

photoVOICE

# photoVOICE

Voicing Our Individual and Collective Experiences

Wang, Caroline and Mary Ann Burris  
creators of the Photovoice methodology

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*„Photovoice 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.”*



# 3 objectives

Identify, record  
and reflect on  
community  
needs & assets

Promote critical  
dialogue

Reach policy  
makers to enact  
social change

# PhotoVOICE can be used as:

A monitoring or evaluation tool

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Researching changes resulting from an intervention.

A needs assessment or context analysis tool.

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Getting insights into the current situation.  
To provide input in program/intervention development.

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A research tool

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Answering a research question which may or may not be directly linked to a program/Intervention

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An advocacy tool.

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To provide input for a focussed advocacy topic.

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An awareness and empowerment tool.

Participants gain insight into their own situation and that of their peers, share this with others, and realise their ability to act on this.

# Example



“Welcome to all young people! This is what youth friendly services are about. In this picture you see many different pairs of shoes which represent the diversity of young people in Indonesia. The pairs of sandals represent the marginalised groups in Indonesia. The way the shoes are lined up reflects the equal way all young people are treated in these services.”

This picture answers the research question: “Why is it important to you to have access to youth friendly services?”



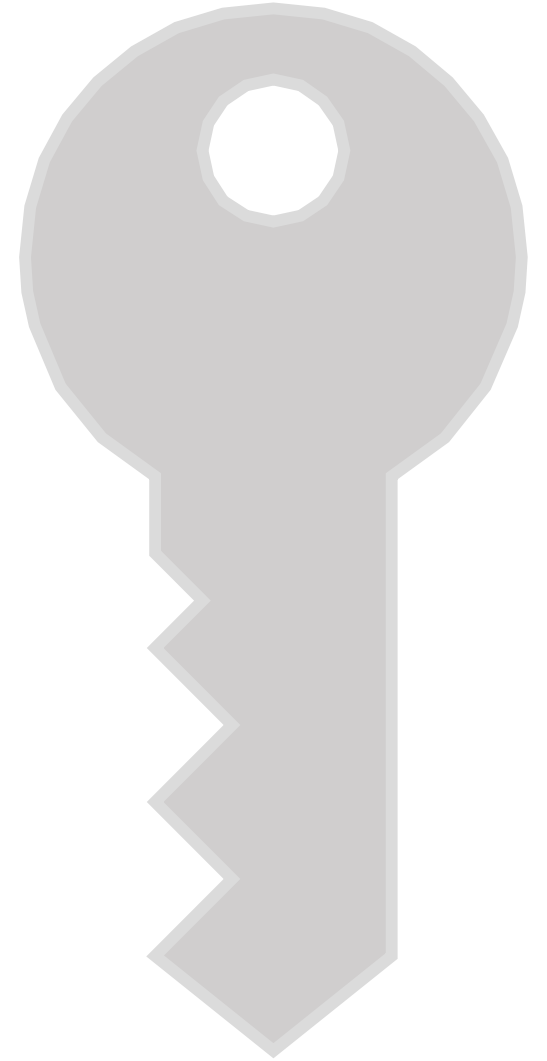
## 2 IMPORTANT KEYS

for a successful  
PhotoVOICE

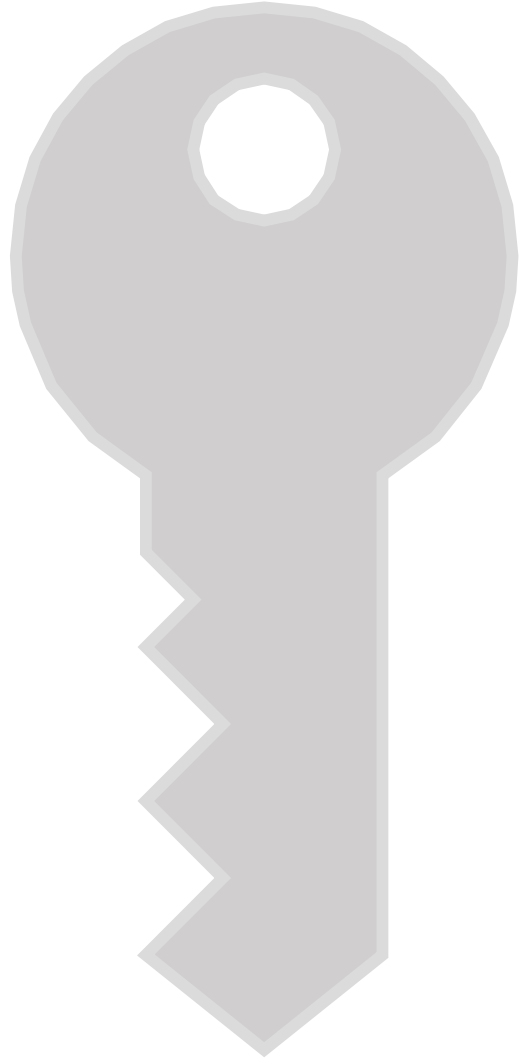




**PARTICIPATORY**







**POLITICAL AGENDA**



# Planning a photo**VOICE**

1. CHOOSE AN INITIAL **GENERAL** TOPIC;
2. **RECRUIT** A GROUP OF PHOTOVOICE PARTICIPANTS (ideally 7 to 10);
3. INTRODUCE THE PHOTOVOICE METHODOLOGY TO PARTICIPANTS AND **FACILITATE** A GROUP DISCUSSION;
4. OBTAIN INFORMED **CONSENT**;

5. COMMUNICATE THE THEME FOR TAKING PICTURES;
6. (DISTRIBUTE CAMERAS TO THE PARTICIPANTS AND REVIEW HOW TO USE THEM);
7. MEET TO DISCUSS PHOTOGRAPHS;
8. PLAN WITH PARTICIPANTS A FORMAT TO SHARE PHOTOGRAPHS AND STORIES WITH POLICY MAKERS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS.

# SHOWeD technique

(Wang 1999)

- What do you **S**ee here?
- What is really **H**appening here?
- How does this relate to **O**ur lives?
- Why does this situation, concern, or strength **e**xist?
- What can we **D**o about it?

Nicolas Rosales Martinez, Alonso Adonay Rosales (grandson) and Maria Cruz Saldana. Nicolas Martinez is one of the most progressive farmers in the area. He has been collecting and preserving seeds in the area as he believes that the indigenous varieties have more nutrients and are more resilient to climate change. His grandson helps out on the farm and is able to name almost every plant his grandfather grows. Location: Santa Cruz Michapa Municipality.



© Jason Taylor 'The Realities of Climate Change in El Salvador'

Concepcion Martinez Vigil is the vice president of the Octavio Ortiz community. He is a farmer who practices organic farming, but occasionally uses a bit of non-organic fertilizer. He is concerned by the climatic changes and flooding which increasingly affects the Lempa River. He believes that his method of farming, along with his hugely diverse crop system, is helping him to continue to feed his family and earn an income. His biggest concern is the summer temperature. A few years ago it was possible to work on the land all day but over the past few years, the mid day sun has become too hot to work.



© Jason Taylor 'The Realities of Climate Change in El Salvador'

Riot police protect soy farmer in Paraguay from local communities who are furious about the impact of industrial soy farming on their livelihoods and health. The soya is primarily exported to feed livestock in other countries.



© Luis Wagner 'Industrial livestock farming, land grabbing and climate change'





© Orin Langelle, 'Struggles for justice'

Copenhagen, Denmark: Clayton Thomas Muller, a Cree Indigenous man from Canada, joins other Indigenous Peoples from around the Earth to lead the “Reclaim Power” march out of the UN Climate Conference in 2009. The march out of the conference was to meet with non-accredited protesters marching towards the conference for a Peoples’ Assembly at the fence surrounding the conference center. Here, participants from both sides would discuss collaborative efforts to find real, peoples’ solutions to the climate crisis. The marches on both sides of the fence were violently attacked by the Danish police and the Peoples’ Assembly did not take place. Some Danish organizers were jailed and charged under anti-terrorism laws. The Copenhagen Climate Conference was where the second round of commitments under the Kyoto Protocol were to be finalized that would take over after the first round of Kyoto commitments expired in 2012. As such, it was a focal point for protests by social movements, Indigenous Peoples and activists from around the world. It ended with the disastrous “Copenhagen Accord,” pushed by the US government, being rejected.

# Climate Change Realities and Resistance

<http://photos.criticalcollective.org/>

# TO REMEMBER!

- The focus is on the content of the photo and to the **meaning** attributed to it and not on the quality of the photograph in itself;
- With photovoice participants are encouraged to tell **their** story, rather than to tell the story;
- No picture is worth the effort if it can bring **harm** to the photographer

photovoice

&

CLIMATE CHANGE

Possible directions:

Awareness raising

Adaptation

Resilience

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# Advantages of photovoice for climate change education

- Community based approach – we can use the local context;
- The process in itself produces awareness raising and debate within a community;
- Makes the scientific knowledge more approachable;
- Photography can make us feel the invisible problem of climate change;
- Looks at both the needs & assets in relation to resilience and adaptation to CC
- ?

Let's talk about your community!

Name one problem or asset related to climate change in your community that could be portrayed with photovoice

## Discussion

What could be the disadvantages/ weak points of photoVOICE?



# References

Wang, Caroline and Mary Ann Burris (1997), *Photovoice: Concept, Methodology, and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment*, *Health Education & Behaviour*, 24: 3, 369-387

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