PHOTOVOICE

Giving voice to participant outcomes through photography
Introduction

A form of visual participatory monitoring and evaluation

Photovoice is a participatory research method that puts cameras into the hands of participants and asks them to document, reflect upon and communicate the outcomes they’re experiencing. Like Most Significant Change, Photovoice gives the power of data collection and synthesis to participants.

Photovoice was originally designed as a research tool for marginalised groups to assess the needs and strengths of their communities. Because virtually anyone can use a camera, photovoice can be a powerful and accessible tool for workers, young people, people who do not read or write in a dominant language or people with socially stigmatized conditions or status. In the context of evaluation, photovoice can give these groups an opportunity to frame outcomes on their own terms.

Contact

The Clear Horizon Academy is Clear Horizon’s flagship learning initiative, designed to bring the skills and expertise of award-winning evaluators who specialise in innovation to a worldwide audience.

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See other tools and resources here.
Advantages of photovoice as an evaluation tool

Photos can carry a large amount of information. A few good photos and captions can convey as much information as a series of participant interviews.

Low cost and easy to share. The spread of smart phones and low-cost cameras have made digital photography increasingly accessible. With a few clicks, participants can share images with the project team, evaluators or each other.

Highly flexible tool. Photovoice can be used in a range of different contexts and adapted for your work. For example, more community-based initiatives, may want to integrate group workshops where participants can choose their favourite photos, identify key themes and make sense of them.

Encourages dialogue. With appropriate ethics requests in place, photos can be shared as a gallery or online to encourage further discussion on the impacts of an initiative.

‘Barebones’ of Photovoice

- Define the purpose of using Photovoice in your context
- Ask participants to take photographs of the changes or outcomes that they have seen as a result of participating in the initiative.
- Ask participants to choose the 3-5 most photographs that best represent the changes they have seen (this exercise can be done individually or as a group)
- Ask participants to contextualise their favourite images with brief captions or stories (for participants with limited writing, this can be done through interview)
- Synthesize and look for patterns across the photos chosen (this can be done with participants)
- Feedback and communicate the results
- Learning and reflection