photography – hard to teach but necessary to explain!

“Photography is not like painting… there is a creative fraction of a second when you are taking a picture. Your eye must see a composition or an expression that life itself offers you, and you must know with intuition when to click the camera. That is the moment the photographer is creative!… The Moment! Once you miss it, it is gone forever.”


Depth of field
Especially if the group is progressing to use of manual SLR cameras you will need to explain aperture and depth of field, i.e. how much of the picture and what parts of it are in focus.

Understanding light
The word ‘photography’ is derived from the Greek and means ‘drawing with light’. It is important to discuss light and its different properties, especially the differences in natural light through the day, from early
Photo games
Fun photography games that you can play with participants that encourage them to be creative and improve their photographic skills, while getting to know one another, include:

> Picture treasure hunts
A great introductory game. Come up with a list of 20 subjects to photograph – something red, a tree, a postman, etc. Set a time limit and have a range of prizes – one for the most items photographed, another two or three for outstanding images shot. The group can vote on this together.

> Picture maps
Participants can create their own picture maps of their local communities (streets, parks, particular buildings, etc), pasting images together and using drawing, too. This exercise can also help the facilitator gain an understanding of how participants perceive their local environments.

> What’s that?
Designate a shooting area around the workshop venue. Set a time limit and ask participants to take an image in which it is hard distinguish what the subject / object in the photograph is. The idea is to encourage participants to go in close, use different angles and use their imagination. Participants have to guess what the image is of. Groups can then vote on the best image.

> Feelings in photos
Participants are given a list of words describing emotions – happy, sad, angry, excited, etc. Set a time limit and ask participants to take pictures that convey or symbolise one, two or all of these different feelings. The group can then view the images in a slideshow. As images are viewed the group has to guess the feeling that the photographer is trying to convey.

Common mistakes
Mistakes are an important and inevitable part of the learning process. They include:

> fingers, hair or straps over the lens
> camera shake
> exposing film accidentally
> not winding film on properly
> taking pictures from too far away (one of the mostcommon errors). Encourage participants to ‘fill the frame’ and look at all the space as well as the object they are photographing. If it is too small they need to move closer.
> cutting heads off / unintentional cropping

The best way for participants to learn is by looking at their own results and pointing out pictures they think are problematic. It is important not to be too prescriptive. Some of the best photos can contain unconventional elements, and mistakes can sometimes turn out brilliantly. Remember not to put too much importance on right or wrong in the workshops. Encourage participants to be creative, and also point out how their photography could be improved.

First photos, portraits and self-portraits
Many participants are really excited when they first get their hands on a camera and when they learn how to take pictures. They will also probably leap at the chance to take photographs of each other and their friends and family. You may find it necessary to allow them to shoot a film or equivalent on whatever they want, on the understanding that portraits of their friends posing are not really part of the intended project.

Build your own exercises
With all of the elements above, design exercises for students to get used to these concepts, for example:

> Take the same picture from three different angles, to use both horizontal and portrait framing.
> Take three pictures where the background is important.
> Take three pictures that focus on colour, three focusing on pattern, line and texture etc.
> Create an exercise around movement and allow the participants to experiment with both colour and black and white photography.

Make these exercises fun. As the workshops progress, continue to refer to these concepts so that the students are encouraged to think about their images more carefully.

Flash photography
Explain the differences between the quality of artificial light and that of natural light, and the use of flash in photography. Especially when using simple point-and-shoot cameras ensure participants understand the minimum and maximum distances at which they can effectively use flash, without causing glare.

Lines, patterns and textures
Encourage participants to look at different textures and patterns and to consider how these can affect a picture and its composition. Encourage them to practise photographing subjects with strong lines.

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In Vietnam the first session resulted in large numbers of pictures of the kids posing next to scooters and motorbikes – a great status symbol in modern-day Vietnam – which they could only dream of having. In Bangladesh, saris were hitched high as participants waded into flower beds to be photographed alongside the seasonal blooms, a favourite with local photographic studios. And in Nepal refugee children trekked for over an hour, away from the refugee camps, to take pictures of themselves in their best outfits, against the mountain backdrops.

Another way round this is to introduce portraiture very early on in the project. Portraiture is a useful tool with which participants can explore how they are represented by others and how, in contrast, they choose to represent themselves. Most PhotoVoice projects introduce portraiture as one of the first exercises. Participants can work in pairs or small groups and learn about composition by taking portraits of the same person from different angles – some full-length, some headshot only. They can also combine taking portraits with asking each other key questions and recording information. This not only allows participants to get to know each other better but also helps them understand the importance of adding context to an image.

**Portraits exercises**

**Experiment with different ways of taking images of people**

Take a headshot; a picture of someone’s head and shoulders; a picture with a striking backdrop; a picture of a person with sun on their face; a picture of someone with the sun behind them so that their face is in shadow.

**Posed/unposed**

Make someone pose for the camera in different positions. Take an image of someone who doesn’t know you are photographing them. What are the differences?

**Expressions**

Take a photograph of someone or different people with different expressions – conveying different emotions. What is the emotion you want to convey through the image?

**Self-portraits**

Practise using the self-portrait button on the camera. Place the camera somewhere stable and look through the viewfinder to find out what area will be in focus. Press the button – move into this area. How do you want to convey yourself? Use different facial expressions – hold something up – bring someone else into the picture?

**Peer portraits**

Creating peer portraits can provide participants with an opportunity to define how they want to be seen. Marginalised people such as young offenders, people living with HIV/AIDS or disabilities, refugees or homeless people can create images that counteract stereotypes.

Get participants to work in pairs. Each member of the pair directs and sets up their own portrait, with their partner taking the final shot.

**Photographing strangers**

Photographing people will be important throughout the project. Some project groups may feel uneasy about going up to strangers and taking photographs, and indeed in some cultures this can cause problems. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, women on the project were repeatedly asked for money when they were taking photographs, which they didn’t have. It can also be very difficult to take natural pictures on the street – people may play up to the camera and constantly pose. With time, participants will learn how to handle these situations better. As they become used to photography their cameras become less conspicuous.

It is very important for the group to discuss issues that might arise when photographing strangers. This will come up when you discuss model release in Ch. 5. If appropriate, ask participants to go out and shoot portraits of strangers – this familiarises participants with photographing strangers, enables them to practise how to explain the project to strangers and encourages confidence.

Some projects have even set up a mini portrait studio and invited people to step inside. Encourage participants to take notes of names of people they photograph and any other interesting facts.

**Not just faces**

Remember that portraiture does not have to be about recording faces. If people don’t want their portraits taken participants can photograph a different part of their body, or people can photograph themselves with a favourite object. This is particularly relevant to projects where participants need to maintain their anonymity for either personal or safety reasons.
Key points

> Establish or re-establish project objectives with participants.

> Set ground rules at the beginning of the project with participants.

> Use ice-breaker games and include other games throughout the workshop – it is important to have fun throughout the workshop process.

> Ensure participants understand camera care and take responsibility for looking after their cameras and project equipment.

> Gauge the participants’ existing level of ‘visual literacy’.

> Work out which technical aspects it is appropriate to teach.

> Set exercises around the technical elements you want to introduce.

> Mistakes are an inevitable and useful part of the learning process.

> Shooting portraits and self-portraits is a valuable first exercise in self-representation.

> Be imaginative with portrait exercises if participants wish to remain anonymous.

> Ensure participants are introduced to ‘photo ethics’, i.e. asking permission before shooting street portraits, etc.
Workshop content: continuation and development

Strand 3: ‘Speaking out’ through photography

Discussion around the ‘issue’
As a project advances it will be possible to move away from initial personal views and feelings and bitty exercises to explore the ‘issue at the heart of the project’. At first this may be done without taking any photographs.

In the third workshop in the ‘Our Voices’ project in Bangladesh, the young people brainstormed together what difficulties disabled people face in Bangladesh and came up with the following issues which they wanted to draw people’s attention to:

- Disabled people are often ignored.
- When disabled people have a problem nobody helps them.
- When people are disabled they are often poor and doctors will not help them.
- Disabled people are often physically attacked and verbally abused.
- Disabled women often suffer greatly and can be abused.
- There is no social security to help disabled people.
- Disabled people are not seen as equal.
- Accessibility issues need to be addressed.
- Equal rights are important, including the right to education and the right to employment.
- Disabled people want to be independent and self-reliant.
- A positive change of attitude towards disabled people is needed.

The next step is for the group to brainstorm what they would like to change. Then they can try to think about how they can communicate their thoughts and feelings through photography and where they need to go to take the photographs. They can then organise themselves into smaller groups according to what they are concerned about.

For some groups, creating and focusing on advocacy messages comes naturally, whereas others will require more structured support, brainstorming and discussion sessions to generate key messages they feel comfortable with. In Nepal, for example the refugee youth were very politically conscious and from day one used the project as an opportunity to ‘speak out’ about their frustrations at their protracted refugee situation. In the UK, however, the young refugees PhotoVoice worked with were still learning to cope with their new lives in the UK and were less inclined to speak directly about their status as refugees.

In some projects it can be relevant to introduce the group to international conventions. This not only enables participants to know and understand their rights but can also provide a very strong context for an exhibition or campaign aimed at key decision makers. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child became a central focus of a number of the Street Vision workshops in Vietnam, and the UN Convention on Rights of Disabled people was used in Bangladesh and Cambodia.

Working with themes
Before participants develop strong ideas about their personal goals within the project they will probably need ideas to inspire them.

A useful early exercise is to get participants to shoot a certain number of pictures on, for example:
- Something I like
- Something I don’t like
- My favourite place
- My favourite thing
- My favourite person

These can later be developed into broader themes which help participants think about their ideas to develop into wider projects.

Examples of broader themes:
- My environment
- Likes and dislikes
- A day in the life of…
- My dreams
- Friends
- Memories
- Desires
- Fears
- Generation to generation
- Relationships

Encourage participants to come up with their own ideas. Get the group to discuss different possibilities and decide where they want to go to take the photographs. Try to link themes to the key focus of the project and ensure that they are culturally appropriate. It can be a good idea to decide on the number of pictures to take when working on a theme – for example, one film or equivalent.

Outshoots
Until the participants gain confidence and experience, most groups will need supervision and guidance when they go out to take photographs. At the beginning of a project, it is useful for participants to go out as a group to practise technical skills through specific exercises and to explore various themes through producing images. The facilitators and any other additional staff needed should accompany the group to provide advice and support. Sometimes volunteers with photographic skills can be a useful resource at this point.
At the beginning participants may photograph around the workshops venue – taking portraits of each other or the local environment. Later on, try to organise outshoots to relevant locations.

Participants in the Positive Negatives project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were women living with HIV. The women visited the local hospital together as well as another NGO caring for orphans.

In Kabul, the young people photographed ruined parts of the city destroyed during fighting in order to document the impact of war. A trip was also organised in partnership with UNHCR to a village undergoing reconstruction.

In London, refugee youth visited central London shooting a project entitled, ‘My View of London’. For many of them it was their first time into the centre of the city and became not only an opportunity to take pictures but also a chance for them to get to explore their new city.

In Cambodia, the young people in the orphanage got up at 4.30am to go on an outshoot to the vast Steung Meng Chey rubbish dump where they photographed the lives of other disadvantaged young people working on the rubbish dump.

On outshoots participants must have a concrete idea of what they want to capture with their photographs. Encourage them to carry a notebook and pen to write down the frame number and a few words about what each photograph is of, why they took it and what it is intended to communicate. In this way, the students think more carefully before taking pictures. They will use less film and produce more meaningful pictures. Some groups will take to writing notes; with some this will never happen.

As the project progresses it can be more suitable, and less intrusive for other people, for the participants to work in small groups or alone as they build up their own reportage stories.

Towards the end of the workshop, if funds allow, plan a fun group excursion. The group can vote on where they want to go.

Remember to consider safety, especially when working with young people. In Afghanistan, for example, the young girls fearlessly marched up to soldiers on the street and took their portraits without permission. Some of the soldiers were none too pleased. While PhotoVoice participants are always instructed to ask permission before taking someone’s portrait, these instructions are not always followed.

Storyboarding and creating a photo essay

Once participants are more confident of their photographic skills and begin to understand the possibilities of image-making and photography as a tool for communication they can also begin to work on individual personal projects. Photographic style reportage or a more artistic photo essay are good options.

Show the participants other documentary photo essays that professional photographers have produced and help them choose a project that will enable them to photograph over a number of days and where they have the opportunity and freedom to explore their own ideas and creativity. At this point it is also really possible to hone in on any specific issues the project is dealing with.

Such work can be very personal. It is often a good idea to schedule in one-on-one time for participants to photograph together as well as another NGO caring for orphans.

In Cambodia, many of the young people took their cameras back to their home villages over Khmer New Year, and took pictures which illustrated how their lives had been before they came to the orphanage. Some focused on hardship they had faced, such as losing their father when a landmine exploded or having to look after their younger siblings alone. Others focused on what their family did to earn a living, such as collecting palm oil.

In India, Ecuador and Cambodia for the project run in partnership with the HIV/AIDS Alliance participants created photo stories around the lives of people living with HIV, other sex workers and transgender friends.

On the Mental Wealth project in the UK, one man shot the duration of his bus journey back to his home and to the shops. His mental illness meant that he had not travelled unaccompanied on the bus for many years – the story represented many of the struggles he had had with his illness but also helped him work through his fears.

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In India, Ecuador and Cambodia for the project run in partnership with the HIV/AIDS Alliance participants created photo stories around the lives of people living with HIV, other sex workers and transgender friends.
“My name is Kaya Kilburn, I’m 15 years old and I live in Deptford, south-east London. I have made a collection of self-portraits. Before I started I wrote up eight different messages on paper and stuck them on a brick wall. I chose to do this as I think everyone should have at least one positive thought each day and should share what they feel. Also, I’m a positive thinker and I try to be as happy as I can and I want to share what I felt that day with lots of people. Each message has a deep meaningful reason, whatever it may be. I am pleased with my self-portraits and I hope that whoever sees them, feels the same way I do and thinks of all the good things there are to look forward to.

Being part of this project, we are wanting to educate others about what it is like having a relative or someone you know in prison. My mum’s partner was in prison and for my mum was stressful and this reflected on the rest of the family. It must have been hard for my mum to know that someone she really cares for and loves was so far away and no amount of visiting could change the fact that her partner wasn’t there. I didn’t like seeing my mum like that. After he came out of prison there was a tagging system. This meant he had to be in at certain times and if he wasn’t, things would go back to the way they were before. Now my mum is as happy as can be and I am happy for her.”


Story boards are an excellent way to think through an idea and plan individual shots. Encourage participants, where possible, to write something to accompany their photo essay.

Developing personal stories
Example from Our Voices project, Bangladesh.
Objective: To design a project that you can work on over the next few weeks. The project must relate to the overall theme of disability issues. This theme can be dealt with directly or indirectly but the link must be made clear in the work — the photos and text.

Goal: To show the work in the exhibition with the aim of educating others about disability issues in Bangladesh. Think about the project for half an hour. Present with diagrams/drawings as a group for 10 minutes each.

1. Choose a subject you feel is important for people to know about.
   Maybe this is because it is a subject that you think is misunderstood or people do not have enough knowledge about.

2. Choose a subject you feel you understand well enough to tackle.
   Maybe this is because it is something that is relevant to your life, something you have experienced or are particularly interested in. Ask yourself if you are comfortable enough to tackle it.

3. Conducting research into the subject.
   Do you need to do additional research? How will you do this? Where will you go? Who will you ask? What methods will you use to do the research e.g. interviews, reading books etc.

4. Think about the logistics involved.
   What will you need to take with you? How much time will it take? Create a working plan/schedule.

5. Think about the end product.
   Create a storyboard. What do you want the photos to convey? Think of particular shots you would like to get.

6. Technical questions.
   Think about technical aspects. What equipment will you need to use and what photographic techniques could you utilise?

Strand 4: Strengthening and personalising the message
Discussing and editing images
Discussing and editing images is one of the most important parts of a PhotoVoice project and will happen throughout the project. Through this process participants start to develop a better understanding of visual communication — a crucial objective of all PhotoVoice projects. The process also provides the participants with an important opportunity to share their work and learn from each other and is a vital part of workshop interaction.

The process of discussing and editing photographs, talking through ideas of what these images communicate in relation to the broader theme, and generating different types of text to accompany the images is what makes this kind of project much more than a photography course. It introduces concepts of selecting and critiquing photos for their technical merits but also — and often more importantly — because of the power that particular images have to communicate to audiences.

Getting back the first prints in a project, particularly when using film, can be incredibly exciting for participants. Often, laughter and squealing and running around ensues! When this happens it is best just to allow everyone to look through all their work (without getting it mixed up with other people’s) and wait for them to settle down. Often it is a really nice part of the project to document yourself.

Find a way to lay out all the pictures or a selection of the pictures so that everybody can see them. Create exercises to generate discussion with the whole group. For example:

- Participants select their five favourite images and lay them out on the table.
- Everyone walks round the table until you say ‘stop’.
- Everyone picks up one of the images in front of them, finds out whose it is and asks the photographer why they like it.

Remember that in some cultures there is less value placed on individual authorship, so it may not be a priority for participants to identify which images are technically ‘theirs’.

Another exercise involves asking everyone to pick out a problematic photograph or one that didn’t work. Others can then offer their thoughts on how the image could be improved. Do not be afraid to make suggestions about what does and does not work visually. The facilitator’s knowledge and visual literacy are a valuable resource for participants.

If you are working with digital, initial discussions can be held while going through images on a digital projector (or a computer) or around a number of printed photos selected by participants.

There are numerous exercises for generating discussion around images — to get participants talking not only about photographic technique but also about how images communicate and to start considering what it is that they want to communicate with their own photographs.

Examples:
- Ask participants to rank the photographs by emotional importance, starting with one they really dislike and ending with one they really love. This is a good way to introduce discussion of images alongside discussions about how people feel about someone or something in their life.
- Choose a single image and invite participants to shout out single words that come to their mind when looking at it. Then ask them to think of sentences or stories inspired by the image. The imagined stories can be contrasted with the photographer talking about their original intention with the image. Resulting discussions can focus on how images communicate stories, feelings and meanings.

Of course every group will respond differently and individuals will differ in how much they contribute to discussions. Some young people may find it difficult at first to articulate why they like a photograph, answering “I just do”, or “It’s pretty!” — but older groups, particularly those who have taken part in advocacy projects before, may be very articulate. As a project advances and participants begin to explore themes, speak out or create particular reportage stories, there will be an increasing amount to talk about. Participants will also normally become more comfortable talking about their images. The group can look at certain images or series of images and discuss whether the photos have achieved what they set out to do.

- Wherever possible, link discussion of images back to any advocacy goals for the project as a whole or for a particular outshoot.
- Images can be discussed in a technical context. For example: would it have been better if the photographer had been closer to the subject, or if the image were taken in black and white?
- Images can also be discussed in an emotional or advocacy context. For example: what does the
image convey, or what effect might the image have on the viewer?

> Individuals will always read photographs in different ways, and discussing a photo will become an interesting learning exercise for participants.

After the discussion the group or individuals can decide whether the image should be reshot or whether there is another image that might be good to add to a series. Throughout the project – and after any group discussion on the most recent batch of photos – participants should select their best, favourite and most effective shots. It is these photos that the participants should write about and which will make it into the wider project edit.

If participants get to a stage where they are developing their own reportage stories then it can be really good, if time allows, to do more intensive one-on-one work. This can also be helpful for monitoring and evaluation purposes as you can ask participants how they are finding the project. Use your imagination throughout the project to find creative ways to generate discussion both about the photographs and the central theme of the project. Encourage discussion at all times – but if someone really doesn’t feel like talking, don’t push them.

Creative play: montage and collage

Montage and collage – or writing on or around images – is another creative way to work with photographs which encourages participants to identify different visual elements and experiment with new ways of presenting images.

Using these techniques requires conscious engagement with the composition of an image through active manipulation of various elements. Montage and collage also introduce the idea of how images work together to convey a particular message or story, and the way in which one image can influence how another is read. Creating a collage or montage can also be a useful way to start generating captions for individual images or to introduce text in other ways.

Finished collages and montages can be exhibited within the workshop to provoke further discussion.

In the Street Vision project the entire group cut up a lot of the photographs that didn’t make it to the final edit and together made a huge collage which was hung at the entrance to the exhibition. It was a good way to finish the workshops and looked great.

In Nepal, the young people struggled at first with the idea of collage because the photographs were seen as too precious to cut up! Once this obstacle was overcome the group generated many collages, documenting all aspects of life in the refugee camp. These were used in many local exhibitions.

Working with text

PhotoVoice projects always use text in conjunction with photographs in workshops and exhibitions. Text is a powerful tool to contextualise images, and producing it encourages participants to focus. The use of text enables participants to draw audiences further into their worlds. Captions are particularly important in projects that have advocacy objectives as they can help the audience understand the photographer’s message more clearly. In international exhibitions, if images are exhibited without captions much of the photographer’s original intention can be lost as audiences may not understand culturally specific visual references.

Text can be purely factual or an additional creative element in the final work. It can consist of:

- captions for specific photos
- biographical information about the photographers
- stand-alone quotes
- entire stories which accompany reportage series of images

Text should be developed as images are produced and not left to the last moment – and certainly not until it is needed for exhibitions. Remember to structure workshops so that participants begin to see image and text working hand in hand.

Where literacy levels are low, working with text is harder but not impossible. It may sometimes be appropriate for Participants to tell their stories orally. Use dictaphones or take notes when participants are talking about their images. These notes can then be turned into captions and other text, which participants can approve or amend. Participants can also work in pairs, perhaps interviewing each other about their work, to generate text.

Captions

The power of an image can be dramatically increased by a strong caption. Captions may include details about where and when the picture was taken and of whom – the subject’s name may give additional strength and intimacy to a photograph and can be used if appropriate. However, captions can do more than simply explain non-visual elements of the picture. Strong captions tell the viewer something about the photographer’s intentions or what a photograph means to them emotionally, and enable the audience to empathise. On most PhotoVoice projects captions are written for every image selected by the participants for the wider edit. In some cases a simple title is given, followed by a sentence or a whole
“We wanted to show how in my picture this building used to be beautiful but now it is destroyed. I liked going on this trip to see these ruins because it is important I see how my country is now and how it once was. In the future I hope this building will be beautiful once more.”

Words by Zakia, Bibin project, Afghanistan, 2002.

Transparency, London

“People have to understand what a big difference there is between our different countries. It is like the difference between night and day. I don’t think anyone comes like a tourist, just coming here to have fun. I don’t want to be a refugee but I was not given any choice. I don’t want people to call me refugee. I want to be seen as everybody else. I believe people are all the same. So, you are English and I am a refugee. What are you that is more than me? I think like that but other people think other things.”

Bajram, 16 years, Kosovo

“| I know nothing about peace. Since I have been aware of who I am there has been fighting. We can show people in our pictures that war is very bad because we lost our mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, aunts, hands, legs, arms, heads - everything. Peace is the most important thing. |

Sakina, 14 years

Street Vision, Vietnam

“I had to stop going to school when I was 12 so I could earn money selling ice-cream. My father was beating me very badly. But his death caused so many problems for my family that I wanted to die to forget everything. I couldn’t live with my mother. I went to the bus station and started begging, then I worked as a porter but in the end I followed the wrong friends and began to break the law. After a while the police separated our group. Some of us were imprisoned, others were sent home. I decided to go to Saigon to earn a living polishing shoes. At night I used to sleep in a cyclo in front of the Green Bamboo Shelter. One morning Mr Hai, manager of the shelter, asked about my situation and allowed me to live in the shelter so I could take part in their activities.”

Thang, 19 years.

Thang is now married and has a baby. He works in a professional photography studio to which he invites the younger Street Vision students, to learn how to shoot studio portraits.

Digital storytelling

Digital storytelling combines images and audio to create narratives. It is relatively complex technologically and therefore not appropriate in all situations. However, it can produce very strong results. Participants need to write their own scripts to accompany their stories. Digital stories have not traditionally been used in development or advocacy contexts but were first developed as community initiatives in the USA and subsequently taken up by the BBC in their Capture Wales project.

PhotoVoice has discovered that digital stories have huge potential within projects and has integrated them into its methodology. It first introduced the technique in two projects in Cambodia and has since run digital storytelling projects with young refugees in East London and young people infected or affected by HIV in South Africa.

Digital storytelling conventionally uses a lot of images that have already been taken in the past, ones perhaps that trigger memories, whereas in PhotoVoice projects participants shoot their own images that have already been taken in the past, ones perhaps that trigger memories, whereas in PhotoVoice projects participants shoot their own images that could be used to depict their experiences.

Examples of digital stories generated in PhotoVoice projects are included in the accompanying DVD.
Key points

> Do not expect initial discussions around sensitive issues to flow easily.

> Encourage the group to brainstorm ideas and issues together.

> Work with broad themes initially. They give focus but also allow for individual interpretation.

> Use story-boarding when participants begin to plan more complex photo stories.

> Text can be a very powerful addition to images and should be created throughout a project whether in the form of captions or longer pieces of writing – or both.

> Adjust exercises to suit groups with poor literacy – don’t let anyone feel excluded.

> Remember that biographies told or written by participants can be a very powerful addition to the body of work.
PhotoVoice projects are about bringing fun and creativity to the exploration of serious issues and enabling participants to learn the necessary skills to communicate with others. The facilitation of the workshops is what makes this process possible. The participants are central to the process as the project is, ultimately, a vehicle for them to educate others about their lives and the lives of their peers. Without the commitment of the participants and their full participation the project cannot be successful.

**Interactive teaching methods and facilitation**

Most PhotoVoice projects involve some ‘interactive teaching’ – transfer of skills in an interactive manner – and a large measure of facilitation.

**Interactive teaching**

Interactive teaching encourages the active participation of students and is based on the belief that their ideas and existing knowledge are an important resource. It makes use of games and other experiential learning techniques, as facilitation does, but presupposes that the teacher possesses particular knowledge and skills that the learners do not possess. In PhotoVoice projects, technical photographic training is done through interactive teaching.

**Facilitation**

The process of facilitation, in contrast to interactive teaching, does not assume that the facilitator has more relevant knowledge than the participants. Facilitation is the process of generating ideas within a group with the vital premise that the participants bring those ideas with them. In participatory photography projects it is the participants themselves who are in the most knowledgeable position to talk about their lives, their views, the photographs they have taken and what they want their photographs to convey.

The facilitator’s role in participatory photography projects is:

- to enable participants to discover the power of photography as a tool for communication and how they can harness this potential to communicate their own stories and ideas
- to encourage participants to consider who their audiences will be and how their images will be received
- most importantly, to encourage them to believe in the importance of their voice and the value of their way of seeing.

The role of the facilitator can be fraught with ethical issues, usually arising from the tension between the dynamics of the participatory process and the desire for a good-quality end product. It is very important not to push a particular ‘way of seeing’ onto the participants. The facilitator needs to create space for participants to find their own ways of using the camera while ensuring that a certain standard of work is produced within the timeframe.

In advocacy projects a key function of the facilitator is to enable participants to frame their images in a language that will be comprehensible to the audiences they are targeting. The facilitator has to build a bridge between two ways of seeing and understanding. But the underlying assumption remains that the group is the creator of the ideas produced.

Obviously, the facilitator must never assume ownership over the participants’ work or compromise it in any way. The key element is collaboration. The relationship that evolves is one of giving and taking, teaching and listening, and ultimately of sharing ways of seeing. Through this two-way process the facilitator learns as much as the participants, gaining first-hand insights into participants’ lives, their culture and community.

**Elements of good facilitation**

Good facilitation involves many different elements. These are listed below, with some guidelines (under each heading) on how you can put them into practice:

**Providing structure**

- Offer activities that lead people logically through a learning process.
- Set pace through structured learning exercises and assignments.
- Focus participants on tasks and act as a time keeper.

**Imparting new knowledge and skills**

- Provide educational resources, such as written notes and images, and access to books and videos.
- Organise excursions and/or invite speakers of interest.
- Explain how to access other sources of information.
- Answer participants’ questions.

**Helping people recognise how much they already know**

- Make sure participants know they are the ‘experts’ on their own lives.
- Ask appropriate questions so as to draw participants out of themselves.
- Encourage participants to draw creatively on their life experiences, their existing skills, and their ideas and opinions.
- Impart enough information for individuals to form their own opinions and make informed decisions.

**Encouraging participation and sharing**

- Be open and approachable yourself.
- Encourage mutual respect in the group.
- Encourage participants to interact with, and learn from, each other.
- Present all sides of a situation or problem without making judgements.

> Acknowledge the limitations of your own knowledge.
> Identify key points in group discussions and summarise these for the group.

**Creating a safe and secure environment for participants and allowing risk-taking**

- Build individual confidence and group rapport.
- Ensure everyone understands the tasks and what is required of them.
- Mediate any disputes that arise.
- Encourage exploration.

**Providing an outside eye**

- Monitor what the participants are doing both individually and as a group.
- Encourage people to look at their own and others’ work in new ways.
- Express your own opinions about what does and does not work.

**Using appropriate communication techniques**

- Use images and metaphors creatively to present new ideas.
- Use learning activities that include a range of art forms and other techniques – remember that photographic skills are not necessarily the most important things taught during a PhotoVoice project.
- Be supportive but do not be afraid to challenge people when necessary.
- Practise good listening skills.
- Learn to identify the key points and summarise what others have said.
- Project your voice.
- Develop techniques that enable you to be comfortable speaking in front of groups – these skills vary from person to person so try to discover what works best for you.
- Learn how to claim and hold the space.
Group dynamics

The project facilitator will always need to oversee and manage the group dynamics within a project. People participate best in a safe environment where they are able to let their defences down. Everyone is afraid of, or at least concerned about, what others think of them. It is important that the dynamics in a workshop create an atmosphere where participants feel free to speak openly. Setting ground rules, considering gender issues (Chapter 3) and covering issues such as anonymity (Chapter 11) will assist with this but you will also need to encourage the involvement of every individual, and ensure that everyone is comfortable about contributing to discussions.

Points to remember:

> Notice those who are less confident and encourage them to speak about their work.
> Some people will work much better in pairs or small groups than in the whole group.
> When most members of a group are shy it may be that they are used to learning by rote, or that they think there must be a ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answer. They may also have had negative experiences of education and discipline.
> Use active games, involving lots of fun.
> Give plenty of encouragement and incentives for creative thinking and ideas.
> Be patient.

Normally, after a couple of weeks, participants will come to understand that there is no set right or wrong, and will start to open up. Remember, too, that individuals learn in different ways. Learning can take place, for example, through hearing or seeing, reflecting or interacting, doing or talking, and through activities incorporating music or rhythm or those involving problem-solving. Good facilitation and teaching incorporates as many learning styles as possible to ensure that everyone is drawn into the process.

Handling difficult group dynamics

Certain groups or individuals may present challenging behaviour in workshops. For example, young offenders or teenagers who have been excluded from school, rather than expose their vulnerabilities may reject the project concept, the facilitators or other young people in the group. Time, patience and building trust are all crucial in these situations.

Even if ground rules are set at the beginning of the project they may not be adhered to. A good facilitator will make sure that when someone breaks the ground rules they are not automatically shut out or unduly censored. Exclusion should be the last resort.

As facilitator you may sometimes find it difficult to command respect from the group. This may be because of gender or age issues – for example, in some societies people may not pay much credence to your views if you are much younger than they are or if you are a woman. If you find yourself out of your depth seek advice and help from those who know the participants better than you, including the staff of partner organisations. When others show respect for you, the group may follow suit. Again, time is one of the most important factors.

Throughout a project it is necessary to balance the conflicting needs of individuals with those of the group, as well as your own needs as facilitator. But always remember that the well-being of the group comes first.

Some strategies to help maintain good group dynamics include ensuring that:

> as facilitator you lead by example and always show...
> participants understand that not abiding by the ground rules compromises what they themselves will get out of the workshops
> in situations of conflict, individuals – and the group as a whole – continue to feel safe
> the opinions and ideas of ‘trouble-makers’ still get heard and are made available to the group in a more positive way though deliberate mediation if necessary.

Remember that conflict is not always a disaster – sometimes it can lead to useful insights and engender creativity.

Facilitating workshops with vulnerable groups
Marginalised people, by definition, face huge barriers to effective social participation and in many cases face ongoing social stigmatisation.

Working with marginalised and vulnerable people can be extremely challenging. The more knowledge and understanding you have of the issues faced by the participants and the way they are viewed by the wider community, the more effectively you will be able to face these challenges.

Above all, ensure you have the necessary support to run your project, including input from those who have specialised experience in working with a particular group. Partner organisations will usually be able to provide this support; if they can’t, you will need to bring it in from outside – which will require research and time, as well as money.

Building trust
Trust is crucial in any participatory photography project but particularly so when you are working with vulnerable groups. As participants get to know each other and come to trust the facilitators they can begin to open up and entrust the group with stories they might not previously have been willing to share. An understanding of confidentiality within the group is very important in these situations, as is the establishing of workshop boundaries.

Building trust among vulnerable groups can be a long-term process and any breach of trust on the part of the facilitator can set back the project considerably. The group dynamic in a project can be one of the most treasured outcomes of a project for groups or individuals who may lack other support, companionship or trustworthy relationships in their life.

Building trust – the PhotoVoice Transparency project
From the point of view of the young unaccompanied refugees taking part in the PhotoVoice Transparency project in London in 2002, the most significant outcome was making new friends and becoming part of a community of young people facing similar issues.

‘Transparency is my family now,’ said one participant. The project forged strong and lasting relationships, critical to the security and confidence of the participants and to their ability to cope and survive in a new country.

On a cautionary note, if strong relationships based on trust are built up in the course of a project it is crucial to ensure this network can be sustained and that participants do not develop an emotional dependence on project staff. A project can do more harm than good if it builds up expectations that are not sustainable after the project ends.

Right to anonymity
Marginalised people are often victims of social prejudice and can, especially in some Southern countries, risk persecution by the authorities or others with more social power. As speaking out and challenging prevailing social perceptions and power structures can carry serious risks, some people may wish to take part in a project while preserving their anonymity. This anonymity may be vital to their safety and well-being and is, therefore, a right that must be taken seriously and respected absolutely.

Disability
It is important to consider what the specific needs of people with disabilities may be and how these can be accommodated. Regardless of the target group, many funders and policy makers require that the needs of people with disabilities are considered at the stage of project design. Project managers and facilitators therefore need to be familiar with some of the basic issues associated with living with disability.

‘Disability’ is a very imprecise and contested term that is put up against an equally imprecise and idealised idea of what is ‘normal’. ‘Disability’ is used to describe conditions as diverse as sensory impairment (such as reduced vision or hearing), reduced mobility of various kinds, mental health problems, long-term illness and learning difficulties. Some disabilities are congenital, whereas others may be acquired through illness, accident or trauma.

People labelled ‘disabled’ but with widely differing abilities and diverse needs can often be put together in one group. This can make catering to their individual needs very challenging. In Bangladesh, PhotoVoice worked with a group comprised of blind people, partially sighted people, people with learning difficulties and people who had been affected by polio or involved in car accidents. In an ideal situation, had funds permitted, separate projects would have been run to accommodate different needs.

Photography with blind and visually impaired groups
In the case of working with partially sighted or blind people the project demands a wholly different method of teaching. PhotoVoice has worked in partnership with Sight of Emotion, which runs photography workshops with blind and visually impaired groups around the world. Whilst the idea of blind photography is not an easy concept for sighted people to understand it is far from impossible. Sight of Emotion workshops use a range of techniques that can help us all use our senses, not only sight but also sound, taste and touch, to create images and communicate emotions in photographs. The compelling images created through the workshops create a bridge between the seeing and non-seeing worlds, and for the participants the project is an opportunity to engage with the visual world from which they are isolated on a day-to-day basis.

Disability and poverty are often part of a vicious cycle.
> Many disabilities are the result of preventable disease.
> Poverty makes the burden of living with disability incredibly hard to bear; both for disabled people themselves and entire families.
> Disabled people often have special needs that are not met by existing social support systems and suffer from discrimination in education and employment. This is true in developed countries but often far more so in less developed countries.
> Disabled people are very vulnerable to various forms of physical and sexual abuse, which can be exacerbated by poverty.

Attitudes to disability are often culturally determined. In some cultures, disability is seen as shameful and
linked to ideas of moral worth and one’s place in the
divine order. In almost all cultures, ‘the disabled’ are
seen as inferior to ‘able-bodied’ people, rather than
simply as people with different needs.

When working with people with disabilities:
> Ensure that you have adequate support and
sufficient understanding to deal with any problems
that may arise.
> Adapt activities as necessary. For example, some ice-
breaker games will be unsuitable – you will need to
find a game that everyone can take part in equally.
> Remember that outshouts involving people with
physical disabilities will probably be more
complicated to organise due to issues of access. You
may need more support staff – this may particularly
be the case in developing countries where
wheelchairs are in short supply.

Dealing with trauma
You may be working with individuals who have
survived extremely traumatic experiences, such as
rape, torture, and witnessing the killing of family
members and friends. The familiar environment of
the individual may have been totally destroyed or taken
from them – with the loss of home, country, family,
friends, known structures, school, community, etc.
This can result in feelings of being ‘overwhelmed’ by
anxieties and intrusive, uninvited memories of the past.
Such feelings may be experienced at irregular intervals,
often leaving the person afraid, humiliated, and
experiencing a loss of control in many aspects of his
or her life.

‘Feeling safe’ is important for participants in all projects
but when you are working with people who have
experienced trauma it is doubly important to set up
a consistent and clear framework that maximises the
emotional security of participants.

For example, make sure that participants know:
> the outline of the project
> how photos will be used
> the length of the project and of individual workshop
sessions
> who will be working with them
> where the workshops will take place

Try to maintain staff continuity, including local staff
and translators. Ideally, use the same room or space for the
duration of the project; let participants know in
advance of any changes.

Listening and ‘containment’ in workshops
Listening is the single most important way of
addressing the emotional needs of participants.

The workshops should ‘contain’ the individual’s feelings
and not encourage a participant who has experienced
trauma to express feelings they are not ready for or
have defended themselves against. This is particularly
important when you are with a group for a short time
and individuals need to maintain their defences so as to
cope with the next phase of their lives.

Remember that any process of recounting personal
stories or past experiences with vulnerable groups may
trigger traumatic memories or raise fears of renewed
persecution. Take extreme care to deal effectively and
safely with these issues and whenever you are working
with participants who may be ‘overwhelmed’ or
traumatised ensure there is someone in the team able
to recognise symptoms of trauma which may arise
during the project period. Ensure you as facilitator have
adequate support from other professionals.

Support
Support is most often provided by local partner
organisations who work on an ongoing basis with the
participants and the issues they face. Make time to
discuss the issues and potential problems thoroughly
with the partner organisation, and ensure that
specialist staff are available if necessary. When working
with particularly vulnerable groups seek advice and
support from trained psychologists and therapists.

PhotoVoice has conducted some preliminary
research, with the input of art therapists, into the
possible therapeutic benefits of participatory
photography. It is currently (as of August 2007)
working alongside a trained psychotherapist in a
project working with female sex workers in East
London, many of whom have suffered domestic
violence and drug abuse.

Remember:
> For vulnerable groups, the process of the project
and its therapeutic benefits may be more important
than any advocacy goals, especially at the outset.
> Not everyone who has experienced trauma is
overwhelmed by it to the extent that his or her
internal life crumbles. Resilience and self-protection
are often present.

In some countries local organisations may have no
formal understanding of the concept of trauma. Some
studies, for example a number carried out among
communities affected by the tsunami of December
2004, found that trauma, as understood by Western
psychologists, simply didn’t exist.

Knowing your boundaries
Working with marginalised and vulnerable people,
especially in the context of a different culture, can be
extremely testing. As facilitator you are not required
to be an art therapist, counsellor or psychologist. It is
very important to acknowledge the professional
boundaries within which you work, as well as your
personal boundaries: how much you can and cannot
bear should be the first step in approaching work
with vulnerable and traumatised groups.

The issues you are dealing with may be distressing
and have no simple or immediate resolution. This can
engender feelings of powerlessness and despair. It is
also easy to take on the burden of other people’s
problems during a project without realising that you
too need a way of shedding this burden.

It is important to find ways to acknowledge and work
through these feelings, both for your own well-being
and that of the project. Regular debriefing with an
appropriate team member or, in situations of greater
isolation, via email, phone calls or a regular written or
video journal can play an important role in dealing
with these challenges.

When working in challenging situations, PhotoVoice
endeavours always to send two facilitators to work
together on a project, who support and complement
each other: PhotoVoice also has links with professional
therapists who can provide support specifically for
project facilitators working in difficult situations.
Key points

> Facilitation is based on the view that participants know the most about themselves and their views and opinions.

> Do not impose your own opinions or agendas, and be willing to learn yourself.

> Facilitation involves a number of ethical issues – familiarise yourself with these.

> Be attentive to group dynamics and develop strategies for coping with difficult and challenging situations.

> Be flexible with the overall timetable and each workshop – respond to the needs and mood of the group.

> Building trust is vital to a project’s success, particularly when working with vulnerable groups, and can take a long time.

> Everyone has the right to remain anonymous.

> Discuss with local partners and staff any difficulties you encounter when working with vulnerable groups.

> Ensure you have adequate support, especially when working with vulnerable people.

> Ensure participants are aware of what they are committing themselves to and how and where their images will be used.

> Ensuring the project has stability, and that workshops happen on time and in a secure space, is especially important when you are working with vulnerable groups.

> Know and recognise your boundaries.

“This girl is from the Hindiyah family. She is standing near the tent where she now lives since the Israeli army demolished her family’s home. I can see in her eyes that she can’t understand what is happening.”

Resources and practicalities

Teaching materials and resources
Over the course of the workshops you can expose participants to a wide range of photographic styles as possible and explain how photography can serve many different purposes and how different genres use different stylistic conventions.

> Use examples of photos from advertising, fashion, documentary reportage, travel photography, sport photography, events photography, art photography and simple snapshots to generate discussion.

> Bear in mind that photoshopped images or advertising images can seem alien to some communities in developing countries and can lead to more confusion than being honest.

Creating your own resource pack of photos
In many situations, especially overseas, the local availability of photographic images will be limited. What you can take with you will also be limited - by weight, among other things - but it is very important to collect resources before you go:

> Cut out lots of images from newspapers and magazines and put them in a folder. These can be organised by theme - Portraits, Angle, Shutter speed, etc. - and can be very useful teaching materials.

> Small photographic publications you can buy in Europe include the Photo Poche series published by Delpire Editeur, and the 55 Series, published by Phaidon, both of which profile specific photographers, as well as smaller Magnum Photos publications. These are relatively light and can be of great interest to participants, from an educational and a photographic perspective. Booklets of postcards can also be fun to use in workshops.

> When working overseas take with you some snapshots of your own family, home town, etc. Remember you will be asking participants to take some ‘personal’ photographs. They will appreciate seeing photos that are personal to you.

> Think about the particular issue the project may be dealing with and find relevant images and photo essays covering this issue to take with you.

> If possible, show participants pictures taken on other projects focusing on a similar theme.

> Remember to be culturally and politically sensitive when selecting images to use. For example images depicting any kind of nudity can cause offence in many cultures.

When working with HIV-positive women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, PhotoVoice used examples of work by photojournalists Gideon Mendel and Don McCullin. This proved a good starting-point for discussions on photographic depictions of people living with HIV and AIDS. Participants discussed what they liked and disliked about the photographs, what impressions/insights the public might gain from looking at the photographs, and what they (the workshop participants) might do differently.

Technical worksheets
Wherever possible, also build up a stock of worksheets to use in the workshops, covering different aspects of photography. As with games and exercises, individual facilitators will have their own preferences about worksheets (and photographic manuals) to use in workshops.

Projects vary greatly in level length, objectives and type of equipment used. For this reason PhotoVoice has not developed any set curriculum, but it does use specific technical worksheets in many of its projects.

Remember:

> When working overseas you will need to get any text on worksheets translated in advance. It can also be a good idea to research existing published manuals, or school or university photographic course-books in the relevant language which could be easily adapted for the project (copyright adhered to of course).

> Keep any manuals you have for the cameras you are using. Photocopied (enlarged) diagrams can be useful teaching aids.

Certificates
Consider the idea of presenting participants with certificates during the final workshop - they can present them to each other and say something positive to the person to whom they are giving the certificate. It can be very important as it gives participants something physical that represents all they have achieved in the project and that they can show to friends and families. PhotoVoice has found that even the most unlikely groups, such as a group of very tough, street-wise young offenders in Scotland, took great pride and delight in their certificates.

Ownership and supervision of cameras
Where there are not enough cameras to go round, a single camera can be assigned to groups of two or three people but care must be taken to develop a workable system to record the authorship of images taken during shoots. In practice this rarely works seamlessly and some groups of participants have been known to select those images they wish they had taken or claimed pictures of themselves as their own (even when self-portrait functions are not available!)

Building trust is central to the success of participatory photography projects. In the initial stages of most PhotoVoice projects participants shoot together in one large group or a number of smaller groups. Once participants have enough technical competence, and have demonstrated their commitment to the project, sufficient mutual trust exists for participants to use the cameras unsupervised. It is important to allow participants to take the cameras away - to shoot photos independently in their own time and to explore ideas without being distracted, influenced or constrained by others. Often the presence of the facilitator, as an outsider, can restrict the participant’s freedom to photograph certain subjects. One of the strengths of participatory photography projects is the unvoiced access participants have to their communities - access it would take months or years for a professional photojournalist to build up.

Remember, though, to check that participants are not at risk by being seen as an easy target by others in their community. Ensure participants are comfortable about carrying the cameras in public.

In some cases it may be necessary to provide participants with project ID cards and letters explaining their involvement in the project. This was the case in Nepal, where the Bhutanese refugee youth ran into problems with the refugee camp authorities when they shot photographs around the camp unsupervised. One girl had her ration card confiscated by a supervisor when she was photographing people collecting their rations.

It is important to ensure the security of cameras throughout a project. A lockable cupboard or box is essential and it is useful to devise a sign-out system for equipment. Each camera should also be numbered in a waterproof way and participants are then able to sign out the camera for a day or longer.

In a number of PhotoVoice projects, particularly talented individuals wishing to pursue further study or work in photography have been given personal cameras. PhotoVoice is increasingly making this part of the PhotoVoice bursary scheme.

> Ch. 1

Anna Blackman and local trainer Mak Remissa present participants in the Khmeye project, Cambodia, with certificates, 2004.
Prints
When using film cameras PhotoVoice projects usually print two copies of every photograph. One copy is kept by PhotoVoice or the partner organisation and the other by the participant. Sometimes, where available and cost-effective, contact sheets are used for editing – but some participants find these difficult and fiddly to work with.

Giving participants a full set of their own prints that they can take home and share with their families and friends is a central principal of PhotoVoice methodology. Even if using digital, where theoretically editing can be done on a computer or on the back of the camera, it is crucial to get at least the key images printed. Another reason for this is so that prints can be used in the workshop context. Rather than simply viewing a picture on the wall it can be much more involving to hold it in your hand, pass it to someone else, even write on it, cut it up or stick it next to another print. In PhotoVoice’s experience having physical prints often enables participants to discuss their work more openly and feel less self-conscious.

A practical idea is to give each participant a photo album in which they can store their favourite prints throughout the workshops. Use of a digital projector is also highly recommended, so the group can learn by editing together and sharing each other’s photos.

In some projects a photo album can take on a special meaning. Some HIV-positive groups have built up albums or ‘memory books’ to give to their children to remember them with. During projects with unaccompanied refugee youth in London young people created albums to send back to their families in their countries of origin to explain their new lives in the UK.

Archiving and labelling
Develop an archive system at the beginning of the project. Make sure it is consistent and easy to understand. Working with digital makes archiving easier (digital thumbnails are generally much easier to find than frames on negatives) but it is equally important to ensure each digital folder, like film, is labelled with the project name, the name of the photographer and the number of the batch/film.

Other details may be relevant, such as the shooting or processing date or the location. With film, remember to explain to the lab that they must label the prints in the same way as you have labelled the film, to avoid confusion over who shot what.

> Explain the archiving system to the participants (if film is used – and where possible with digital, too).
> As soon as images are given back to the group, everyone should write their names on the back of photographs, plus (ideally) a number indicating the folder/batch of images the prints are from. Where participants take responsibility for labelling and ordering their own work the process contributes to their sense of ownership of the images.
> It is a good idea to provide each student with albums or boxes where they can keep their photos and notebooks. Any edited or selected photos should also be put in these.
> Albums or boxes should stay at the workshop venue throughout the project – if taken home they can get lost or given away to friends and neighbours.
> At the end of the project albums become the property of the individuals.

Very important: If using film, any negatives should be filed together and kept in a safe place where they won’t get lost or damaged. Ideally, negatives should be digitally scanned at high resolution as soon as possible to limit chances of lost images.

Documentation of workshops
Ensure that the workshops are fully documented visually as well as with notes on the process. Visual documentation serves not only as a record of the working process but may also be used in promotional materials on the project. Pictures of the project at work are really important for contextualising the project for the general public as well as other stakeholders. Collect a range of images including:

> Portraits of all participants. It is useful to have a very good quality set of portraits taken by a photographer associated with the project. These can be used to accompany personal testimonies and biographies when the work is exhibited and will complement portraits taken by the participants.
> Images of participants working with their photos or using their cameras on outshoots.

PhotoVoice often uses video, as well as stills, to document workshops. Projects that have been filmed include the Positive Negatives project (Democratic Republic of Congo), the Children’s Forum project (Nepal), Transparency (London) and the Side-by-Side project (Israel/Palestine).
Key points

> Build up a collection of your own photographic teaching resources, relevant to the project.

> Plan and develop technical worksheets and handouts.

> Allow and enable participants to work on their own with cameras – remember building trust is an important part of the process.

> Ensure participants will not be at risk if shooting alone.

> Ensure that every participant is given prints of their images as well as any copies of digital files to keep.

> Develop a clear and simple archiving and labelling system.

> Document the workshops visually.

> Ensure you have good portraits of all participants.
As discussed in Chapter 4, local exhibitions enable participants to share their work with friends, family, the local community and local dignitaries, which gives them a strong sense of achievement, ownership and empowerment. Through exhibitions and events further afield, projects raise awareness of issues on a larger scale. Wherever possible, participants should play an active role in preparing for and co-ordinating exhibitions of their work. Their availability may dictate to what extent they can get involved but it is a key part of the PhotoVoice process that participants feel ownership of the editing process and the methods through which images are presented to public audiences.

Factors to consider
There are numerous factors to consider when preparing for an exhibition, whether this be a ‘local’ exhibition or one held further afield.

Budget
> How much money is available for the exhibition?
> How will this affect all the other decisions that need to be made?
> How ambitious can you afford to be?

Theme
> What is the main theme of the exhibition? What is the exhibition attempting to communicate?
> What will the exhibition be called? Who will decide? How?

The work
> What will be exhibited? How will the curatorial process take place?
> What is the original format of the work?
> How big will the prints be? Will they be in black and white or colour?
> Digital photos? Will there be a slide show? What technological equipment is required? Is it available? Will it have to be hired?
> Will other media such as video, collage, drawings or digital stories be included?
> How will text be used? How will it be presented?
> Will it need to be in more than one language?
> Will the photographers’ names be displayed with the photos?
> Will photographer’s biographies and portraits be part of the exhibition?

Venue
> Where will the exhibition take place?
> What makes it a suitable venue? Is it easy to get to? Is it big enough? Is it a dedicated exhibition space or does it also serve other functions?
> Does the venue automatically include a ‘passing’ audience?
> How does the venue influence hanging decisions?
> Will the exhibition be held in only one place or will it tour to different places?

Hanging
> How will images be mounted? Will they be framed?
> What hanging system will be used?
> How creative, innovative and original is the exhibition concept? Is this important to the participants?
> If the exhibition is to tour, how will this affect decisions about hanging?

Audience
> How many people are expected to attend? Will most come to the opening or at other times?
> Who is the work aimed at? Who do the participants most want to come to the exhibition? How old will they be?
> Are all the different target groups likely to come? What would best encourage them?

Dates
> When will the exhibition take place? How long will it last?
> Do the dates coincide with any other events that are relevant to the main theme of the project?
> Should it be planned to take place during a holiday period? Why or why not?
> Will it be open all day? Who, if anyone, will supervise the show during opening hours?

Publicity
> How will the exhibition be publicised?
> What, if any, are the potential problems involved with publicity?
> Is the issue explored in the exhibition sensitive? How will this be dealt with in the publicity? How well have issues of sensitivity and exposure been thought through in the whole project?
> Will there be flyers, posters, invitations, a booklet?
> Who will design, fund and produce them?
> Are the press going to be encouraged to publicise the event? Is there going to be an organised press day?
> Where are the most appropriate places to publicise the exhibition to reach the people who are most important to the success of the show?

Evaluating the exhibition
> How will the audience’s impressions and understanding of the exhibition be gauged? Will there be an audience questionnaire? A comment book? Interviews?
> How will the participants’ feelings about the exhibition be evaluated? Is the exhibition the end of the project? What, if any, follow-up will there be?

Participants’ roles in exhibitions
Participants can play numerous roles within all the various aspects of exhibition co-ordination from the production of images and text for the show to generating the venue, hanging the exhibition and organising activities for the opening night. In Nepal, Bhutanese refugee students took responsibility for much of the press and publicity for their first exhibition in Kathmandu, spending more than a day hanging around in the foyer of Radio Nepal to ensure the exhibition was announced on the morning news. In South Africa, the young people organised speeches, dancing, food and music for the opening of their exhibition in Orange Farm in order to attract local audiences to their work on HIV and AIDS in their community.

Press releases and generating media coverage
It is essential to learn how to produce a professional and effective press release in order to gain the attention and interest of the media.

Some basic points to remember:
> Make sure the information is newsworthy and send it out at an appropriate time.
> Use a recognised format for press releases. Be clear, concise and accurate – and do not exceed one side of an A4 page.
> Make sure the first 10 words of your release are...
Be aware that journalists are rarely excited by
If your original contact is not interested, ask if
Always follow up with a phone call.
Try to find out the name and email of the
Do not expect members of the press to get back to
Target press outlets that are most relevant to the
Select key press images to send with the press
Provide clear and accurate contact information, including the individual to contact, address, phone, fax, email, and web site address.
Inform the members of the press and photo calls in a monitored.
Ensure that participants, particularly young people, are accompanied by a project or partner staff member when being interviewed by journalists.
Remember every participant has the right to anonymity.
Photo calls
If you believe that the project you are working on is likely to generate a lot of media interest it may be worth organising a general press and photo call. A press call is simply an allocated time where members of the press are invited to attend to receive information, ask questions and take photographs in an organised way. This could be on the opening night or, if that is too busy a time, a couple of hours earlier or the previous evening.
Examples of press coverage of PhotoVoice projects
“The photographs on the gallery walls were taken by HIV-infected women... They are an attempt to educate the Congolese public, but also to jolt the affluent and complacent West.”
The Independent, 29 November 2000.
“PhotoVoice is a genuine example of how a form of social entrepreneurship can be used not only to raise funds – but also the roof.”
“The 25 year-olds want to encourage documentary photography, through enabling those who have traditionally been the subject of such work to become its creator.”
“A Side Gallery-originated project, working alongside PhotoVoice, First Sight has given children a unique opportunity... First Sight is documentary photography at its best. Simple and above all, brutally real.”
Newcastle Metro, March 2002.
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Newcastle Metro, March 2002.
Key points

> There are numerous factors around issues such as budget, resources and venue which need to be considered carefully when organising an exhibition.

> Ensure participants play as central a role as possible in editing and exhibition organisation.

> Take time to write a strong press release.

> Ensure that participants, particularly young people, are accompanied by a project or partner staff member when being interviewed by journalists.

> It is important to mediate between the press and participants, especially minors. Every project must protect participants’ best interests.

> No participant should be forced into the limelight or to give interviews.

“Flying to reach the Sun. I saw this my friend playing in the rain. He was a street child like me. I was so excited to take this picture, to capture the expression of freedom.”
Appendix A: Resources

Links and publications are listed under chapter numbers.

Introduction
International development and participatory methodologies
www.ids.ac.uk
www.reflect-action.org
www.oneworld.net
www.creativexchange.org
www.paulofreire.org

Participatory video
www.insightshare.org
Braden, S. and Than Thi Thien Huong, 1998, Video for Development: Casebook from Vietnam, Oxfam

PhotoVoice Forum (Network) – Partners 2006 -7
www.sightofemotion.org
www.daylightmagazine.org
www.searching-for-eldorado.net
www.capinfo.org
www.asha-nepal.org/pages/myworld/
www.narobe.com
www.savethechildren.org.uk/eyetoeye/
www.bread-and-roses.com
www.wajaproject.org
www.grouphototos.com
www.photorystoryproject.org
www.wkipa.org
www.whoareandhomes.org/childsvie
www.sandblast-arts.org
www.thephotoessay.com
www.drik.net/autofocus/
www.kids-with-cameras.org
www.fotolibras.org
www.displacements.info
www.picturepeople.org
www.home.earthlink.net/~bobbyfoto/ourvoices
For other Forum (Network) projects please see
www.photovoice.org/html/projects/forumprojects

Some other participatory photography projects
www.photovoice.com
www.fotokids.org
www.photovoice.ca
www.supported-parenting.com/photovoice/
www.housingandsupport.co.uk/photovoice.html
www.ph15.org.ar
http://cds.aas.duke.edu/cgi-bin/index.html
www.rwandaproject.org
www.culturalagents.org
www.photonet.org.uk/index.php?id=46,205,0,0,1,0
www.theworldthroughmyeyes.org
www.insight-photography.org
www.youthinfocus.org
www.tphotovoice.org
Ewald, Wendy, 2000, Secret Games, Scala.
Wong, Lana and Hall, Runyon, 2000, Shoot Back: Photos by Kids from the Nairobi Slums, Booth-Clibborn Editions.

Resources, booklets and publications on PhotoVoice projects available from PhotoVoice:
info@photovoice.org / www.photovoice.org

1 Phototherapy
www.phototherapy-centre.com

2 Research
www.dh.gov.uk/travellers
(To order copies contact: information@phf.org.uk)

5 Copyright and intellectual property in the UK
www.own-it.org
www.dacs.org.uk
www.artquest.org.uk/artlaw/

Beyond the Lens: Guide to rights, ethics and business practice in professional photography, The Association of Photographers.

6 Health and safety
www.crbcheck.info


7 Monitoring and evaluation
www.mande.co.uk

(To order copies contact: information@phf.org.uk)

8 Ice-breaker games
www.funattic.com/game_icebreaker.htm
www.funandgames.org/Games_icebreakers.html
www.wnpn.org/resources/icebreaker.htm
Directory of Social change visit: www.dsc.org.uk
Cook, Tim, 1998, Avoiding the Waste-Paper Basket, LVSC

5 Copyright and intellectual property in the UK
www.own-it.org
www.dacs.org.uk
www.artquest.org.uk/artlaw/

Beyond the Lens: Guide to rights, ethics and business practice in professional photography, The Association of Photographers.

6 Health and safety
www.crbcheck.info


7 Monitoring and evaluation
www.mande.co.uk

(To order copies contact: information@phf.org.uk)


8 Ice-breaker games
www.funattic.com/game_icebreaker.htm
www.funandgames.org/Games_icebreakers.html
www.wnpn.org/resources/icebreaker.htm
Teaching photography
www.youthlearn.org/learning/activities/multimedia/photo.html
www.pathtothebest.org
www.pinholephotography.org
Further reading on photography

9 Digital story telling
www.storycenter.org
www.bbc.co.uk/wales/capturewales
www.coe.uh.edu/digital-storytelling
www.storycenter.org
www.digtales.us
www.dsaweb.org
www.teachingteachers.com

10 Facilitation

12 Press, media and exhibitions

Background
PhotoVoice was built on a partnership between Anna Blackman and Tiffany Fairey that originated while both were studying for MA’s in Social Anthropology and Development at Edinburgh University, Scotland. They merged their passions for photography and photojournalism with anthropological and development research and in 1998 individually set up what were to become the two founding projects of PhotoVoice: the StreetVision project in Vietnam and the Rose Class project in Nepal.

After holding an initial joint exhibition in a café near Baker Street, London, during their final degree year, Anna and Tiffany both visited an international photojournalism festival in Perpignan, France (1999). Inspired both by the results of the projects in Vietnam and Nepal and the huge potential still to be fulfilled, they decided to set up PhotoVoice.

PhotoVoice was registered as a company limited by guarantee in March 2000. After three years of working voluntarily for PhotoVoice and juggling part-time media and development jobs, Anna and Tiffany secured a committed and capable board of trustees and a pro-bono lawyer. The organisation obtained charity status in March 2003.

To date there have been over 1,000 direct beneficiaries of PhotoVoice projects, across four continents; indirectly, PhotoVoice’s work has affected tens of thousands.

PhotoVoice was described as a pioneer in the sector, winning widespread support with the public and media and sharing its unique project methodologies with groups all over the world. With a tiny income it has accomplished great things, training socially excluded groups in photojournalism skills to give them a voice. Its students have gone on to study at university, found work in the photographic industry and been commissioned by the BBC.”

Project list
PhotoVoice projects include:

Able Voices / Our Voices
Photography project with disabled adults and young people in Bangladesh and Cameroon, 2004. Run in partnership with Healthlink Worldwide. Local partners: SARPV and FACAPH

Bibin: Shooting Kabul
Photography project with street-working children, Kabul, Afghanistan, 2002-03. Local partner: Aschiana

Children’s Forum
Photography project with young Bhutanese refugees living in camps in the Jhapa and Morang districts, Nepal. Ongoing since 1998. Local partner: Lutheran World Federation

Appendix B: PhotoVoice – background and project list
**Appendix C: Working with PhotoVoice**

**Khmeye**  

**Making Waves**  
Photography project with young people affected by the Tsunami, Sri Lanka, 2005. Run in partnership with Save the Children.

**Mental Wealth**  
Photography project with adults with mental health needs, UK, 2005. Run in partnership with United Response.

**Moving Lives**  
Digital storytelling project with unaccompanied young refugees and local young people, East London, UK, 2005. Local partner: Project DOST.

**On the Move: Voices from the Street**  

**Positive Negatives: Picturing Life with HIV/AIDS**  
Photography project with women living with HIV/AIDS, Kinshasa, People’s Democratic Republic of Congo, 2000-02. Run in partnership with Christian Aid. Local partner: Fondation Femme Plu.

**Ratanakiri Digital Stories**  
Digital storytelling project with indigenous people in Ratanakiri, Cambodia, June 2004. Local partner: CFAC.

**Side-by-Side**  

**Sight of Emotion**  

**Street Vision**  

**Transparency: Living without borders**  
Photography project with unaccompanied young refugees, London, UK, 2002-03. Local partner: Project DOST.

**Unheard Voices, Hidden Lives**  
Photography project with sex workers, gay men, men who have sex with men, and people living with HIV, Cambodia, Ecuador and India, 2006. Run in partnership with the HIV/AIDS Alliance.

**U-Turn: Change the Picture**  

**Young Lives**  
Photography project with children living in poverty, Ethiopia, 2005. Run in partnership with Save the Children.

**Youth Photo-Reflect**  
Photography project with young people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, Orange Farm, Gauteng, South Africa, 2006-2007. Local partner: VRACO.

There are a number of key ways you can get involved with PhotoVoice or support our work.

For up to date information on any of these opportunities please look at the PhotoVoice website or contact us:

- www.photovoice.org
- info@photovoice.org
- tel: 020 7033 3878

**The PhotoVoice Network**  
The PhotoVoice Network, launched in 2004, is the world’s first network for participatory photography projects and practitioners. It is based on PhotoVoice’s belief that great benefits derive from bringing together the myriad of voices from participatory photography projects around the world. These include:

- enabling practitioners to share experiences and resources
- enabling the sharing of best-practice guidelines
- bringing professionalism to the field and raising the profile of participatory photography
- enabling wider audiences to view the work and learn about issues depicted in projects
- creating stronger commercial possibilities for projects and participants
- enabling participants to exchange work with and learn about participants of other projects around the world.

PhotoVoice provides a number of services through the Network which could help you establish your project, develop it further and raise greater awareness of and through it. PhotoVoice is constantly working to expand and develop these services.

The PhotoVoice Network meets both virtually and physically. It is open to:

- individuals who have been on PhotoVoice training courses (see below)
- existing practitioners of Participatory PhotoVoice projects.

Network membership is free and at the discretion of PhotoVoice.

**PhotoVoice training courses**  
From time-to-time PhotoVoice runs intensive training courses in PhotoVoice methodology for those interested in working for PhotoVoice on a freelance consultancy basis or those wishing to establish their own participatory photography projects. The course module covers all aspects detailed in this manual, drawing on the experiences of the PhotoVoice co-founders and existing project facilitators as well as offering further guidelines and resources on issues such as fundraising, monitoring and evaluation, and workshop design and delivery. It includes practical project days, working with participants, and lectures given by visiting and guest lecturers and industry professionals.

**Working or volunteering for PhotoVoice**  
Opportunities exist for ongoing office internships and – from time to time – UK project work. Opportunities are posted on the PhotoVoice website.

To work overseas in either a paid or voluntary capacity for a PhotoVoice project you will, in most cases, have to have joined a PhotoVoice training course.

**PhotoVoice prints and books**  
PhotoVoice offers limited edition prints for sale and has also published booklets on a number of projects. Proceeds are fed back into PhotoVoice and individual projects.
PhotoVoice’s quarterly e-newsletter
You can keep in touch by signing up to this online.

Become a friend of PhotoVoice!
Through a simple subscription starting from just £5 a month you, your family and friends can help PhotoVoice continue its work of empowering some of the most disadvantaged groups in the world with photographic skills. In return you will receive a welcome pack, newsletters and project updates, as well as invitations to private views, talks and other PhotoVoice events.

PhotoVoice
www.photovoice.org