

Photography for Integration

A resource for running photography projects with young refugees

Contents

- Introduction
- Why are photography projects useful for young refugees?
- How to set up your project: planning and management
 - Defining your project purpose
 - Selecting a project team
 - Selecting participants for your project
 - Working with a partner organisation
 - Logistics
 - Equipment
 - Other workshop resources
 - Planning a workshop
 - Using images publicly
 - Key points in this section
- Designing and running photography workshops
 - Briefing and debriefing
 - Participation
 - Language and literacy considerations
 - Good practice in camera use
 - Looking at images
 - Reviewing and editing
 - Captioning
 - Archiving
 - Monitoring and evaluation
 - The end of the project
 - Key points in this section
- Responsible practice
 - Introduction
 - Balancing project goals
 - Using personal stories as creative material
 - Understanding and managing risk
 - Responsibilities of facilitators
 - Supporting facilitators
 - Public and media exposure: issues of safety and confidentiality
 - Child protection
 - Permission and consent
 - Sustainability
 - Key points in this section
- Games and activities for workshops
 - Introduction
 - Workshop games
 - Introduction to photography
 - Editing skills
 - Captioning skills
 - Discovering people and places
 - Literacy and language skills
 - Exploring gender: boys and girls in the UK
 - Project closure
- Monitoring and evaluation exercises

INTRODUCTION

Photography for Integration is based on PhotoVoice's work with young refugees over the past six years. Through this resource we aim to offer ideas and advice for groups looking to use photography as a tool to support and enable the integration of young refugees. Specifically, to help young people build new lives in the UK: make friends; gain confidence and feel valued; learn the language; reflect safely on their lives and experiences; gain new skills; communicate and express themselves. Photography for Integration is intended as a resource for project managers, youth workers, arts practitioners, teachers, community workers, photographers and anyone else working with young refugees. The model at PhotoVoice is to have a project manager and a small team of facilitators. Your project may be on a smaller scale and may not be using facilitators. Indeed you may be a teacher working on your own with a small group. Whatever the scope of your project, and your role within it, we hope that you'll adapt this resource to your needs. The main sections cover the practicalities and ethics of photography projects with young refugees, and the final section provides examples of workshop activities.

The participatory arts field is a thriving one and the benefits to participants have been widely documented. Since 2002 PhotoVoice has been running award-winning photography, digital media and self-advocacy projects with young refugees. Experience shows that longer-term photography projects are more likely to make a sustainable contribution to refugee integration than short-term projects. We encourage you to bear this in mind when planning a project with young refugees, to allow time for the building of confidence, trust, skills, and relationships. However, we recognise that the constraints of time and resources mean that smaller one-off projects are sometimes all that is realistic.

This resource isn't intended as a generic set of rules or 'how tos'. Anyone who has worked with young refugees will be aware of the enormous complexities and challenges these young people face. No experience is the same and any strategies devised to support young refugees need to take this into account.

Every young person can be creative and communicative with a camera in their hands. It's important to keep in mind when you're working with young refugees that first and foremost they're young people. PhotoVoice has had the privilege of working with this group of inspiring young people for the past six years. We've had lots of fun, and hope you do too!

Liz Orton and Tiffany Fairey
PhotoVoice

"I really enjoyed taking photos, it has been the best experience of my life. Through photography I have looked at things more deeply, like looking into my life, and seeing how to move on. The photos reflect my life back to me. Something about them makes me think of how music links peoples' lives, the way these photos link with mine. Photography has been a therapy for me: it has helped my confidence and helped me express my feelings. Through photography, I learned how to break free of myself."

Loria, New Londoners 2008

WHY ARE PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECTS USEFUL FOR YOUNG REFUGEES?

The situation of young refugees

Though the total number of young refugees under 18 living in the UK isn't known, it's estimated that there are currently 82,000 refugee children in schools. Many young refugees come to the UK with their families but there are an estimated 6,750 unaccompanied or separated children in the UK who've arrived on their own with no parent or guardian.

Many young refugees have experienced conflict and suffered trauma. They've fled countries where major conflicts have taken place or where serious human rights abuses have occurred, including Angola, Ethiopia, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq. Young refugees experience new difficulties on arrival in the UK, which may include the following inter-related problems:

- living in poverty and having little or no money for social activities
- poor housing – often in run-down B&B and hostel accommodation, and frequent moves
- emotional or mental health problems, such as loneliness or depression
- social isolation
- not speaking English
- discrimination and racism
- difficulties in accessing mainstream services, such as GPs or school and college places
- confusing and stressful asylum application procedures, for example, dealing with
- complicated appeals procedures
- living with parents or carers who're experiencing emotional problems themselves, increasing risk of family breakdown
- separation from family and friends
- loss and bereavement
- navigating procedures and making difficult decisions without trusted adult support.

Refugee children also report the following problems in schools:

- racism and bullying
- isolation
- loss of identity
- barriers to educational attainment
- barriers to accessing further and higher education, especially for unaccompanied asylum seekers
- concerns about the future.

Young refugees cite making friends as their top priority.

While many young refugees do experience some or all of the problems above, it's important not to see them as a group defined by problems. Many young refugees are able to adjust quickly to new circumstances in the UK. They demonstrate significant resilience and are keen to develop their talents, benefit from new educational opportunities, and build new relationships. Refugees make considerable social, economic and cultural contributions to the UK.

Why do we work with young refugees?

PhotoVoice's work with young refugees is aimed at supporting integration. We aim to help them to:

- integrate into the education system
- feel valued and respected
- participate in community life
- build their self-confidence
- be part of social networks and relationships
- develop knowledge and skills to take informed decisions and build their lives in the UK.

How does photography help integration?

At its simplest, photography is an accessible tool for self-expression: it can be quickly learned and it's not difficult for young people to take decent pictures. A young refugee – new to the UK – who might be lacking confidence, can quite easily master a basic digital camera. Digital photography gives instant results, and requires no formal training to become an effective tool for communication, observation and creativity.

Overcomes language barriers

Photography is an especially useful creative tool for new arrivals with limited levels of English. The language of images, offers opportunities for communication without using words. Young refugees can show visually, for example, things around them which they think are important, interesting, puzzling, new, or exciting.

Building relationships

At first, all the young refugees we work with – like all young people – are interested in taking pictures of each other more than anything else. They take instantly to the idea of 'posing' for the camera. Both the photographer and the subject quickly get involved in directing and giving instructions to each other. Taking these portraits of each other, in a fun and unthreatening environment becomes a step in building friendships and a sense of immediate community.

Exploring identities

Young people also quickly turn the camera on themselves and looking at their self-portraits over time it's possible to see how they form a kind of visual autobiography. These self-representations are about performance and fantasy, idealisation, experimentation, humour and identity. They act out different roles for themselves: Bollywood star, East London hoodie, Afghani popstar, fighter, athlete, sports star, hard-working student etc. Photography is not just reflecting the process of creating new identities; it's part of the process of rebuilding and renegotiating self-identity.

Self-expression and record-making

Photographs create instant and permanent records. Many of us do this in our everyday lives: we create tracks for ourselves through photos, diaries, videos, etc. When you're uprooted from one place to another the need to do this can be even stronger. Photographs can be built into histories and albums that reflect a new life, a new start. Pictures can decorate walls in sparse bedrooms, fill the gaps with new memories and friends, pictures can be sent to families and friends, they can be emailed and sent through mobiles.

At a time when their lives are being defined by 'official' records and documentation, photographs provide a way for young refugees to create and control their own records and memories. In looking at the world through a lens, in deciding how to frame what they see, young people can mark out conscious moments in the endless process of observation.

Getting to know new places and a new culture

You can use a camera to expand horizons and explore unfamiliar places and cultures. PhotoVoice takes project participants on shoots around London – to the Southbank, along the Thames, to the City; and to places in their local communities – down the high street, to the park, to the local market. Many young refugees have limited opportunities to explore beyond their immediate neighbourhood.

Young refugees are faced with much that is unfamiliar. Attitudes, values, social codes and habits might all be different from their own countries. By photographing the things that seem strange and different young people can familiarise themselves with what is new.

Dialogue and conversation

Photographs can facilitate discussion by creating distance between the photographer and a subject of conversation. A photographer can talk around a subject, via the medium of an image, rather than directly. This depersonalization can help someone who might want to talk but finds it difficult.

Through discussion and dialogue photography enables learning, not just about image-making but about the world around us, and about each other. Engaging in photo projects and viewing and talking about each others' photographs enables conversation about diverse topics from family to religion, relationships to dreams. In examining and discussing what an image communicates and means, opinions are voiced and shared and understandings develop.

Telling stories

The camera is a flexible tool for invention and creativity, and can be used for story-telling. Photos are used to illustrate stories in teenage magazines and children's books and are a reference for many different film makers. Making photo-stories can be a brilliant tool for building confidence, exploring hopes, and different cultural norms and values.

As a tool for public communication

Public opinion is broadly unsympathetic towards refugees. The media has a part to play in this, generating myths about new arrivals, suggesting that traditional British morals are being eroded, and contributing to a climate of anxiety. Participatory photography projects, in which refugees are in control of image production, offer the potential to give the power of representation back to those who are traditionally subjects of the media.

Images are powerful, which means they have great potential as a means of providing young people with a public voice, and as a tool for public education, awareness raising and advocacy. Exhibitions can be held anywhere – in galleries, classrooms, libraries, shopping centres and cinema foyers. You can use anything from glass-framed prints to affordable computer printouts. You can use digital projectors to screen slideshows of images. You can also use images to create postcards, flyers, posters or DVDs and CD-Roms.

The potential for broad public communication is always present in any project, but should never be assumed. Projects should always remain accountable to the needs and desires of participants, who may prefer to maintain the privacy of their work.

'I want to be a free person in this country, to be equal. If you are a refugee, you are seen as dependent. I want to be independent and free, not someone who is waiting to be told what they can do and what they can't do. This photography is about who we are and our way of life as new Londoners. This is our chance, we are making a piece of history.'

Mussie, New Londoners, 2008

Summary of Key Points:

- help young refugees feel valued
- have fun
- re-build, negotiate and play with identities
- explore and learn about a new place
- learn new technical and creative skills
- share ideas, skills and experiences with others
- reflect on difficult issues
- make friends
- speak out
- create memories.

HOW TO SET UP YOUR PROJECT: PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Defining your project purpose

Before you start it's essential to be clear why and for what purpose you're using photography. You need to ask: what's the aim of the project and how is photography going to facilitate this? Photography is an extremely flexible tool, but it's hard to design appropriate workshops unless you've got clear objectives.

Example:

Problem/need

You're a teacher working in a school. New refugee pupils arrive mid-term. They're overwhelmed by the size of the school and by the daily school routines. They're quite isolated in their classes and within the school more generally.

Objectives

- To support the new students to settle into the school
- To build the confidence of new arrivals in using school facilities
- To encourage empathy and understanding for the new arrivals amongst current pupils

Activities

You could design a project where the current pupils use photography to create maps of the school and a 'welcome booklet' for the new arrivals. There could be a portraiture session where new arrivals and current pupils take portraits of each other. These photos could then be displayed on the walls of the classroom with names underneath.

The above example involves identifying clear needs, and a corresponding set of objectives; and designing a methodology which will help meet your objectives.

Consult with the young people participating about the project purpose and design. They may identify priorities and issues which you haven't considered. Their engagement in the project design can be central to ensuring the project meets their needs.

However, young people may find it hard to articulate their needs or even to understand the concept of project consultation if it's unfamiliar to them, especially at the beginning of a project. In this case, especially if the project is led by a non-refugee project leader, it's essential that the aims and objectives are explained clearly, that the process remains sensitive to needs, and open to participant ideas and input during later stages.

Selecting a project team

A good project team is essential. In most situations, running a photography project will require you to hire in external expertise in the form of photographer facilitators. These are people with skills in both the media and in participatory workshop practice. A skilled facilitator is someone used to working inclusively and informally, who understands group dynamics and the needs of vulnerable young people. Typically a facilitator enables and empowers participants and builds relationships, and is not the educational focal point. However, when working with young refugees who're not used to participation, a facilitator will often mix facilitation with more traditional teaching practices. This helps build trust and confidence amongst the group.

As a general rule PhotoVoice facilitators always work in pairs or small teams with an experienced lead facilitator. There are often young people who will need individual support and a team of facilitators can divide themselves as needed between the group and individuals requiring additional support. An important part of PhotoVoice's work with young refugees takes place at a one-to-one level, where the young people are supported, in a safe environment, to talk about their images and to think about what they want to photograph. Many young refugees, particularly separated youth, have limited opportunities to simply hang out with adults and this one-on-one attention is valuable for them.

In photography workshops with large groups of young people all the project team need to have clearly defined roles. Having a clear set of systems makes the team efficient, helps provide a safe space for young people, and underpins successful workshops. When there are lots of young people running around taking pictures, posing for pictures, running out of batteries, downloading images, peering at each other's pictures, swapping prints etc chaos can ensue! Make sure that you have at least one facilitator with good technical skills including archiving, uploading, editing and

viewing. It's important that specific members of the team are given responsibility for archiving and equipment to ensure negatives/files/cameras are not lost.

There needs to be a formal introduction to the project where facilitators can meet each other; be informed about the project and the participants; familiarise themselves with the setting and objectives; and receive training in project systems.

If you're running your own project without bringing in facilitators remember that this can be a learning experience for staff as well as for participants. Allow time to debrief and share thoughts and feelings amongst the team.

If you're commissioning artists or photographers to facilitate the sessions, be clear about the resources and time they'll need to deliver the project. Agree on the terms in a contract for ease of reference.

If you're using translators, include them as much as you can in planning and support them to become 'co-facilitators' as they'll need to be comfortable and know what's going on.

Selecting participants for your project

Unless you're working with a pre-defined group, for example a school class, or a youth group, you'll need to decide who is included in the group. You'll need to decide whether to work exclusively (ie just with refugees) or inclusively. Some projects, especially with new arrivals in need of a safe space, work exclusively with refugees or even with a particular community of refugees. These projects can build confidence and security for young refugees, which help provide the foundations for building subsequent relationships between communities.

But many young refugees don't want to be marked out or included on the basis of their refugee status, and want, more than anything else, to make friends in the local community and be treated like everyone else.

For a project manager, deciding on group composition can be complex, and will depend on the context, the needs of the individuals, how long they've been in the UK, broader integration policies, and the project objectives. In addition to these complex considerations, there'll be more practical criteria for selection such as availability, interest, age and gender.

Working with a partner organisation

It's very important that any photography project for young refugees is firmly located within the generalised provision of professional support. There may be many issues relating to a young person's health, mental well-being, living situation, asylum case, protection etc that arise during the project that are beyond the scope and training of the project staff to deal with. Many photography projects involve some level of partnership, for example, between a host organisation such as a refugee community organisation or a school, and an arts organisation. You might want to draw up a simple agreement which identifies the roles and responsibilities of each party. This helps establish a system for referring issues which arise to the appropriate support organisation. PhotoVoice has worked very successfully in partnership with Dost since 2002 and this partnership has been key to project success.

Working with staff such as youth workers or case-workers who already have a strong existing relationship with the participant can be an excellent way to support participants through a project. On the other hand, it can be liberating for participants to engage with a project as individuals, on their own terms. Either way, it's important to work with and understand the wider support network of young refugees.

Logistics

Logistical issues are generally project specific. Here are some considerations:

Venue

Have you got an appropriate venue for workshops? Is it the right size? Is it familiar to the young people? Will they feel comfortable there? Is it far for them to get to?

Workshop times

Ensure that workshops fit in with the young peoples' timetables. Their availability will depend on whether or not they're in education or working. Generally the summer holidays are a good time when the young people have lots of free time to fill. Christmas is often a hard time for separated young refugees. It's also a good idea to be aware of any relevant religious or cultural events that may impact on a project. In general young refugees, particularly teenagers, have incredibly unpredictable timetables. Apart from being typical teenagers with the tendency to forget arrangements, they also often have meetings with solicitors, doctors or social workers at very short notice.

Workshop duration

Young people have varying levels of concentration and the duration of workshops should be planned to ensure they remain engaged. PhotoVoice has run workshops lasting from a single hour to a whole day. As a general rule more can be achieved in longer workshops but they need to be structured with appropriate breaks and flexibility.

Getting to the workshops

How will the participants get to the venue? Do they need to be accompanied? Will it cost them money to get there? Will it be an issue for young girls, in particular, to get there?

Group composition

Will it be mixed gender? Will it be mixed culture?

Group size

There's no ideal group size, but it's important to have enough resources. PhotoVoice has found that groups of more than 15 young people can be difficult to manage, even with a strong team of facilitators. It's important to break the larger group up, from time to time, to work in smaller groups of three to four, in pairs or individually.

Equipment

Types of cameras

The type of camera used will be determined by cost and existing resources. Few organisations are lucky enough to have ready access to equipment so it usually has to be purchased as part of the project. Most participatory projects rely on simple point-and-shoot, film or digital cameras. These cameras are more than adequate in nearly all circumstances: they're easy to learn to use so technical issues don't impede self-expression. Digital cameras have gone up in quality and come down in cost dramatically in recent years. It's important to get cameras with at least 6 megapixels if the images are going to be printed for public display. You'll need to have access to computers and digital storage facilities such as an external hard drive if you're going to use digital cameras. Cameras can be shared but this can lead to frustration and complications in keeping track of who took which images. If resources permit, it's ideal to work with one camera per participant. For longer-term projects, using manual and SLR cameras can be immensely rewarding, allowing the photographers more control over their photographs; leading to greater skills and knowledge; and higher quality images.

Cameras can get lost, stolen and damaged so it's important to factor the costs of a few spare cameras into project budgets.

Issues of trust

In resource-poor settings a digital camera is a valuable item. You'll need to decide from the outset whether the participants are allowed to take the cameras home, and at what point. PhotoVoice always lets participants take cameras home – not immediately, but after two or three sessions – to help build trust. We regard this as part of the contract made – by taking a camera and agreeing to be responsible and look after it, the participant is underlining their commitment to the project. Allowing participants to take cameras away from the workshops also opens up a far larger subject field as they can explore in their own time and space.

Memory cards

Memory cards currently come in sizes from 128MB to 4GB. How many images fit on the card will also depend on the camera settings. As a guideline a 1GB card will allow about 300 images to be taken if the camera is set to fine quality, large file size. You'll need to decide if you want participants to take that many images and whether there's adequate time and capacity to manage the editing and archiving.

Labelling cameras

The easiest way to manage cameras is for each participant to have an identical camera (so there's no comparison between different qualities) labelled by name. This simplifies image-management and downloading, and also generates a sense of responsibility for the equipment.

Batteries

Rechargeable batteries last longer and are much cheaper in the long run though it requires an initial outlay for the batteries and one or two rechargers. Have two sets of rechargeable batteries for each camera so that when they're depleted you don't have to wait to recharge them. Alternatively purchase cameras with rechargeable Lithium-ion batteries and make sure they're charged before each session.

Computers

If you're using digital cameras you'll need access to at least one computer for uploading images. Aim for a maximum ratio of six participants per computer – and preferably less. Uploading and editing creates queues and waiting time for participants which can be frustrating for everyone.

Printer

It's always desirable to be able to work with prints as well as looking at images on the computer. Prints can be laid out on a table or on the floor and new ideas and ways of looking at them are revealed by moving them around. As editing is better done in steps rather than as a one-off activity, it can be a good idea to do an initial edit on the computer, print the selection and do a second, tighter edit from prints.

If there's no printer on-site, then check out local photo labs for rates and printing times in advance. You might be able to negotiate a special rate. Alternatively, online printers can be good value and high quality.

Projector

If you're working in a group with digital cameras, a projector is a valuable workshop resource. It can be used to enlarge images, view edits and sequences of images, and is a good tool for bringing the whole group together to look at each other's work and give feedback.

Other workshop resources

In addition to technical equipment and stationery, key resources for workshops include a good stock of images for use in discussion and exercises. You can cut these out from newspapers and magazines, and use personal photographs and postcards. You can laminate cut-out images or just stick them onto card. Keep a stock of magazines for participants to look at and see how images are used, to cut out images they like and use for collages. If the budget allows, a collection of photography books are also useful to introduce a wide range of professional, non-commercial photographic imagery such as art photography and photo-journalism. Ensure you get a diverse range of images (it's easy to fall into the trap of choosing images that you like personally); be sensitive to culture, gender and race. If you use foreign news images be aware that they're often of war and poverty. Try and balance them with more 'commonplace' images of other countries. It can lead to a rewarding discussion on how images are culturally read, as participants share insights and thoughts on the images.

Planning your workshop

The success of a good workshop will, to a large extent, depend on thorough forward-planning. Only with a clear set of project systems and procedures can facilitators provide a setting which allows participants to feel secure, the most important foundation for all workshops. It's important to be responsive to the group you're working with, and flexible as unexpected things nearly always happen. This also goes for the overall project schedule which might need adjusting to participant needs. As a rule of thumb, thorough planning is best but you don't have to stick to it rigidly. Some key considerations in planning and preparation are:

make sure there are clear and well-established workshop systems which cover facilitator briefings, and uploading and archiving procedures.

- ensure all the facilitators are aware of their own, and others' roles in the workshop.
- prepare workshop plans and timetables for the whole project.
- prepare a warm-ups which are relevant to each workshop.
- plan activities which allow the group to share and bond.
- allow enough time for everything, bearing in mind that uploading can be time-consuming and is a common bottleneck of activity. Plan for the dead-time created by uploading and editing images.
- allow some time working as individuals or pairs, some in small groups and some as the whole group.
- make sure enough time is left for viewing and editing images, which is as important as taking the images.
- think about whether any activities or themes are likely to be a trigger for personal issues to arise. Is this consistent with the workshop objectives?
- prepare and discuss strategies for meeting the needs of the less participative and confident of the group

Using images publicly

At the outset, or as the project develops, it needs to be decided whether the images being produced by the young people will be viewed publicly. This might be friends and family, or a broader public audience. The great power of images lies in their ability to communicate and tell stories to an audience. Exhibitions, books or websites of images taken by young refugees can be used with great effect to raise public awareness and understanding about the experiences of refugees in this country.

Exhibition openings or image screenings can be a focal point in a project; when all involved can come together to celebrate what's been achieved. It's an opportunity for the young people to take great pride in their work, as they see other people take their work seriously and take note of what they have to say.

Decisions around the public use of images will depend on the project aims and objectives, whether there's a clear strategic role for public communications and how the young people feel about showing their work beyond the group. At some point a conscious and inclusive decision regarding the public use of images needs to be made. There can be protection and support implications which need to be actively considered.

It's not always appropriate for images to be used publicly. Much of the value of photography can be in the therapeutic process of making albums, diaries and histories. This may be a highly personal process that participants don't want to share publicly. At times the prospect of a public event can put harmful pressure on a project – maybe because the young people are unsure about what to expect or because there's the pressure to create images that will conform to audience's expectations. Project managers need to be sensitive to such pressures and not expect refugees to become vehicles for raising issues. Sometimes, projects are a space to escape problems, not necessarily a place to deal with them.

Young people will often have little idea of the impact of showing their work publicly. It's essential that they're appropriately prepared and supported, and are able to opt out at any point.

Key points in this section

- Be clear about your project purpose and plan objectives
- Involve participants in project purpose and design
- Ensure the project team has adequate experience, skills, training, capacity and resources to deliver the project
- Build clear project roles, systems and procedures and train all staff in them
- Think through participant selection carefully, taking into account the immediate and longer term needs of participants
- Make sure that the broader support needs of the young refugees are taken care of, preferably through a partnership with an appropriate support organisation
- Think through all the logistics including equipment and resources in advance
- Consider the implications of using images created through the project publicly
- Plan all aspects of workshops thoroughly – both the content and the delivery – but be prepared to be flexible

DESIGNING AND RUNNING PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

This section is to be read in conjunction with Games and activities for workshops.

Briefing and debriefing

Every workshop should be immediately preceded by a briefing session involving all the staff and facilitators who'll be present in the workshop. The purpose of this is to review the workshop plan, anticipate any issues, ensure all roles are clearly allocated, and go over all the practicalities and timings.

Every workshop should be followed by a debrief, again involving all staff and facilitators. This involves a practical review of what went well in each workshop, what could have gone better, and what changes, if any, need to be made. It should feed into the planning cycle for the next workshop.

Participation

Most refugees will never have participated in a workshop before, having experienced traditional or informal school settings with teacher-focused learning where pupils are expected to listen and write down what the teacher says. Workshops are entirely different in that they don't rely on hierarchy and they aim to allow participants to take more responsibility for their own learning. It can be quite intimidating initially for young people to participate actively, and take creative initiative. Group participation is a skill that has to be learned like other skills, and takes time to develop.

Some practical ideas for encouraging participation are to:

- design good warm-up games
- write participants' names clearly on a board or on labels until everyone knows each others' names
- begin with low-risk activities that are fun and build confidence, and which build the group
- identify and support individuals who are struggling
- work in small groups of three to four
- mix up young people from different countries to avoid language-based groupings establishing themselves
- demonstrate activities before asking participants to do them
- use peer education techniques, which work well when there are a few individuals with more developed skills and confidence
- have a clear workshop structure that participants can understand.

Language and literacy considerations

Most refugees speak English as a second language. Many don't speak any English at all, or have very limited English. Poor language skills can be a source of shyness or embarrassment for some young people. You can build language and literacy considerations into workshops and facilitation styles by:

- using a key words system, picking out between five and ten key words for each workshop
- starting workshops with a refresher of last week's key words
- checking participant understanding frequently by asking participants to explain what's just been said
- having a visual representation of the workshop days/times/activities etc posted on the wall
- structuring workshop ideas and warm-ups to develop language skills
- using well-known words such as OK, facial expressions and prepared cards with happy and unhappy faces on
- maintaining flexibility and awareness amongst facilitators so that they can give additional support to anyone struggling
- encouraging young people to support each other with their English through peer-translation – those with stronger language abilities can help others
- explaining things slowly and being aware that some participants may pretend to understand when they don't
- asking participants how the words translate into their own language, showing that the interest is two-way.

Good practice in camera use

Young people take exceptionally quickly to using digital cameras. It's tempting for participants to snap away endlessly generating hundreds of images, deleting ones which don't immediately please. It can be a good idea to have an exercise early on that allows the participants some time to play with the cameras and take as many pictures as they want, to get this out of their system. As a rule it's important to encourage participants to:

- use discipline in shooting – the best photographers might only take a few pictures, spending time setting up and composing the shot before actually taking it
- not delete any pictures until they've been uploaded onto the computer – self-editing for a beginner is not generally recommended (you could tape over the delete button!)
- delete all files on the camera after the images have been uploaded
- turn off cameras and keep them in their cases when they're not being used
- not change camera settings
- only use the camera with their name on and not to swap with other participants, as this can cause problems in archiving.

Taking good pictures requires moving around with the camera, finding good angles and viewpoints. This can mean lying on the floor or climbing onto a table. Some young people find this physical side of photography difficult initially. One technique for encouraging confidence in movement can be to use physical games and warm-ups.

Depending on how the project develops there's likely to be an element of street or portrait photography. It's important to find time to discuss the ethics of permission with participants. Generally speaking if a photographer is taking pictures on the street they don't need to ask for the subject's permission. However, if someone is likely to feature prominently in an image some photographers feel it's polite to ask them, perhaps not formally, but by indicating the camera and waiting for their response. Other photographers tend not to ask on the grounds that it ruins the picture. This is something you need to discuss with participants before they go out to shoot publicly. Many young refugees find it difficult initially to ask permission but come to enjoy it as a means of meeting and chatting to new people.

Looking at images

Introductory workshops should cover the basics of using cameras, taking and looking at photos. Most young people take to photography quickly. However, learning to look at images, or to express feelings and ideas about an image can take time to develop. The activity of 'looking' can feel strange to a young person initially. Photography has its own language which needs to be learnt over time and practiced. You can start by exploring the basics of composition. Allow time for participants to view each other's images. This is an important part of building the group and getting discussion to happen.

It's also important to introduce the different ways in which photographs can communicate ideas and meanings: through content and composition, colour, representation etc. Looking is culturally specific activity; the things we see and value are personal but also cultural. It's important that young people's opinions – whatever they are – are valued.

Reviewing and editing

Learning to edit – which involves judging the relative qualities of different images and developing an understanding of how to put together a body of work – is as important a skill as taking images. It's challenging to take a good photograph, but even more challenging to explain why it might be seen as good!

At first, it's wise not to push participants too much in terms of editing. Start by asking participants to select their favourites and discuss their choices. Although there are 'rules' about what makes a good image, these are often there to be broken and how we value images is subjective. What's important is that participants are supported in finding the confidence to hold and express an opinion. As the project develops, the critical thought process can be developed.

There are a number of different situations where participants need to edit their work. For example: editing favourite images; editing a narrative such as a photo-story; editing a slideshow; or editing for an end of project show.

In participatory workshops, facilitators and participants can feel unclear about who takes the decisions about editing. Should participants do their own editing? How much should facilitators get involved? It's largely a question of balancing participation and self-expression with skills development.

Some practical guidelines for editing are to:

- leave plenty of time to look at images
- see editing as part of the skills development process, not as something to be squeezed in at the end
- ensure facilitators and participants work together, with facilitators asking questions, listening to answers and giving feedback
- allow participants to make a selection of personal images of themselves and friends in addition to the editing activity
- edit in pairs – this encourages participants to engage with each others' work
- review all final edits as a group using a projector or teaching computer
- encourage participants to discuss their photos, and to find positive qualities in each other's work, using simple language.

Captioning

Photographs almost always carry levels of ambiguity. For many people that's what's so exciting about the medium – meanings are not fixed, and much is left to viewer interpretation. But the potential for using photographs for communication is increased when they're used in combination with writing or words. A good caption will elaborate on the image or on some aspect of the image, rather than merely describe what's in it. It will add an extra dimension that may reveal something of the photographer's thinking behind or feelings towards the image. Words and image as image come together to create something new.

This image below takes on a very different meaning when the caption is read.



"This picture really says a lot about how I was feeling on my 17th birthday. The blown cake shows how I celebrated my birthday with my friends in the UK. The unblown cake shows how I have a hope that one day I will have a birthday with my family in the Congo.

In this country, I feel like a shadow with my real body in my home country; my body is lost somewhere, and nobody knows where. I feel scared, out of myself and really confused about what might happen to me in this country."

By Dorky, New Londoners

Captioning can be a very rewarding experience, encouraging a deeper sense of self-expression, a more involved engagement with the photographic work and an opportunity to work on language skills. On a practical level, captioning images can be challenging – or undesirable - when participants aren't literate in English (and some may not be literate in their own language). This will be an area where facilitators need to play a more proactive role, being highly sensitive to participants' needs. Captioning is a skill which takes time to develop like any other.

You can help generate captions with young people for whom writing is difficult by:

- the facilitator acting as a scribe, discussing the image with the participant, writing down the conversation and reading back possible captions
- providing journals or scrapbooks so writing can be done in participants' own time and at their own pace, perhaps with support from teachers/carers outside the workshops
- asking participants to write in their own language and getting this translated

- encouraging participants to work in same-language peer groups, so they can assist each other
- starting with single word captions, or using a pre-prepared structure (for example, see the 'sense poem' in Captioning skills workshop activity).

Archiving

It can be surprising how many images are produced during a project. Developing a good archiving practice is a key part of workshop organisation and management. Without a simple system – which is understood and followed by all the facilitators – confusion will quickly break out. You'll need to work out this system in advance and make sure that the facilitators understand it.

Some basic principles of archiving are that:

- each student should have their own folder, with each new upload entered as a sub-folder according to the day/date and the activity
- if multiple computers are being used for uploading, at the end of each workshop all image files need to be transferred into a 'master' archive
- images should be backed up after every workshop – it's worth investing in an external hard drive
- one facilitator should have overall responsibility for archiving and back-up
- participants are nearly always interested in the uploading process, so provide clear demonstrations and explanations.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation should be a key part of any project, built into the project from the beginning and budgeted for. Monitoring is the ongoing collection of information as the project progresses and helps planning and management of the project. Evaluation helps assess the impact of the project in the context of the initial aims and strategic concerns. It's extremely valuable to undertake some form of monitoring and evaluation to ensure a project meets its objectives and to ensure project learning and performance is maximised.

Monitoring and evaluation can happen at two levels – amongst the project facilitators, and with the project participants. Facilitators can use various tools including workshop journals, online forums and ongoing de-briefing and evaluation sessions. This does add to facilitator workloads but should be regarded as an intrinsic part of the job, rather than an add-on. These tools enable learning to be captured and create a practitioner support network. End of workshop debriefs are a key tool for monitoring the project. Lessons from one workshop are then incorporated into ongoing activities.

It's important to ascertain participant expectations at the outset of a project and then monitoring and evaluation exercises can be scheduled at various points during the project and at its end. Exercises can explore whether expectations were met, what the young people gained from the project and how it could have been improved. There are examples given in the 'Monitoring and evaluation exercises' section.

The end of the project

Participants need to understand that the project will end, and know when it will end. The project should have in-built exit strategies to ensure that participants feel supported at the end. Research into possible progression routes for participants – such as local photography courses, accessing equipment, online resources – should take place well in advance so that options can be discussed with all participants before the end of the project.

All participants should be given a CD or DVD with all the photographs they've taken during the project. PhotoVoice often allows participants to choose a top ten of favourite images for printing at the end of the project as well. If you're keeping an archive of all the images, explain this to the participants and let them know where it's being kept and for what purpose. See Responsible Practice section for more about the end of projects.

Key points in this section

- Don't assume participation just happens, prepare to nurture and support it through appropriate methodologies
- Make sure all facilitation and teaching is appropriate for limited and varied English levels
- Train participants in all aspects of camera use and care
- Set up a good archiving system, and update it regularly
- Remember that editing and looking at images is as important as taking them
- Allow time to develop captioning skills
- Monitor and evaluate the project
- Prepare for the end of the project

RESPONSIBLE PRACTICE

Introduction

Ethical and responsible practice should lie at the heart of all participatory photography projects. Unless sufficiently thought through and sensitively and flexibly managed, activities may end up doing harm rather than enabling and supporting young people. Their needs and interests – which can be complex and changeable – have to be prioritised over all other considerations. Active participation rarely just happens. Facilitators need to nurture the group, which takes skill, time and understanding.

A key priority is to provide the foundations for participants to feel safe, secure, respected and valued. You can help establish good foundations by:

- introducing the purpose of the project really clearly
- providing simple and regular information about what's going to happen next
- asking participants to set and enforce ground rules
- ensuring participants feel able to opt out of an activity at any given point in time
- being clear what personal or creative risks you might be asking participants to take
- using trust and confidence-building activities
- making sure participants feel listened to and listen to each other
- ensuring all activities are inclusive.

Balancing project goals

The purpose of all photography projects with young refugees is to support the process of integration, either directly or indirectly. This involves a balancing act between the social and skills goals of the project. The tension between these goals is more pronounced in projects which have some kind of public output as the quality of images becomes more important. It's important to make sure that a balance is maintained, and that the social goals are not lost in the drive to produce good photographs.

Using personal stories as creative material

Personal experiences can be rich sources of creative material, and emotional stories have a powerful impact on audiences. It can be tempting to base workshop activities around personal or refugee-related themes. A young person should never experience any pressure – explicit or implicit – to tell their personal story or to talk with a 'refugee voice'. It's neither safe, nor ethical, to assume that this will hold therapeutic value for someone (though it may do for some people at different times). A workshop fulfils different things for different participants. For many it may be a place to forget worries, make friends, be creative and have fun.

You may experience a situation where a participant wants to tell a personal story, either in the workshop itself or to a potential audience. It's important that the implications of this are discussed with the individual. What are their motivations? Is it OK? For the rest of the group? For the facilitators? Who takes that decision? Any discussion with the participant should make clear to them the impact their story may have on potential audiences, and any possible consequences for themselves. The young people will be in the process of making sense of their own lives and – especially if they're new arrivals – their thoughts may jump around frequently between the present, past and the future. If they choose to go ahead, it's important that facilitators are able to support them.

When working with young refugees, it's important to ensure that the project doesn't contribute to the labelling they experience by society and the asylum process, where they're often treated as a refugee first and a young person second. If projects are to succeed in helping young refugees integrate, it's important that they feel respected and valued as a whole person and not just as a refugee.

Understanding and managing risk

Participation in an arts workshop can mean participants taking personal and creative risks for a young person. The job of a facilitator isn't necessarily to minimise those risks but to provide an environment where they can be understood and managed. It's important to:

- recognise that even simple activities can feel risky to participants
- make sure that there are elements of play within activities
- provide participants with a choice and respect those choices
- provide a safe space in which participants feel respected; and ensure participants never feel judged
- understand that it's fine to provide creative challenges to participants
- recognise difference, some young people are more risk-averse or prone than others.

Responsibilities of facilitators

Every young person is unique and will respond differently to being in a workshop. It can take a while for participants to get used to non-hierarchical relationships, and a friendly atmosphere. Workshops can lead to unpredictable emotional and psychological responses for various reasons: a particular trigger; stress and discomfort with the activity; or the feeling that it's safe to let go. It can be challenging in such cases for facilitators to balance the needs of the individual with those of the group.

Facilitators need to refer issues arising to the appropriate support services linked to the young person: a social worker, youth worker, community worker or case worker. In some cases, it may be appropriate to establish more formal links so that a support worker can be in a workshop or able to input into workshop plans.

Facilitators working with young vulnerable people are in a position of responsibility. It's confusing and unsettling for participants if they don't feel clear about their role. Facilitators should recognise the extent of and limits to their responsibility and be qualified to handle it. They need to be mindful that they don't send inappropriate signals, so that young people feel they're expected to share confidences with them, or share their stories to satisfy curiosity. It's not the sign of a good facilitator if a participant starts disclosing personal information to them. Their job is to create conditions for participants to embark on a supported creative and social process.

Facilitators need to lay clear boundaries with young people. Vulnerable young people who lack adult support and relationships may also seek out the company of a supportive adult who they can trust. Facilitators may come to care deeply about the young people they're working with and want to help them. It's professionally inappropriate for facilitators to offer friendship to project participants, but entirely right to work in a way which is open and friendly.

As a rule, facilitators shouldn't offer support beyond the workshop, unless within a structured mentoring programme. This is to protect both the facilitators and the participants. It's the facilitators' responsibility to ensure that they're conscious about their practice, stay aware of dynamics and maintain boundaries. It underlines the need to recruit experienced practitioners who have a clear professional approach to working with vulnerable young people.

If a participant does disclose personal information, either to a single facilitator or to the whole group, it's important that the facilitators know what to do. They can explain that they're not trained in that area and it would be more appropriate for the young person to speak to someone professional. If they won't stop, or it's affecting the rest of the group, then that person will need to leave the workshop until the behaviour is discussed with the appropriate support worker and resolved.

Trust is essential to a successful project and participants must feel sure that confidentiality will be respected. Facilitators must always respect confidentiality (unless there is an over-riding child protection concern). It's important to discuss ground rules to ensure that participants respect each others' confidentiality if something personal is discussed. However, the reality is that while facilitators can endeavour to respect confidentiality, other participants may not always do so.

Supporting facilitators

Project managers need to give facilitators guidelines and support. They can do this by:

- establishing a peer support mechanism for facilitators to help each other deal with issues that arise – an occasional meeting, a virtual forum or extra time during debriefs
- ensuring facilitators understand their own role in group dynamics, and have the skills to reflect on their practice
- ensuring facilitators have access to external supervision – working with vulnerable people can give rise to powerful emotional responses which may require professional support
- establishing clear guidelines and procedures for referral – facilitators need to have the appropriate information and support to deal with difficult situations.

Public and media exposure: issues of safety and confidentiality

Having photos exhibited publicly, whether it's online or in a gallery, involves exposure and risk. Refugees can experience complex feelings about why people want to see their photography, from fear to pride. The creative process should be as much about building self-confidence as about creating images. Participants should feel that they're doing this for themselves, not to satisfy the curiosity of others or because they're being patronised as refugees.

Participants need to discuss the issue of 'being seen' by an audience and its implications. They should be encouraged to think about what they want the audience to take away from looking at their images. They'll need to make sometimes difficult decisions about what personal information or views they want in the public domain. An asylum seeker might face very real threats to their person or their asylum case if they're seen in the wrong way in the public eye.

Attitudes towards public exposure may vary greatly within a group of young people. Some may be keen to show their pictures and talk publicly about their experiences as refugees. Others may not even have discussed their refugee status with their friends and will want to retain their privacy, either by not participating in public work, using a false name, using just their forename, or by not using images which identify them. Others may want to celebrate their photographic achievements but may not be happy to relate their images directly to their refugee status. Some may want to participate but want to keep certain images or captions out of public display. There are many options available to enable a young person to participate without compromising confidentiality.

Participants can get very excited and nervous and it's good to discuss these feelings. High profile projects can mean publicity and media coverage. Their images (and words) may be seen in lots of places by many different people and this may lead to questions. Or it can also involve being recognised or identified by people who the participants don't know personally.

High profile projects may involve interviews with journalists which can be intimidating. Young people need to be accompanied, supported and protected through this process. You'll need to think about who will speak to the media - it's often useful for one or two young people to take on the spokesperson roles - and use role play to practise responding to media questions. Project workers should ensure journalists are briefed regarding appropriate subject matter and young people should be fully prepared for what the interview will entail. Young people should always be accompanied when they're being interviewed and project workers need to ensure that nothing is discussed and printed that may compromise their protection. This may involve consultation with their social or case worker.

If handled sensitively and young people are motivated to speak out to audiences, public exposure can be a hugely rewarding and exciting experience. Young people's images also have significant potential to educate audiences about the successes and struggles of refugee communities and to raise awareness of the experiences and policy issues relating to refugees in the UK.

Child protection

The organisations with whom or for whom you work will probably have their own child protection policies and procedures. All project staff, facilitators and volunteers must understand and observe child protection policies and procedures at all times. There need to be clear steps and actions for the referral of child protection issues and all staff and facilitators need to be fully aware of them. A Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check will need to be held by

facilitators working on the project. If you or any facilitators need to get a new CRB check, you'll need to leave enough time for the application to be processed, which can take a couple of months.

Permission and consent

Issues of permission and consent need to be considered from the outset of a project and are particularly sensitive if images are to be used or shown publicly.

Initially, you must seek permission for the young people to participate in the project from their parents, carers or guardians. In addition, the young people need to be informed about issues of consent, permission and copyright. There are two sides to this – the consent of people who are the subjects of the photographs and the consent and permission of the photographers themselves for the public usage of their images. If images are being used publicly a 'model release form' may be required for the subjects in the pictures. This is especially the case if the pictures feature other young people. Young photographers should also be taught about copyright and understand that they own their images and can decide how they're used. If pictures are to be used publicly the photographers should sign a permission form granting consent. The complicated legal language of consent, copyright and permission forms may be daunting for young people. PhotoVoice uses two forms – one containing all the formal legal requirements and one that translates the 'official' form into more simple language. See the resources section for examples.

Sustainability

All participatory photography projects should give prior consideration to the question – what happens after the project ends? It's irresponsible to leave participants feeling that they participated in something great, and were then abandoned. The social process of integration and the artistic process of development and creativity don't suddenly stop, just because the project has. Participants might want to continue their involvement with photography, or continue the relationships formed within the project. It's important to begin to assess this mid-way through the project, not wait until it's finished. What sort of progression routes would enable some of the benefits and outcomes of the project to continue? These things imply some kind of continued support for participants, though perhaps at a much reduced level. Project organisers need to be realistic about their capacity to sustain relationships and activities and ensure that the project is embedded within ongoing support structures in order for benefits to be long-lasting and sustainable.

Key points in this section

- Ensure all project staff have the necessary skills and experience, and are trained in child protection risks and procedures
- Ensure facilitators understand and maintain appropriate boundaries with young people
- Help participants to make informed choices about public-facing project activities
- Never assume it's appropriate to work with personal stories
- Support young people to deal with public and media exposure
- Ensure that project benefits and outcomes are sustainable and that participants can continue with their photographic work if they want to
- Support facilitators throughout the project
- Establish clear referral procedures for participants
- Respect confidentiality needs at all times

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES FOR WORKSHOPS

Introduction

Participatory photography projects are about more than simply taking photographs. This recognition is central to the PhotoVoice process and is incorporated into all the games and activities outlined below. Preparing to go on a shoot, developing visual literacy and photographic skills, discussing, editing and working with images all play a part. It's within this wider context that photography can reach its full potential as a tool to support the integration of young refugees.

When you're planning a workshop you'll need to work out how any game could fit in with the particular workshop journey. You can adapt these games and activities to suit the needs of the group and project.

It's useful to think about the energy levels of the group when planning games and activities. Do you want an activity which helps pick up energy or brings it down so that participants can focus? Be aware of group dynamics and personalities, as this can make or break small group work.

Some of these activities are appropriate for very new arrivals with limited English, and others are more advanced and require a basic grasp of English. Times have been included as a guideline for planning but these will vary depending on the group. These workshop resources are aimed at facilitators who will be working directly with young people.

Workshop games

Games are a key part of any workshop, and are a useful way to involve the whole group in an activity. They can be used at any point to help group dynamics. A simple warm-up game or ice-breaker can help to break down barriers, overcome initial shyness and build group relationships. They can also help participants focus and feel comfortable and 'present' in the room.

Here's a random mixture of games and activities to choose from. You'll need to judge the mood and confidence levels of the group to see which may be suitable. Some are good for people who've never met before, and others suit a group who're already quite familiar with each other.

1. The name game

Helps people to learn each others' names, and develop language for the workshop.

Get into a circle. Each participant throws a beanbag to someone and says their own name. After a while, switch to saying the name of the person they're throwing to. If you don't have a bean bag you can just roll up a (clean) pair of socks and use them!

Variations on the name game

- a. Get into a circle. Someone starts by saying their name, then the next person in the circle repeats the previous name and then adds their own name. Go round the circle adding names so that the last person is saying the names of everyone else before adding their own name.
- b. Each person uses an adjective to describe how they feel. My name is... and I feel hungry/worried/excited etc. Go round the circle each person repeating previous group names and feelings before their own.
- c. Each person introduces themselves and then uses a simple physical gesture to show how they feel. Everyone in the group repeats their name and the gesture.
- d. Each person uses an adjective beginning with the same letter as their name to describe themselves eg funny Fatima; clever Chris; lovely Latif.

Once people know each others' names you can adapt these games for other purposes such as practising new words, or introducing a workshop theme. For example, go round in a circle:

- adding new items to an imaginary shopping list
- giving an example of a word they might use to describe a photograph
- naming a place they would like to visit
- giving an example of the different services/facilities in a community.

2. Go if you...

A good energiser, and a useful starter when working on portraits as it encourages people to reflect on themselves and their characteristics.

Everyone sits round in a circle on chairs with one person standing in the middle. The person in the middle says 'Go if you ...' and then names a category for example: are a boy; are over 16; have brown hair; live in Westminster. Or they can say 'Go if you like...': football, apples, cinema, the colour blue etc. Everyone who fits the description has to get up and sit in a new chair, leaving someone standing in the middle. The new person in the middle then says 'Go if you...' etc. Facilitators should observe closely and support more reluctant players.

3. Games with a balloon

Good for building energy levels and physical confidence in the room.

Everyone stands in a circle. Bat a balloon into the middle and go round the circle taking it in turns to keep it in the air. Each person returns to their place in the circle after they have batted the balloon.

Do the same again but this time the person says the name of someone else when they bat the balloon. That person bats it next and says the name of someone else etc.

4. Get into order

Helps the group interact and work as a team.

The group has two minutes to get into a line according to a particular category, such as height, date of birthday, first letter of their first name; length or colour of hair etc.

If you want to make this physical and the group are comfortable with it you can do this standing on chairs!

5. Hot and cold

Good for building confidence in expressing an opinion and for increasing energy levels.

Each corner of the room represents an extreme, with an imaginary line joining them. The leader shouts out a series of opposites and everyone has to stand on the imaginary line according to how they feel as a person eg hot and cold; quiet and loud; cat and dog; summer and winter; sugar and spice etc.

6. Count to 10

Good for getting a group to focus and concentrate.

The challenge is for the group to count to ten without more than one person talking at a time. Only one person can say each number, and anyone can say the next number at any time. The catch is that if two people say a number at the same time, they have to start again. This is harder and more fun than it might sound!

7. Friend or foe

Good for building focus and awareness of others.

Each member of the group chooses a 'friend' and a 'foe' without indicating who they've chosen. After the game starts, each person must try to keep as close as possible to their chosen friend and as far away as possible from their foe. It leads to a room full of jostling, laughing people trying to flee their foe and chase their friend.

8. Group size

Good for mixing up groups who may not know each other.

Everyone walks around the room in no particular direction. The leader calls out numbers and everybody has to get into groups of that number as quickly as possible.

9. Tangle

This is only suitable for a group who know each other well. It's a great celebration of a group of people able to work well together.

Everyone stands in a circle with their eyes closed and their arms outstretched. All walk forward and grab two hands from the other side of the circle. Everyone should try to grab two different people's hands. Everyone opens their eyes and the group finds itself in a great big knot! The aim is to untangle the knot, but working as a team and climbing over/under arms etc.

Introduction to photography

Objectives

- To introduce essential skills for looking at images
- To introduce key photographic concepts
- To introduce essential photographic language
- To practise taking photographs

Duration: about 30 minutes per activity; one hour for the Treasure Hunt

Resources: prepared images from newspapers/magazines/photo archives; prepared words for all three activities; cameras; computer; digital projector; hat or bag, enough facilitators to accompany participants outside

Activity 1. A picture tells a thousand words

Participants should work in small groups of three or four with a selection of prepared and varied images from magazines, books etc. They have to find images which show different 'compositional elements' including: colour, black and white, close-up, long distance, landscape, portrait, low angle, high angle, level/side angle, movement, still life, subject in foreground, subject in background, subject on the side, reflection, shadow, pattern with colours, pattern with shapes, pattern with lines, frame within a frame, texture, natural light, artificial light, dark image, flash, shadows, a picture that tells a story, a favourite picture.

Write/print these compositional elements onto pieces of paper and get the participants to select them from a hat or bag, so they know what they're looking for. The slips could also have a picture if literacy/language levels are low, for example a small black and white icon to indicate a black and white photograph.

Activity 2. One subject: 6 viewpoints

Prepare a list of simple subjects that are easily found in the workshop room and write them on slips of paper to be drawn out of a hat or bag by participants. For example: window, table, glass of water, a hat, a door handle, a pair of glasses; a book, some stairs etc. Each participant then takes six different pictures of the same subject – in the foreground; in the background; high angle; low angle; subject in the centre; subject at the side. Make sure that the objects stay in the same place for all the photos.

The purpose of this activity is to encourage participants to look at things in different ways and to develop confidence in moving around with the camera.

Activity 3. A first portrait or landscape

One of the facilitators volunteers to be the subject. Every participant then takes a portrait of the facilitator, using the techniques developed in Activity 2. Download the images onto the computer and view using a projector. Discuss the different portraits. The purpose of this activity is to show how everyone looks at the world differently, everyone has a different way of expressing themselves, and that all pictures are unique and tell us something about the photographer. This activity does not have to be based on a person but could also be of a particular place/object or landscape.

Activity 4. Colours

Write a list of different colours on slips of paper (writing the words with appropriately coloured pens will help if your participants have limited English), and put them into a hat or bag. Each participant draws one out and shoots five images in which the colour features strongly. For this activity it helps if you can broaden the location a little bit beyond the workshop room, for example to the whole school or the street. After downloading, the images are viewed by colour group. Facilitators can encourage a discussion about how colours create a particular feeling, idea or emotion. This helps introduce the idea that an image communicates something beyond the immediate content. It can also help participants understand the effect that cultural background has on interpretation, as colours have different associations and meanings depending on culture.

Activity 5. Treasure Hunt

Give everyone a list of 12 things to photograph – mix up objects and styles. Check everyone understands all the words on the list. Participants can work individually or in pairs. They have about 45 minutes to find and photograph everything..

Examples: something red; something you don't see in your country of origin; a pattern with shapes or lines; a shadow; a picture of the sky; a street sign; a close up of a tree; a street scene; a bicycle in motion etc.

Editing skills

Objectives

- To develop an understanding of the relationships between images
- To develop editing and presentation skills

Duration: Editing 1: one hour; Editing 2: two hours. Editing 3: about 30 minutes depending on the number of groups and how many categories you work with

Resources: prepared images from newspapers/magazines/photo archives; cameras; computer or printer, blue tac

Editing 1

Participants should work in small groups of three to four for Editing 1, 2 and 3. Give each group up to 20 photographs to work from – these can be random images taken from magazines or photo archives. Working as a group, the participants must select four to six images out of the 20 which they feel work well together based on a theme, the subject matter, a style, colour etc. It's up to the group to find what makes a particular set of images work together but if they find this hard the facilitator could provide a theme. Look at the dynamics and relationships between images, look at the body of images as a whole as well as at individual photos. How do the individual images contribute to the whole? What is unifying the images? Play around with different ways of arranging them. Use blue tac to stick them onto a blank wall.

Editing 2

The object of this exercise is to make a series of images about the workshop location (school, community centre, church hall etc). Brainstorm all the different things that could be photographed (for example, people that work there; people attending the workshop; physical spaces inside and outside; facilities; objects; surrounding landscape). Each

person in the group shoots one or two images from the brainstorm list. As a group, make an edit of four or five images. If there is a printer, participants can edit using prints, which is a lot easier. If not, they can edit on a computer.

Editing 3. Scaling images

Give each group a selection of images (seven is a good number) to scale according to a category such as hot to cold, quiet to noisy, happy to sad. This exercise is good at introducing visual literacy – the meaning that we take from photographs and how they work in relation to other images. This is an opportunity for participants to examine how photographic styles and techniques communicate emotions and messages. The groups then discuss each others' selection. You may want to give each group the same images to allow a discussion around the different selections.

Captioning skills

Objectives

- To develop an understanding of the relationship between images and words
- To develop captioning skills

Duration: about 30 minutes per activity

Resources: prepared images and captions from magazines/newspapers, pens and paper, hat or bag

Activity 1. Introduction to captions

Prepare this activity by cutting out some pictures with captions from a newspaper, those with simple captions are best. Separate the pictures and the captions. Working in small groups of three to four, get participants to look at a few prepared images without captions, and ask them what the images are about. Then introduce the captions separately. The group have to match the captions with the correct images. Discuss how captions can change/add to the image.

Activity 2. Words and images

This activity can be prepared from archive images or from magazines etc. Make up several different captions (one word, a phrase or short sentence depending on language abilities) for each of the images, making sure that each image has at least two possible captions.

For example: a photo of a group of people could have the captions: 'Family' or 'When people are poor they have no choice'.

Place all the images on the floor. Give participants a few photos and captions and get them to match them up. They'll need to discuss with each other and with facilitators the meaning of some words and their thoughts on which words go with which images. At the end of the activity they'll see how an image's meaning can change in relation to different words.

Activity 3. Writing captions

Everyone picks their favourite photograph from the archive or from available photo resources including magazines and books. Participants then write a caption about the image, but without describing the obvious things in the image itself. Techniques and questions to stimulate ideas include:

- A sense poem. I see...; I hear ...; I touch...; I feel...; I taste...; I smell.... This exercise comes into its own when you take away the sense prompts afterwards to create a poem.
- Close your eyes and see which bits of the image stand out in your memory
- How does the photograph make you feel?
- Why did you choose the photo? What messages are contained within the photo?

Activity 4. Nonsense captions

Giving images captions picked from a random bag of words can be a fun game and highlights the impact of the text on how we read images. For example, a portrait of a stern figure entitled 'a deer feeding its young' can bring a welcome bit of humour to a workshop.

Discovering people and places

Objectives

- To get to know an area, its services and characteristics
- To work as a team and build friendships
- To improve language, communication and digital media skills
- To develop increased confidence in travelling to and within a location

Duration: Activity 1: two x two-three hour sessions, Activity 2: Session 1: half-day to one day shoot; Session 2: two hours

Resources: cameras, paper, pens, travel budget, printing budget, A2 card, computer; enough facilitators to accompany young people while they're out shooting

Activity 1. Making an image map

The aim of this activity is to get the young people to create an image map of a local area. Initially the project should be discussed together as a group and the objectives explained. The final product could either be a big map that everyone contributes to or maps made individually or in small groups. The final maps could take the form of large collages – made with photographic prints stuck on pieces of paper, the map drawn around the prints – or it could be created digitally on the computer.

Session 1

Have a discussion before going out to shoot and make a list of things to photograph using 'mindmaps' where participants list things from memory. For example – places where we eat, bus stops, the doctors, cinemas, places where young people go, places where different people live, schools, libraries, internet cafes etc.

Then the young people can go out to photograph for one to two hours depending on the size of the area. They can shoot in a big group or break off into smaller groups. They could also incorporate interviews with local people if language levels and time allow.

At the end of the first session everyone comes back, downloads their pictures and discusses in a group how the shooting went – places they liked, pictures they were pleased with, places they didn't know about before etc. If they're doing collages then you'll need to make prints of their pictures from the first session.

Session 2

During the second session the young people create their maps. As well as prints, they can use coloured pens, cut-outs from magazines etc to make their maps as vivid as they want to. If they're working on computers, there's now quite simple software which allows users to embed their own images in a google map to create personalised maps. In the final half an hour hang all the maps (or the final big map) on the wall for a group discussion, focusing on what's been learned about the area. The maps can be taken home or hung in a communal area.

Additional workshops could involve choosing one place on the map to explore further. Participants could then make a more detailed map of that location. Or city-wide guides could be made where the young people travel to all the key locations they need to know (college, the doctors, solicitors, community centres etc) mapping out transport links and locations geographically.

Activity 2. My View of ...

This project provides a young person with the opportunity to present their personal view of a given place or topic. A theme – such as a location (a market, museum, street, park, cultural area etc) or subject – can be chosen by the young people based on a particular interest, or given to them. PhotoVoice has often done this project with the theme ‘My View of London’.

Session 1

Discuss possible ideas with individuals or small groups. It’s a good idea to use postcards, promotional pictures, and landscape photography of the city to spark conversation and expose the young people to different photographic styles and techniques.

Then the young people head out to photograph. It’s a nice idea to try and make the shoot into a day trip (in which case you’ll need to plan refreshments, travel etc). After the shoot, the images are downloaded, and edited down to a short list of about 15 images for printing.

Session 2

Working with the 15 prints the participants do a further edit of about seven images. These can be stuck onto a large piece of card about A1 size and captioned. The work can be hung on a wall to present a mini-exhibition.

Literacy and language skills

Objectives

- To improve English vocabulary
- To develop media language skills
- To build a language resource which can be used by others

Duration: Activity 1: one hour, as ongoing activity over duration of project; Activity 2: 20 minutes
 Activity 3: two-three hours

Resources: cameras, paper, pens, computer, printer

Activity 1. Basic English vocabulary

Choose a shooting area – this could be within a building, school or park. All the young people are given 20 minutes to go and take pictures of five to ten things that they don’t know the English words for. The pictures are then downloaded and viewed on a projector. Participants can help each other with the words they don’t know. All the words are written down and the young people start to create their own visual dictionaries. This project can continue over a period of many weeks with new pictures and words being continually added. You can choose a wall to fill with pictures and their corresponding words or you can make a digital ‘pictionary’ (picture dictionary) and print it out at regular intervals. Individuals can create their own pictionaries in their journals or scrapbooks. If participants are using their cameras outside workshops they can regularly photograph all the things they don’t know the words for. The creative challenge comes when they have to try and take photographs of verbs and actions. Images could also be taken from magazines and newspapers.

A variation on this uses the Treasure Hunt idea in the Introduction to Photography activity. Participants are given a list of about 15 objects – ranging from simple to more difficult words – to photograph.

Activity 2. Basic photographic terms

Write up a list of key photographic terms on a board which everyone can see. Bring in books and magazines with images for participants to look at. Everyone has to choose an image to talk about. Working in small groups of three to four and taking it in turns, each participant has to tell the rest of the group something about the photograph, using three of the words on the list.

Activity 3. Creating a photo story (advanced activity)

Session 1

Begin by looking at some news photographs in small groups. Get participants to explore the stories contained within the image: What's going on? Where's the action? What message does the image convey? What happened immediately before and after the picture was taken?

Give each group a couple of examples of photo-stories: documentary photo-stories which narrate an event through a series of images or photo-stories from teenage magazines which tell a fictional story. Both create a narrative and both use words: get the participants to explore how they work differently.

Session 2

Each small group decides what kind of story it would like to work on, a real/documentary story or a fictional story.

a. A documentary photo-story

Working in small groups of three or four, each group chooses a story they would like to tell. Do they have all the information they need? Do they need to get permission to shoot it? Do they need to do further research through newspapers/web/interviews? They need to allocate roles including story and location research, photographers, interviewers etc to ensure all aspects of the project are catered for. Once they have all the information, they need to make a shot list as a group to ensure that all angles of the story are covered. Include key people, action, detail, context, moments, locations etc. Plan the shoot.

During the shoot, participants should refer to the lessons learned in the first activity and use a variety of styles and techniques.

After the shoot, the images are downloaded. Working in small groups, participants should edit the images down to about 20 pictures ensuring that all aspects of the story are represented. They can work with the printed images to further edit the story down to about six key images. These need to work together as a whole both visually and in terms of the issue/story they're telling.

b. A fictional photo-story

Working in small groups of between four and six people, get the participants to come up with a story idea based on two to three central characters, using brainstorm techniques. It sounds obvious but the story needs a beginning, middle and end; a point of interest; and a sense of drama. Participants should use a storyboard technique to plan the key scenes which need to be shot, working to a maximum of 12 images. They'll need to allocate roles: location scout, director, actors, and photographers.

After the shoot, participants should download all the images and work as a team to do an initial edit. They should print out about 20 images to work with, then edit the selection down to about eight images which tell the story, adding captions where necessary.

Exploring identity

Objectives

- To explore identity
- To develop confidence in self-representation
- To build group cooperation and team working skills

Duration: Activity 1: two to three hours; Activity 2: one hour

Resources: prepared portrait images or books of portrait images; cameras

Activity 1

Spend 30 minutes as a whole group looking at various examples of photographic portraits, discussing different styles, techniques and the many ways in which a portrait can be taken. What can we learn about a person from their portrait?

What kind of things are communicated about characteristics and personality? How does the portrait make us feel about the person? Is it posed? Natural? What's the background and how does it contribute? Where's the person in the frame? Are there props and what's their role?

Ask the young people to discuss what would be important to them in their own self-portraits. Use a simple questionnaire to generate some ideas for example:

Identity: I describe myself as... (Afghani, male, young, fashionable, sporty, handsome etc)

Emotions: I am... (happy/sad/lonely, hard working etc)

Things that make me happy/sad/angry etc are...

Actions: Things I like to do are... (hobbies/sport/entertainment...)

Inspirations: People I admire are... (my teacher, my friend, God etc)

Aspirations: My dream is... (to become a rock star, to go to college etc)

Reflecting on the information from the questionnaire, each person decides where they want to be photographed; what background they want; where they want to be in the frame; what they want to be doing; how much of their body they want in and from what angle; whether they want a prop.

Working in pairs or small groups, participants have about 45 minutes to shoot their self-portraits. They can either direct their own photographs with another participant pressing the shutter, they can hold the camera at arm's length and shoot themselves or use a shutter release cable.

Once finished the pictures are downloaded. Each participant chooses their favourite self-portrait/s. These are all put into a single slideshow and presented back to the group. Everyone feeds back on each portrait and each photographer is given the opportunity to explain why they composed their portrait as they did.

Prints of their best self-portraits can be given to participants once they've been processed. It's quite fun, if the budget allows, to print A4 versions of favourite portraits, stick them onto foam board, and hang them side by side on a wall to create a portrait gallery.

Activity 2

Variations and follow up on Activity 1 include:

- creating a temporary photo studio – with backdrops, lights, costumes and props, to allow dressing up and more formal portraiture
- creating self-portraits that don't include the person but use objects and landscapes to represent something about the person
- composing 'Hockney joiners' – images created in Photoshop from a number of separate images – (requires fast editing in Photoshop by an experienced facilitator)
- creating self-portraits by collaging photographs and images/text taken from magazines and newspapers.

Exploring gender: boys and girls

Objectives

- To explore differences and similarities between different cultures through images
- In particular to explore gender roles and norms in different countries and cultures
- To develop ideas about role models

Duration: Activity 1 and 2: each about one hour, Activity 3: two hours

Resources: lots of images of men, women, boys and girls; scissors, A4 or A3 card, cameras, costumes/dressing-up clothes

Activity 1

Working in small groups of three to four, participants are given ten prepared images of boys/men and ten images of girls/women. Ensure a culturally diverse set of images is prepared. Working in small groups, participants organise a set of images along a line from positive to negative. Pointers for discussion: What makes a negative or positive image of a man or a woman? Are they the same factors for men and women? What things are different or the same about boys/girls in the UK as their country of origin? Which things about being a boy or girl in the UK are completely new or surprising? What do they like or dislike about being a boy or girl in the UK? How do participants feel about how UK society expects them to be as boys and girls?

Activity 2

Depending on the group and what's appropriate, you can build on the first session in a number of ways. Ask the group to create their own representations of positive or negative images of girls/boys and men/women. Using pictures from old prints or from magazines, allow participants to work alone or in pairs to create composite images from cuttings, sticking them onto A4 or A3 card. They can caption these images using single words or short phrases.

Look at images which include both genders and use them to explore issues around relationships between boys and girls, and same sex relationships.

Build on ideas about positive images to look in more detail at role models. What makes a good role model, what are their characteristics, does it have anything to do with gender?

Activity 3 - Dreams and hopes

Brainstorm with the group about their hopes and dreams for the future. Participants could work in pairs, taking turns to ask each other questions, or you could organise a group-based game to come up with ideas. Participants should work out how to represent those ideas visually. A multi-media project can work well here. For example, each participant could use objects or costumes in a photographic portrait. They could then add text, design or cuttings from other images on a printed or digital copy of their portrait to build a multi-media self-portrait representing their hopes and dreams.

Project closure

It's important to end a project with an activity designed especially to provide a sense of closure and celebration. This can help participants reflect on the project as a journey, and process the experience.

Activity 1

You need to do this activity during the session before the last workshop. Each participant has 20 minutes at the computer to choose ten images which they would like as prints as a memory of the project. You can give these to participants at the last session.

Activity 2 - Gift to the Group

Each person takes it in turns to leave an imaginary gift in the centre of the room as an ending present for the group. Or an imaginary photograph representing something which they want to give as a gift to the group.

Activity 3

Everyone sits in a circle and takes it in turn to make a gesture which expresses how they feel about the end of the project. You can also do this using a single word rather than a gesture. If you want to make it more fun or complicated then each participant can list all the previous words or gestures from the group before adding their own.

Activity 4

Make a group slideshow in which everyone has one or two of their favourite pictures and play to music chosen by the group.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION EXERCISES

Examples

1. Words – prepare about 30 simple words on paper or card for example: 'interesting, boring, frustrating, funny, friendly, OK, scary...'. Use positive, neutral and negative terms and ask participants to pick up five words which reflect their feelings about the project.
2. Pictures – get participants to draw a simple picture of a face showing how they feel about the project; or prepare five different faces from unhappy to very happy and ask participants to pick one which shows how they feel about the project.
3. Physical action – stand in a circle and, one by one, get participants to make a physical gesture which shows how they feel about the project.
4. Skills scale – prepare numbers from one to ten on paper or card. Ask participants at the beginning of the project to rate their photography skills, and ask them again at the end. You can also use this for other categories – depending on project objectives – such as language skills, self-confidence, friendships in the group, understanding of UK communities etc.
5. Sentence starters – write up the following incomplete sentences on a board where everyone can see them. The thing I liked most was...; My favourite picture is...; I would have liked the workshop better if...; The most important thing I have learned is...etc. Ask participants to complete the sentences by writing on post-it notes and sticking them on the board. You can use the answers for a group discussion.