PHOTOVOICE GUIDANCE

10 SIMPLE STEPS TO INVOLVE CHILDREN IN NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Save the Children

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We save children's lives. We fight for their rights.
We help them fulfil their potential

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Cover photo: Children practie use of cameras in Bangladesh (Photo: Tanvir Ahmed /Save the Children)

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INTRODUCTION

Save the Children is a leading independent organisation working to increase fulfilment of children's rights. Save the Children's vision is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection and development. To achieve this we must honour our commitment to involve children in all stages of programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Children's participation and accountability

Children's participation and accountability are part of our core values. Children's participation refers to children having the opportunity to express a view, influence decision-making and to contribute towards achieving change. Participation is not about 'doing something nice for and with children' - it is a fundamental right that has been ratified by the UN Convention on Rights of the Child (article 12) and which we have a responsibility to promote, irrespective of children's ages, vulnerabilities and different abilities. Children's participation relates strongly to the HAP (Humanitarian Accountability Partnership) Standard for Accountability and Quality Management, insofar as it involves giving children the power to share their perspectives, which we have an obligation to consider in order to improve the quality and appropriateness of our programmes. Please see the HAP Standard for more information, available at www.hapinternational.org.

What will be the benefits to programmes?

Adopting approaches and tools that foster accountability and participation bring important practical advantages to our programmes, including:
- Improved decision-making and better informed responses and outcomes.
- An insight into children's lives, leading to organisational learning.
- Increased credibility and accountability.
- Informed advocacy with key stakeholders.
- A body of evidence from children, from which robust policy asks can be created.
- Participation makes projects more relevant and thereby improves value for money.

About this guidance document

Although the principles of children's participation and accountability are not new, and we are already promoting children's participation and accountability to varying degrees, there continues to be a need to embed innovative and participatory tools into our 'ways of working' throughout the project cycle. This guidance document has been designed to introduce you to one such tool, namely Photovoice, and provides you with 10 simple steps to deliver and facilitate children's participation through Photovoice.

This *Photovoice Guidance* is primarily aimed at country-level Save the Children staff and partners responsible for implementing development or humanitarian programmes. It brings together practical and tested 'how-to' guidance from colleagues in Bangladesh (Save the Children, 2014a, b). It will include key learning points from their experience.

There is no blueprint for setting up a Photovoice project. Each project will have to be customised to reflect the context, thematic area, resources and experience available to support the facilitation of the project. It is therefore important that you do not consider the 10 steps outlined in this guidance note as the only 'right' way to facilitate Photovoice, but that you continually think about how these steps and key learning points can help you set up a Photovoice project that reflects your thematic area and objectives. We hope you find this guide useful and welcome your feedback.

I PHOTOVOICE

PHOTOVOICE

You have probably heard the saying: 'a picture is worth a thousand words' and can think of images that left you with a lasting impression. Photographs have the unique ability to communicate across cultural and linguistic barriers, are easily shared and can spark dialogue. Picture taking can be fun and is accessible to most ages and skillsets. It is these characteristics of photography that highlight its potential to offer marginalised groups the opportunity to communicate their perspectives of daily life, capturing their struggles and coping strategies, that will make local stakeholders listen. Digital technology has strengthened these characteristics still further. However, this very power also means it must be used responsibly.

What is Photovoice?

Photovoice is a participatory action research methodology that was coined by Caroline Wang in the 1990s. She describes Photovoice as a methodology that enables people to identify, represent and enhance their community and life circumstances through photography. Underlining its potential to enable personal and community change, she goes on to say that Photovoice is a process that "entrusts cameras to the hands of people to enable them to act as recorders, and potential analysts for social action and change, in their own communities. It uses the immediacy of the visual image and accompanying stories to furnish the evidence and to promote an effective, participatory means of sharing expertise to create healthful public policy" (Wang and Buris 1997).

Photovoice has its roots in Paulo Freire's approach to critical education which argues that anyone could and should be able to critically engage with their personal and social reality. It was also influenced by feminist theory which emphasises the voices of the marginalised; recognising that those who have voice are the ones who set the agenda.

The value of photography as a means of engaging children has long been recognised. But not only are images, and the stories behind them, important sources of information, the process of capturing, discussing and sharing the images are as important as the images themselves. Research suggests that Photovoice can also contribute to the self-development of the participants through fostering recognition of the need for change, improved self-awareness of local circumstances, personal worthiness and confidence, as well as awareness of social resources and problem-solving abilities. The process has the potential to be empowering.

Photovoice has been used in all corners of the world and with a variety of different participants, including children living in refugee camps, children living with HIV, street and working children, as well as children with disabilities. Photovoice has also been used for a variety of different purposes, including advocacy, income generation, research, needs assessments, programme monitoring and evaluation. PhotoVoice.org is a British organisation dedicated to promotion of Photovoice as a method to empower marginalised communities. Visit their website for examples of how Photovoice has been used and further guidance (www.photovoice.org)

Remember – Photovoice has the potential to:

➔ Create a safe environment for critical reflection
➔ Engage children and communities in active listening and dialogue
➔ Move children and communities toward collective action
➔ Inform the broader society and more powerful stakeholders to help facilitate community change

As detailed above, Photovoice projects aim to make voices heard and support the self-development of participants. This section will outline how the combination of these two broad aims has the potential to contribute to enhanced programme impact and quality.

Photovoice in the programme cycle

Photovoice projects can be delivered and facilitated at various stages of the programme cycle. As depicted in Figure 1, this includes at the **planning stage**, where Photovoice can be used as a needs assessment tool and to develop a more contextual understanding of the context in which a programme is embedded. In addition to understanding children's needs, this might include an analysis of children's coping strategies, giving us an insight into the innate resources and support structures that we will need to strengthen. Obtaining children's voices at the planning stage, can effectively ensure a programme targets the articulated needs of children and resonates with their lived realities. Photovoice can also be used at this stage to re-define what success and impact looks like, transforming monitoring and evaluation frameworks. This guidance book looks explicitly at how you can involve children in the planning and needs assessment stage using Photovoice.

During the **implementation stage**, Photovoice can be used to understand barriers and facilitators to programme success and impact. Photovoice can enable children to depict and communicate any potential unintended consequences of a programme, requiring Save the Children to respond and make the necessary changes. Similarly, Photovoice can be used to understand the facilitators of programme success, encouraging Save the Children to do more of 'what works'. Such a Photovoice project can map out the different contextual and operational factors that contribute to programme success or failure, highlighting important programmatic lessons that can inform future programming.

At the **evaluation stage**, Photovoice can be used to provide children with the opportunity to depict and describe stories of change. These stories can refer to both positive and negative changes as well as those more or less significant. Photovoice at this stage can also be used to gather children's perspectives of programme strengths and limitations, contributing to an understanding of programme impact.
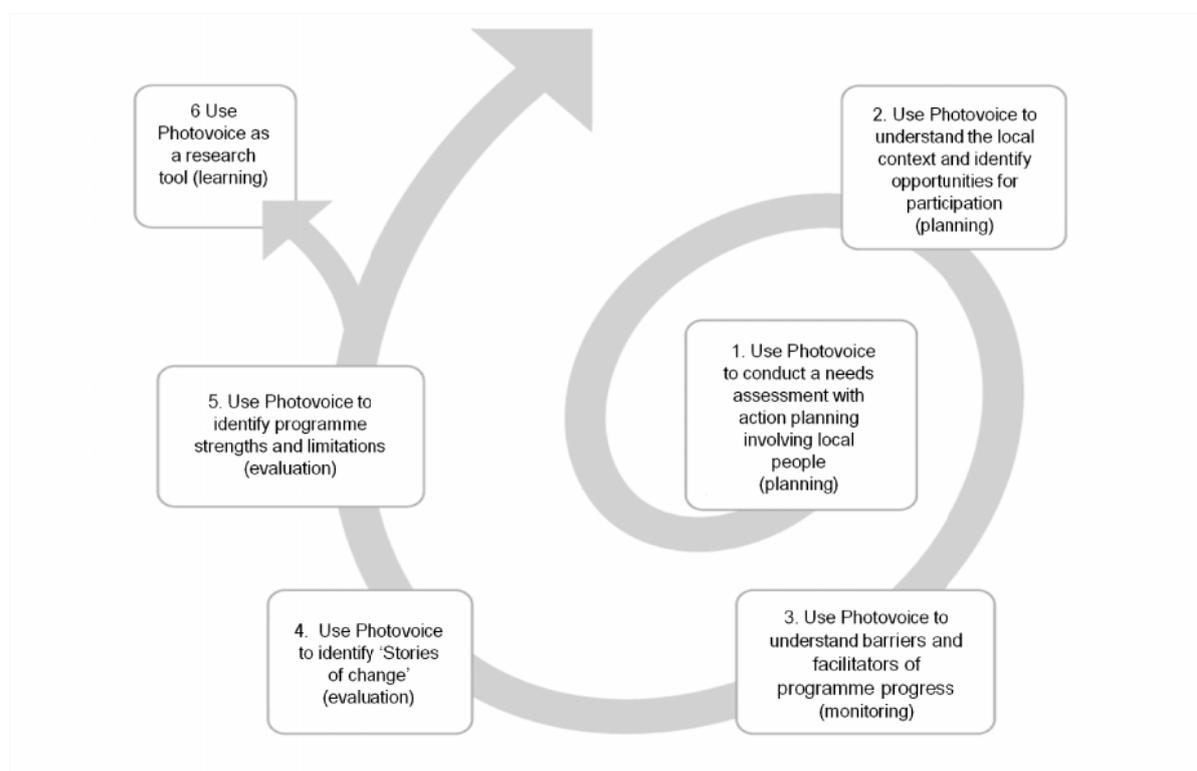

Figure 1: Using Photovoice in the programme cycle

At any point during the programme cycle Photovoice can be used as a **research tool**, advancing our understanding of a particular area. This might include an investigation into gender relations or the role of community participation in the programme or to explore the impact of a new challenge within the community.

Bringing children's voices to the fore at different stages of the programme cycle provides us with a unique opportunity to adjust a programme so that it resonates with children's *real* needs and lived realities – prerequisites for programme impact and quality. If Photovoice is used at all stages of the programme cycle, it can also serve the purpose of **monitoring progress**.

Remember – Photovoice can:

➔ Provide a perspective of a situation from the point of view of those who are affected but are not in control of resources
➔ Provide powerful visual descriptions to communicate to stakeholders, including Save the Children.
➔ Include the most vulnerable/excluded (e.g. illiterate)
➔ Be used to redefine programme goals
➔ Capture not only needs but also assets and strengths
➔ Be used at all stages of the programme cycle
➔ Improve programme quality and impact, but **only** if we take children's voices seriously and respond accordingly.

![Save the Children]

Mollahat Photovoice project, Bangladesh

In April 2013, Food Security and Livelihoods staff at Save the Children in Bangladesh met to reflect on current monitoring and evaluation progress. Two important areas where further efforts were needed emerged from the meeting:

i. A need to encourage increased beneficiary (particularly child) participation throughout project cycles (including needs assessments).
ii. A need to strengthen feedback mechanisms of learning from project intervention to external audiences.

Photovoice was identified as an appropriate tool to foster local accountability and learning as well as to involve children in the needs assessment of their new Mollahat Most Critical 1000 Days Programme (MCDP) tackling chronic malnutrition in Southwest Bangladesh.

The aim was to give children the opportunity to voice their concerns and challenges and to use this information to engage with other local stakeholders in the response to overcome malnutrition.

The Food Security and Livelihood (FSL) team tasked with facilitating this project teamed up with their Child Rights Governance (CRG) colleagues whose in-house capacity and expertise in engaging children and young people in photojournalism was used to build the capacity of the FSL team to use Photovoice.

2 PLANNING AND DESIGN

PLANNING AND DESIGN

Photovoice is a complex process that requires a variety of different skills, knowledge and resources. To design a Photovoice project that is feasible in a given context, with sufficiently concrete and clear aims and objectives, there is a need to foster team work and discussions between a variety of stakeholders.

Questions to consider

To plan and design a Photovoice project, a few key questions need to be considered early on in the inception phase. These include:

What is the purpose? What are the broader goals of the project?
It is important for you to have a clear idea about what the purpose of the project is. Is it to engage children and youth as part of a needs assessment? Or does it serve the purpose of generating learning and evidence, requiring more of a research approach? Clarity around these questions will support the team to mobilise and find the stakeholders with the expertise required.

Where will funding come from?
Photovoice projects come at a cost, which may determine the scope of the project. It is therefore important that you are realistic about what resources (e.g. staff time and money) are required for the project to be implemented.

- Develop a budget early on that considers human resources, travel, equipment, the participants, dissemination activities as well as contingency.

What is your timeframe?
There is no set rule on how long a Photovoice project should take; it really depends on how you design the project. Photovoice projects can last from anywhere between a couple of days to a year or more.

- Key factors influencing the timeframe include the length of time participants have to take pictures, including the number of cycles in which participants come together to reflect on their photographs before they return to their communities to take more pictures.
- It will also be important to consider whether Photovoice should be instigated at a particular time of the year based on the children's availability, taking into account seasons or the school calendar.

Who will you be working with?
As explained earlier, Photovoice requires the support and input from a variety of local stakeholders and partners.

- You may consider partnering up with a local government department to gain their interest or permission to facilitate the project.
- You may also want to link up with a local partner organisation and get their support in sensitising the local community prior to the roll out.
- You may also wish to contact Save the Children colleagues who have expertise and previous experience of facilitating Photovoice projects.
- Internally, ensure that you have senior management on board at the early start of the design phase and they understand the advantages of the approach.
- If you are working on programmes that address different sectoral issues, compose a team comprising different members to reflect the different needs of the programme.

Look at your team composition for taking Photovoice forward. Depending on the aim and objectives, you will need different skill sets.

- You will need someone who is good at working with children as the main facilitator.
- You will need team members with documentation, communication and research experience if you want to capture the findings of the work for a range of different outputs.

What child safeguarding procedures need to be in place?
Save the Children has a responsibility to safeguard children, keeping them out of harm's way. A Photovoice project involving children does not come without risk and it is your responsibility to consider these risks and take measures to mitigate them.

- You may for example review organisational child protection policies and identify ways to follow these policies.
- You may also require any facilitator working directly with the children to undergo a criminal records check.
- You can arrange refreshers trainings on child safeguarding.
- Investigate the need for insurance in order to protect the participants from any unforeseen risks.
- Work with your 'health and safety' and 'child safeguarding' colleagues to develop a comprehensive plan that ensures the safety of all participants.

How will the findings be disseminated?
As providing voice to the most marginalised is core to Photovoice, it is important that the target audience for the findings of the Photovoice project has been considered from the start. This also provides clarity to the purpose of the project.

- Consider whether there is a role for the target audience to get involved in the Photovoice project, increasing their stake in the project.
- Develop a dissemination strategy that considers what media will be used to communicate the children's voices and photographs, the desired reach and social change you would like to see as an outcome of your dissemination strategy.
- It is important not to stop after the Photovoice captions have been developed as the use of these captions more widely to raise awareness of certain issues among stakeholders can prove powerful for advocacy purposes.

Once you have considered the above questions, you are ready to design and plan a Photovoice project.

Aims and objectives

A first step is to transform your overarching purpose into a set of aims and objectives of the project. Aims are meant to 'paint a picture' of your Photovoice project. They are either broad statements of your desired outcomes or express some of your intentions with the project. Aims might include:

1. To use Photovoice to explore children's perspectives of malnutrition
2. To give children a voice to communicate their perspectives of malnutrition
3. To explore the role of Photovoice in needs assessments

These broad, but different, aims are meant to emphasize what a given project seeks to achieve. These aims will lead to different projects. The first aim points to a project that uses Photovoice as a research tool to examine children's perspectives of malnutrition. The second aim relates to a project with an emphasis on disseminating children's perspectives. The third aim suggests a project that will

explore the role of Photovoice, as a methodology, in generating information along the programme cycle. If you are working with a particular group of children, for instance street and working children, or in a particular context, you can include those identifiers in your description of the project aim(s).

Objectives on the other hand should describe the steps you will have to take to meet your Photovoice aim(s). Objectives should also convey your intentions, but be specific, measurable, appropriate/achievable, relevant/realistic and timebound (SMART). If the aim of the project is to give children a voice to communicate their perspectives of malnutrition, objectives may include, but are not limited to:

- To initiate a new partnership with one local stakeholder
- To establish collaboration between e.g., the Child Rights Governance and Food Security and Livelihood teams
- To develop training tools that can be used to facilitate Photovoice
- To facilitate three workshops
- To organize a strategic meeting with key decision makers at both local, regional and national level
- To support the development of an exhibition of Photographs and stories

With your aims and objectives set out, you are ready to identify the people you will need to work with in order to execute the project.

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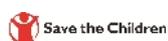
Aim of the Mollahat Photovoice project, Bangladesh

In the Mollahat Photovoice project in Bangladesh, Photovoice was designed to be used as a 'needs assessment' prior to the roll out of a new programme looking at chronic malnutrition. The overall aim of was to capture the views and perceptions of children and young people on the key needs and challenges within their local community whilst simultaneously exploring the value of Photovoice itself as a tool for capturing voices of children and young people in different stages of the programme cycle (in this case as a needs assessment). Subsequently, we also trialled various mechanisms for using the evidence gathered during Photovoice as a platform for discussion with other stakeholders on nutrition.

Setting up a team

Bringing people together and harnessing different networks and skills sets can make or break a Photovoice project. Depending on the scale and aims of your project, you might consider setting up different teams with specific objectives. These might include:

- **A reference or advisory group**, which can be used to involve key stakeholders who either have got particular set of skills and know-how that you can draw on to inform the development and design of the project. You may also decide to include decision-makers, increasing the likelihood that they will be influenced by the project and its findings. It is important that any reference group also involves the key population that is of focus in the project. Reference or advisory groups can be set up at local, national, regional and national levels.
- **A project team**, which takes responsibility for the design and implementation of the project. A project team can be made up of several sub-teams, including those responsible for i) the design of the project (e.g. someone who has experience of working and facilitating children, research and communication experience for documentation purposes ; photography experience to provide session on how to use cameras); ii) facilitating the process of Photovoice (e.g., trainers) and; iii) those that make the project possible by organizing the logistics (this can be supported by partner implementing staff).
- **A monitoring and evaluation team**, which takes responsibility for ensuring the project is accountable to both the targeted key population and the donors. They are also tasked with the responsibility of documenting learning and facilitating exchange between teams, projects and country offices.

Irrespective of what kind of team you are trying to set up, make sure children and young people's representatives are included in the team and that they have been selected by children and young people themselves.

Selecting participants and a setting

You can select participants in many different ways. What is important is that the criteria match the target group as set out in your aims and objectives. Strategies to recruit participants might include:

- **Random sampling** where you randomly select a group of participants from a population.
- **Purposeful sampling** where you purposefully select a group of participants either because you can do so in a way that is convenient, or because you want to learn something that requires you to purposefully select participants based on their background. You for example look for participants who represent either extreme or typical cases or meet a particular criterion you have set. If you struggle to identify potential participants you can ask local stakeholders or other participants if they can recommend others to participate. This is also referred to as snowball sampling.
- **Stratified sampling** is good for projects that want to compare and contrast the responses of different target groups. You may for example want to compare the voices of boys or girls, or between children from different communities.

It can help to work with local partner organisations in the recruitment of participants. Their knowledge of the local setting and of Save the Children can ensure there is a good fit between the participants and Save the Children. You can also recruit through educational establishments, sports associations, community-based and faith-based organisations to mention a few.

But how many participants do you need to recruit? This very much depends on your project objectives, the budget and staff time available to you, but 10-20 people is typically an ideal size. More

people can of course participate. As Photovoice can take up a lot of time, expect some participants to drop out in the process. Keep that in mind when you recruit participants.

Ethical considerations

The public nature of photography infringes on the privacy/anonymity of people. People, who agree to appear in a photo, or have a photo taken of their home, may not necessarily know what the captions and reflections that will accompany the photo will say. This makes Photovoice an ethical minefield with potentially serious implications, requiring a number of considerations to be made. These include:

- When taking a picture one has to be careful about not **intruding into one's private space**, whether that means taking a picture of someone's home or a picture of a person.
- Being careful about not **disclosing embarrassing facts** about individuals. It would for example be inappropriate to take a photograph of someone doing something that may incriminate them or if they are in a compromised position (e.g., sick and bedridden)
- Being careful about not **giving individuals a false impression** by refraining from telling them how the image will be used.
- Being aware of **how local people will react** to having their community documented through photography.

A number of things can be done to overcome some of these ethical dilemmas. These include:

- Making sure **participants are adequately trained and sensitized** on the ethical implications of using Photovoice in their setting. It is crucial for the participants to reflect on the specific ethical dilemmas of using Photovoice in their setting and for them to map out ways to overcome these challenges.
- If participants took a picture of someone and want to write a story that reflects badly on them, or if participants decided not take a picture because it would infringe on their personal space or disclose something embarrassing about them, they can **draw a picture** instead.
- It is important to **sensitize local communities** on the Photovoice project, making them aware of its aims and objectives, and to obtain collective consent for the project. This is particularly important for the safety of the children.
- Another step to **increase transparency** about the project, and the role of Photovoice participants, is to equip the participants with t-shirts (e.g., with a camera printed on it), a cap, an ID card and/or a research bag that carries the logo and name of their group and potentially of Save the Children. The participants can also carry a brochure or information sheet giving detail about the Photovoice project, its aims and objectives.
- To give back to the participants and the local community, it is good practice to **provide prints of the photographs** to the participants and those who appear on the photos.
- You also have the responsibility to safeguard Photovoice participants. It is therefore important you **conduct a risk assessment** and map out what some of the risks of participating in the project might be. You can then take steps to mitigate the risk and make sure the participants are fully informed about these risks before agreeing to participate.

Obtaining informed consent is a measure that seeks to formalise a response to ethical dilemmas. Three different types of consent forms can be adopted in a Photovoice project. These are:

1. **Informed consent** involves full disclosure of the aim, objectives and potential risks/benefits to the Photovoice participants (the photographers) as well as reassuring that they have the right to withdraw at any point in the project. Participants should also be guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity where possible. Once the project has been fully

explained, as well as their rights and responsibilities, written or oral consent can be sought. If the participants are under the age of 18, additional consent should be sought from their parents.

2. **'Model' consent** is an agreement between the Photovoice participant (the photographer) and the persons who appear on the photo (the 'models'). The agreement seeks permission from the 'model' to i) take their picture and ii) to use it for a particular and declared purpose. 'Model' consent is required when you take a photograph of one or two individuals who can be clearly identified; when you take pictures inside someone's home; and when you document the life of an individual. For many child and youth participants, obtaining 'model' consent is challenging. You can adopt different strategies to make this process more informal, for example by giving the participants little flyers that explain the project and a notebook for them to gather signatures or thumb prints.

3. **Photo release consent** is a third type of consent form that is primarily used to give permission to the project to make available any, or some, photographs. This form can be used to agree on copyrights and whether the participant's real name or a pseudonym shall be used. You can use this form as a back-up if you feel insecure about the informed nature of the first two consent forms, or if you the purpose of project has changed slightly. The Photo release consent form can be discounted if the first two forms provide sufficient detail.

Remember – Consent to participate should also not be considered a once-and-for-all event, but should be continually negotiated throughout the Photovoice project. It is therefore important that you continually mentor staff and participants on the ethical principles and actions underlying Photovoice.

Honour the principles laid out in the 'right of the child to be heard', which demand that all processes in which a child or children are heard and participate, must be:

➔ **Transparent and informative** – where children are provided with full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about the implications of their participation in the study.

➔ **Voluntary** - children should never be coerced in participation.

➔ **Respectful** - children's views have to be treated with respect and they should be provided with opportunities to initiate ideas and activities.

➔ **Relevant** - the issues on which children have the right to express their views must be of real relevance to their lives and enable them to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities.

➔ **Child-friendly** - environments and working methods should be adapted to children's capacities.

➔ **Inclusive** - participation must be inclusive, avoid existing patterns of discrimination, and encourage opportunities for marginalized children, including both girls and boys, to be involved.

➔ **Supported by training** - adults need preparation, skills and support to facilitate children's participation effectively, to provide them, for example, with skills in listening, working jointly with children and engaging children effectively in accordance with their evolving capacities.

➔ **Safe and sensitive to risk** - adults must take every precaution to minimize the risk to children of violence, exploitation or any other negative consequence of their participation.

➔ **Accountable** – children and 'models' must be informed as to how their pictures and voices will be interpreted and used and, where necessary, provided with the opportunity to challenge and influence the analysis.

Workshop facilitation

The ultimate aim of a Photovoice facilitator is to empower participants to identify, represent and enhance their community through photography. In order to do this, facilitators need to perform various roles, which include the planning of participatory workshops, the promotion of equal participation in the workshops, the building of trust and an open environment for sharing. These roles require particular skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. These may include:

- **Knowledge of various Participatory, Learning and Action (PLA) tools** and how to use them. PLA tools help local people participate in the planning, action, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes. Save the Children has got a number of resources on how to use PLA tools (visit http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se where you can find and upload materials).
- Having good **knowledge of Photovoice**, its aim and objectives as well as being aware of other Photovoice manuals, such as the one produced by PhotoVoice.org (www.photovoice.org/PV_Manual.pdf).
- Ability to **work as part of a team**.
- Experience and skills in **facilitating group discussions** that enables everyone to participate, including children (http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/so-you-want-consult-children-toolkit-good-practice).
- Being able to **ask questions effectively** in a way that brings forward local perspectives. This is done through open-ended questions (e.g., Why? What? When? Where? Who? And How?) and by probing further, asking for examples and more information.
- Being able to **listen actively**, for example through using body language and facial expressions that show your interest and understanding of the issues being discussed.

A few key attitudes and behaviours that Photovoice facilitators should try and strive for include:

- Being **flexible** (as opposed to being rigid)
- Being **patient** (as opposed to being in a rush)
- Being **humble** and respect local views (as opposed to imposing your own ideas and views)
- Create a **fun and informal** atmosphere (as opposed to being serious and formal). This is critical when working with children and young people.
- Being **practical and concrete** (as opposed to theoretical and vague)
- **Trusting** people (as opposed to undermining their ideas and doubting their decisions)
- **Being one of them**, sit, stand and dress like the participants (as opposed to standing out as a teacher and outsider)

Remember – Not everyone has got the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to facilitate a Photovoice project, particularly when working with children. Some people are better suited to facilitate Photovoice than others. Look at the different skills within your team and decide appropriately. It is useful to do a trial run of the exercise prior to roll out in the field. This can be incorporated within the Training of Trainers session and can increase confidence.

The team and schedule of Mollahat Photovoice project, Bangladesh

The team comprised a mixture of FSL and CRG colleagues for design and facilitation. Photovoice was rolled out over a period of 5 consecutive days where the last day was an exhibition event of the Photovoice captions of children (see Table below for a break-down of session). The facilitator team comprised two main facilitators (one responsible for overall facilitation and the other for photography), 4 co-facilitators and a documentation team of 2.The children were split into four groups where one co-facilitator sat in each group whose role was to support the children with the various conceptual work and to accompany the children in the field whilst taking the photos (see Save the Children 2014a,b for more detail).

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Introduction to Photovoice	Recap of day 1	Recap of day 2	Recap of day 3	Exhibition development
Activity clock	How to use a camera		Needs of children in Mollahat	
Problem analysis	How to take good pictures		Positive aspects of Mollahat	
Cause analysis	Visualisation of problem tree	Picture taking	Picture selection and caption development	Exhibition
Impact on children's lives	Developing and discussing story boards		Mock exhibition presentation	

3 DELIVERING AND FACILITATING PHOTOVOICE

DELIVERING AND FACILITATING PHOTOVOICE

Photovoice projects can be implemented in many different ways. There is no single right way of delivering and facilitating a Photovoice project. Flexibility is important, not least so that you can tailor Photovoice to your context and target groups. This also gives you the chance to be creative and innovative, exploring new and different ways of using Photovoice.

Although Photovoice projects can take different shapes and forms, there are some key elements and principles that would be good to follow. To help you deliver and facilitate a Photovoice project with children as part of a needs assessment, you may consider adopting a version of these 10 core steps:

Step 1: Community sensitisation and recruitment

It is important to be accountable to the communities in which your Photovoice project will take place. You will need to provide local community members with timely, relevant and clear information about the Photovoice project. You may not be able to gather the entire community, nor may this be necessary. A good starting point may be to reach out to local government representatives and community influentials to get their permission to facilitate Photovoice and follow their lead on who to invite to a community meeting about Photovoice.

Community meetings provide you with an opportunity to introduce the planned Photovoice project and to gain their support of the Photovoice project. It is particularly important to obtain their authorisation for participants to walk around in their community and take pictures. Community meetings can also be used to explore what may be acceptable or unacceptable ways of taking photographs, and whether there are areas within the community that participants should avoid. Community meetings also provide an opportunity for you to start identifying participants.

> **Remember** – It is important that staff who carry out the community facilitation are fully aware of the aims and objectives of the Photovoice project. This is important; both to 'sell' the project well and obtain buy-in as well as to avoid creating inaccurate or unrealistic expectations.

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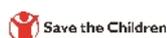
Community sensitisation and recruitment in Mollahat Photovoice project, Bangladesh

Project staff visited Mollahat several times before the project started. During the initial visits, staff discussed Photovoice with relevant local government officials to get their acceptance and approval to undertake the exercise with the local community. These preliminary visits were also used to explore where Photovoice could be carried out as well as identifying a venue for hosting the workshops. A secondary education office was also consulted in order to identify when the Ramadan vacation would start, freeing up time for children and youth to participate in the project.

Project staff also worked with the leadership of local primary and secondary schools to identify children who met a set of criteria matching the project's target group. Through a process of participatory wealth ranking, children who met the criteria were identified and invited to participate, after which consent from parents was sought. Whilst the wealth ranking exercise proved effective in terms of getting an equal mix of extreme poor and moderate poor, getting an equal spread of ages proved more difficult.

During the selection process, it emerged that it was difficult to find 'working' children (only 2 were included in final group). Moreover, a number of children initially selected dropped out, which meant that an additional five children had to be recruited. The final selection included 14 girls and 11 boys, most of whom were around the age of 11 to 12. This experience demonstrates the importance of flexibility.

Step 2: Introductions and establishing group dynamics

Once you have mobilised the community and identified participants, you are ready to get started with the delivery and facilitation of Photovoice. At the first workshop, participants and facilitators will get introduced to each other. This is a vital step as the success of a Photovoice project depends partly on the group dynamics and rapport that exist amongst the Photovoice participants. If the participants do not communicate or feel open with each other, this will undermine the voices being brought forward. When establishing your facilitator team, it is useful to ensure that the main facilitator is someone with prior experience of working with children, or is someone who has got strong interpersonal skills.

A good way to establish group dynamics and prepare participants for the Photovoice project is through games. Most children enjoy games. They are not only fun, they can also foster a feeling of togetherness, both between children and between facilitators and children and establish rapport if working through groups. Through games, children and facilitators can learn more about each other and acquire social skills and confidence that will make them better researchers.

To get ideas and tips for rapport-building and icebreaker games with children consult the 'A Parrot on your Shoulder?' resource - developed by the International HIV/AIDS Alliance. The resource is available from the Save the Children Resource Centre (http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/parrot-your-shoulder-guide-working-orphans-and-vulnerable-children).

Remember – Not all children feel equally comfortable with sharing and playing with other children. So please do not force anyone to participate in a game. Make sure the games are appropriate to the context, age, gender and different abilities of the children. Also choose games that are appropriate to aims and objectives of the Photovoice project, making sure they develop interpersonal skills that will be relevant to the Photovoice project.

Establishing group dynamics in Mollahat Photovoice project, Bangladesh

After an introduction to the Photovoice project, the main facilitator carried out icebreakers amongst the children which included a mini journalism game where children pretended to be journalists. This was used to encourage children to introduce themselves to each other and take down key notes about each other to report back to the group as a whole. This was also used as a test to gauge the note-taking ability of the children. This proved important for the later exercise of developing captions to accompany the photographs.

The children and young people were then divided into teams with one co-facilitator per group. Teams were given names according to colours. These colours used for documentation purposes and to help identify the differences between each of the groups through the course of the different exercises. Dividing the children into teams made the process more manageable and also encouraged rapport within the groups and a fun level of competition between the groups. In Mollahat experience, the teams were divided according to gender and age: older girls and boys, younger boys and girls. It was expected that there may be age and gender differences in the discussions. The co-facilitator remained with their team throughout the course of the programme to build and develop rapport throughout. The co-facilitators were also responsible for going out with the team during the photography session and for the caption development which was also important to safeguard the children.

Icebreakers
(Photo: Julie Newton/Save the Children)

Step 3: Focusing children on a thematic area

Once a safe and open environment has been created, you can start the process of helping the children to think about issues that might be worth exploring using Photovoice. This is best done using Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) tools, which are interactive and, as their name suggest, enable participatory learning.

Although there may be occasions where you can let children and youth fully decide what overarching theme to study, as a development practitioner you may find yourself working within confines of the interests, values and mandate of Save the Children and its programme. You may be guided by a grant proposal or a programme within your thematic area, leaving the purpose and scope of the Photovoice project explicit (e.g. a needs assessment for a food security and livelihood programme in Bangladesh). This means there is a limit to the direction of the Photovoice project.

Participants can still play an important role in refining the project goals (see Step 4). Moreover, the process of focusing children on a thematic area, and with a particular purpose, can be carefully facilitated in such a way that participants feel a sense of ownership and involvement in setting the agenda. However, to avoid 'facipulation' (using participatory facilitation as a guise of manipulating Photovoice participants in a particular direction), it is important to be transparent about the scope of the project and its intended purpose as well as to explore what other possibilities there may be

for participants to explore 'out-of-scope' themes (from a thematic project perspective) with other Save the Children teams or organisations.

A number of different PLA tools can be used to guide and focus children on a thematic area. These include:

- **Mapping tools** can be used to help participants map out the different impacts and effects of an issue on their community and life circumstances. An example of a mapping tool is 'body mapping', which uses the drawing of a body as a platform to discuss local views and perceptions about the impact and effects of an issue (e.g., malnutrition) on someone's body and mind. Other examples include 'community mapping'; 'service mapping'; 'transect walks' and so on.
- **Time analysis tools** are useful to explore how the effects or impact of an issue change over time. An example of a time analysis tool is a 'daily diagram' or 'daily activity chart', which depicts how people spend their time over the course of a *typical* week day or weekend day, perhaps at different seasons of the year. Other examples include 'seasonal health and disease calendars'; 'history profile'; 'before and now diagrams' and so on.
- **Linkages and relationship tools** provide participants with the opportunity to explore the causes and effects of an issue. An example of a linkages and relationship tool is the 'problem tree', which, through the drawing of a tree enables participants to depict the problem (the trunk), the causes of the problem (the roots) and the effects of the problem (the branches). Other examples include 'spider-grams'; 'visual mapping' and so on.
- **Prioritisation and quantification tools** provide Photovoice participants with an opportunity to quantify and rank the significance of an issue. An example of such a tool is the 'low hanging fruit tree' where pieces of paper cut to represent a fruit represents an activity or issue. These fruits, or issues, can then be glued to a tree drawing, with lower hanging fruits being easier to implement (if activities) or of lower priority (if an issue to be addressed). Photovoice participants can use this process to rank and prioritise activities or issues. Other examples include 'activity prioritization grid'; 'action planning diagram'; 'matrix ranking' and so on.

These tools can be used creatively and sequenced in such a way that the facilitator can carefully guide the participants in the direction of your thematic area. Once the participants have decided to look at issues resonating with your thematic area, you can proceed with using PLA tools that will help the participants unpack the issues in more depth. If your study is guided by an established model of framework, you can use PLA tools that uncover information relevant to the framework (for an example, see case study below).

For more detailed examples of PLA tools, and how to use them, please refer to one of the following resources:

Save the Children (2008) A kit of tools for participatory research and evaluation with children, young people and adults: http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/sites/default/files/documents/kit-of-tools_1.pdf

Save the Children (2003) So you want to consult with children? A toolkit of good practice: http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/so-you-want-consult-children-toolkit-good-practice

International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2006) tools together now! 100 participatory tools to mobilise communities for HIV/AIDS: http://www.aidsalliance.org/includes/Publication/Tools_Together_Now_2009.pdf

Remember – PLA tools are visuals that provide a springboard for diverse voices and perspectives to be considered. They aim to facilitate joint learning and give participants a level of control of how local knowledge is identified and used to facilitate social change. When facilitating a workshop using PLA, to encourage participants to think about an issue, you may consider the following learning points:

→ Pilot the PLA tools with colleagues and work out what PLAs are best suited to your project and your team's strengths. Identify what tools to use in order to build up an empowering sequence of discovery and learning.
→ Be careful not to give away your opinion on the subject matter, biasing local perspectives.
→ Do not be prescriptive or facilitate PLA tools in a way that undermines local views. Make sure children talk about issues that reflect 'their problems' and not what you perceive to be their problems.
→ Use many different PLA tools to ensure that all participants get a chance to engage with a tool they feel comfortable contributing to.
→ As children participate to different degrees, it is the role of the facilitator to ensure that everyone gets an equal chance to speak and contribute.
→ As issues may affect boys and girls differently, you may consider separating them. Similarly, you can keep different socio-economic groups together.
→ Work with small and manageable groups.
→ Use a facilitator who speaks the local language and who can relate to issues that are being discussed.
→ Don't rush through a workshop; let things evolve at their own pace.

![Save the Children logo]

Focusing down to the problem of nutrition, Mollahat Photovoice project, Bangladesh

To focus children on the issue of nutrition in preparation for a needs assessment, a couple of PLA tools were used in the following sequence:

1: An 'activity clock' exercise was used as a bridge to lead on to a discussion about the problems and challenges the children face in their life. These problems would provide a snapshot of the 'needs' of children within the area. The facilitator drew a large clock on the board and prompted the children - What do you do when you get up? Describe a general day? The facilitator prompted the children to talk about their daily activities (non-Ramadan). Each team was given flip chart paper to write down their general day activities within their groups and

Problems, causes and effects of undernutrition
(Photo: Julie Newton/Save the Children)

then feedback in plenary. They were urged to make it specific to their age group and gender.

2: The 'problem tree' was the core activity of the day and served the purpose of helping the children draw linkages between the problems, causes and impact on their lives. Using the activity clocks as a reminder, the first stage involved identifying the general problems, which was followed by a process of filtering down to the specific problems and grouping them under 'issues' such as education, health, discrimination etc. Different colour cards for the different groups helped with the documentation purposes in terms of identifying which groups said what. This process was used as an entry point to explain that Save the Children was setting up a new project in Mollahat that would promote better nutritional outcomes. It was explained that we could not address all problems they identified, but we would be able to address some of the issues they had raised in the 'health box' which touched upon nutrition (e.g. health, disease, food scarcity and food quality).

Problem tree
(Photo: Julie Newton/Save the Children)

To explore the level of understanding of nutrition amongst the group, another facilitator took the floor with translation from the research assistant and asked the group "what do you understand by nutrition?" The children participants, particularly the older ones, spoke of how "nutritious food gives us energy, helps us fight diseases and also helps us grow well".

To introduce the importance of the '1000 days' concept, the facilitator used a vignette of a poor adolescent girl who was unable to eat three times a day; eating mainly rice and limited vegetables. Due to poverty, she had to marry at an early age and quickly became pregnant. Because she was not eating well, this also affected the growth of her child during pregnancy. When the child was born, was low birth weight and the mother did not know the accurate way to feed her child. The period of child's life up to age of 2 is most critical as it affects the brain development and other growth issues. The vignette sparked a lot of debate and discussion around issues related to food, under nutrition, unsafe water and hand washing.

As a result of this discussion, it was explained that the remaining of session would focus on their 'health' box which would be re-labelled/renamed to health, nutrition and food. The problem tree was then introduced and it was explained that we would focus on these problems from now on and go deeper into exploring their views on why these problems were taking place within their community. Each group pasted their respective 'problems' on to the 'trunk' of the 'problem tree' and began to identify causes (roots) and effects (branches) of the problems.

Step 4: Project goals

After sensitising participants to your thematic area and the overall intention with the Photovoice project (e.g. a needs assessment) you can work with the Photovoice participants to set specific project goals.

It is important that Photovoice participants are involved in refining project goals. This will ensure the piece of work reflects their perceived needs of participants and not those of Save the Children. It also helps sustain their interest and participation in the project.

A project goal can consist of one or two statements that the Photovoice participants agree upon. The statements should specify intended results of the project and could start off with something like "this Photovoice project will contribute to…" or "this Photovoice provides…"

If you are using Photovoice to conduct a needs assessment, your project goal statements might look something like:

- This Photovoice project provides an overview of children's perspectives of the causes and effects of undernutrition
- This Photovoice project will feed into the Mollahat Most Critical 1000 days Programme by gathering information for a needs assessment

After you have agreed on a project goal statement you can define the success criteria by asking the following questions:

- "What does success look like?"
- "How do we know that the Photovoice project has ended?"
- "How do we know we have done a great job?"
- and finally, "How will all this be measured?"

> **Remember** –
>
> → Goals are high level statements that provide overall context for what the project is trying to achieve
> → Because the goal is at a high-level, it may take more than one activity to achieve it
> → A project goal gives the Photovoice participants a sense of purpose, helping them stay focused and motivated

Step 5: Introducing photography and use of cameras

'Photography literacy' differs substantially across contexts and social group. In some contexts older children and youth have access to camera phones and upload images to social media sites on a regular basis. In other contexts, children and youth have never held a camera in their hand. It is important that you tailor your Photovoice project to the participants, their context and the budget available. Within your team, it is useful to delegate the responsibility for giving a specific session on the use of cameras as part of the facilitator's role. Examples of types of cameras you might use include:

- **Disposable cameras** are useful for when you work with children who have never had a camera in their hands before, and who will only be taking a single roll of pictures (unless

you will give them a new disposable camera each time). Disposable cameras are inexpensive and useful if the security of the cameras cannot be assured.

- **Regular still cameras** share many of the same benefits to disposable cameras, but are perhaps easier to access. If you plan to give the children an opportunity to take many rolls of film, this would also be a preferred option.
- **Digital cameras** are more expensive, but allow your participants to take pictures, view them and delete as they wish. This, coupled with the advances of digital cameras, means that photographs taken with a digital camera tend to be of higher quality. It also means they can be reused in other contexts.
- **Camera phones** share many of the same benefits as digital cameras and are in some contexts readily available.

Regardless of what camera type will be used in the project, work with the participants to make sure they:

- Understand the different **functions of the camera**. This includes turning the camera on and off or using the flash.
- Know how to **use the camera** and take pictures. They may not know the benefits of looking through the lens or which button to press. Some cameras need winding.
- Know how to **change or charge the battery.**
- Are aware of key elements of **good photography**, such as knowing what needs to be in frame to capture the story, the composition of the picture, holding the camera still, are considerate of the role of light, lines and movement, and make a deliberate choice of taking either a landscape or portrait photo.
- **Practice** using the cameras, both to learn from common mistakes and to explore different ways of taking 'good' pictures. To help the participants practice their photography skills you can prepare a 'picture treasure hunt', where you develop a list of items, shapes, colours or feelings/expression that participants are to capture through photography within a set period of time.

Workshops on the use of cameras also provide an opportunity to discuss the power and ethics of camera use (see also the 'ethical considerations' on page 15). The discussion could be led by the following questions:
- What is an acceptable way to approach someone to take their picture?
- Can you take pictures of other people without their knowledge?
- When would you not want to have your picture taken?
- To whom might you wish to give the photographs? And what might be the implications?

Remember – not to make any assumptions about participants' previous experience of using cameras

- → The living arrangements of Photovoice participants may not be conducive for keeping expensive cameras (e.g. leaking ceilings or homes with no locks). If you have local implementing NGO partners, you could arrange for them to safeguard the cameras during the course of the session at the end of each day.
- → Practice makes perfect. Give the Photovoice participants plenty of time to practice their use of the cameras. Often, this part of the workshop is the most fun for the children as it is the first time they have ever held a camera
- → Make sure your co-facilitators know how to use the cameras so that they can provide technical advice when the children are in the field.

Using cameras workshop, Mollahat Photovoice project, Bangladesh

The food security and livelihood team leading the project was joined by an expert on communications and photography with prior experience of working with children, from the child rights governance team. A specific session on how to use cameras and ethics was incorporated into the session, providing the children with an opportunity to try out using cameras. The facilitator kicked off the session by asking children about whether they had mobile phones with cameras. This was used as an entry point for the facilitator to introduce the digital camera, with emphasis on the basic features of point and shoot camera with all the technical specifications (on/off, battery power, focusing on subjects, memory cards). He also talked about the practicalities of composing different pictures portraits,

Practicing taking pictures
(Photo: Julie Newton/Save the Children)

lighting, landscapes, moving subjects and so forth. The session covered the issues of ethics, consent forms, building rapport with subjects and what to do/not do. In particular, it was highlighted that for any individual that we wanted to use the image for the exhibition, we would have to get consent.

Ground rules were particularly emphasised in terms of not taking photos without consent forms or photos of nakedness. Throughout, each of the children within the group was given the opportunity to handle the camera and try shooting pictures.

It was also decided, for transparency and child protection reasons, that the children would wear a 'Photovoice uniform', namely specially printed t-shirts and caps, when roaming around in the community taking photos.

Mollahat Photovoice project participants wearing their "Photovoice uniform"

(Photo: Tanvir Ahmed/Save the Children)

Step 6: Speaking out through photography

Related to goal setting is the process of deciding how best to speak out and capture the issues of importance to Photovoice participants and the goals of the project. It is good practice for Photovoice participants to have some kind of guidance that can keep them focused on the 'issues at heart of the project'. This guidance can be developed either by the project team or in partnership with the Photovoice participants. If time and skills are available, facilitate a process where Photovoice participants develop and agree on a set of questions that can guide their photography and story-telling. If however you are pressed with time, you can offer a small series of questions and ask for their approval or suggestions for changes,. These could include:

General
- 'What is your life like?'
- 'What is good about your life?'
- 'What makes you strong?' and
- 'What needs to change?'

Thematic example
- 'What health, food and nutrition problems do you face?
- 'What are the causes of these problems?
- 'What are the effects of these problems?' and
- 'What helps you cope with some of these problems? '

The general questions are good for capturing a whole array of challenges and contextualising them in children's everyday lives. Although these general questions, when asked in the context of clearly defined project goals, may be answered in relation to your thematic area and purpose, there is a risk that they may not provide you with the detailed information you require for your project. You can therefore develop more specific questions that relate explicitly to your thematic area and project goal. Regardless of how general or specific your guidance is, this approach does not pre-define the issues and you should allow the Photovoice participants to capture a range of issues they perceive to be relevant.

Remember – Guidance needs to be clear, age appropriate and accessible.

➔ Guidance questions need to be discussed and written in the local language.
➔ Guidance questions can be printed on small stickers and attached to the back of the camera (if using disposable cameras) or written on small card linked to the neck string of the camera.

Photography guidance, Mollahat Photovoice project, Bangladesh

The Mollahat Photovoice project adopted a version of the second approach described above. A 'problem tree', because of its focus on problems, causes and effects, was first used to map out the children's perceived problems (food insecurity, under nutrition, health), their understanding of the causes of these problems and the impact of these problems on their lives.

Groups of children were given coloured poster paper and asked to add to their 'problem tree' problems, causes, and impacts that they, as a group, had identified as the most relevant and important issues. The colours of the cards corresponded to the group names to support documentation. Following this, they were also asked to provide detail on the 'type of image' they would take to capture the interface between a problem, cause or impact and identify where they would be able to capture this image in the form of a 'story board'. In this instance, children in each of their groups would often identify particular individuals or households where such an image might be found. The groups were given 30 min to develop these story boards and then feedback in plenary which stories and images they were going to take. On average, each group identified two stories to describe the linkages of events from problem, causes and impact. A plenary was also used as an opportunity to challenge the children in the choice of images chosen and whether these were appropriate and ethical to take. This preparation and guidance was seen as necessary in terms for efficacy of timing so that the children/young people had a clear agenda on the sort of images they would be going into the field to collect.

Developing story boards
(Photo: Julie Newton/Save the Children)

Step 7: Taking pictures

Photovoice participants can adopt a variety of strategies to capture stories of interest to the project. They can for example:

- Document their **own experiences** and life circumstances, giving the pictures and captions a personal touch.
- Develop a **photo documentary** of another child (e.g., a peer) or family where the Photovoice participants capture issues relevant to the project as they manifest within a household, through both interview and photography
- Take the role of a **photojournalist** and walk around the community to capture the issues they find relevant to the project. They can either do this on their own or in groups. The group strategy is useful if you only have a limited number of cameras.
- **Stage the scenarios** they want to show through photography. This may be a good option if the topic they want to capture is sensitive and ethically problematic to capture 'in real life'. This may include sexual abuse of children.
- Adopt a mixture of the above.

If Photovoice participants are unable to take a picture, either because the issue is sensitive, or because they were unable to capture the issue within the given time frame or season of the year, you can encourage the participants to draw the situation.

Related to thinking about what picture taking strategy best suits your Photovoice project, is a need to decide on how long the participants will have to take pictures. Will they need half a day? A week? Two weeks? A month? Longer? There is no single ideal duration. This very much depends on your approach and strategy. If the photographs serve the purpose of triangulating pre-defined themes, the pictures can possibly be taken in half a day. If however you are giving the children room to capture anything they find relevant, they probably need longer.

> **Remember** – No Photovoice participants should take pictures without having extensively discussed some of the ethical implications of Photovoice (see page 17 for more detail). Relatedly, you may consider:
>
> → Whether the children should be accompanied by an adult facilitator when walking around the community taking pictures. This can mitigate safety risks and ensure an adult can take responsibility for any ethical dilemmas.
> → Whether the children need name badges, research backpacks, t-shirts or caps to distinguish themselves as photojournalists or researchers.
> → Whether it would be worth for the Photovoice participants to pilot the picture taking process first.
> → Whether the children are likely to interview their 'models' and thus require training to develop their interview skills.

![Save the Children]

Picture taking in the Mollahat Photovoice project, Bangladesh

In the Mollahat Photovoice project the children, after having identified the problems, causes and impacts of under nutrition, food insecurity and poor health, and identified the type of image they wanted to take and the location (through the story board), they went into the community with their co-facilitator as their guardian to start the process of collecting the required images. Groups of children were given an hour and a half to do this. Within each group, clear instructions were given that everyone would take turns taking the photos, and that one person should do the interview of the subject to capture information for caption development, and the other person in the group would take notes. It was explained that these roles should rotate. After returning from the field, the teams submitted the cameras to the co-facilitators.

Children walking around the community taking photos
(Photo: Julie Newton/Save the Children)

During this occasion, care was taken to note down each camera per group and download the pictures from each group. It turned out that the groups had taken instructions carefully not to take many photos and think twice about how to compose the pictures. Only a few pictures were taken on this day. It emerged

that not all groups were able to take the required pictures for the day and more time would be required the following day to complete their picture taking. As a result some of the original schedule needed to be adapted in order to ensure sufficient time to give feedback to the children on the pictures that they took so that they understood which gaps they needed to fill for the second day.

The positive aspects of the day included the fact that the children enjoyed this part of the day the most and for many it was the first time they had ever handled a camera. For example, one of the younger boys explained "I touched the camera for the first time and that was the best part". The 'problem tree' also proved to be a very useful way for getting the children to focus on the task they were undertaking and be clear on the sort of images that they needed to take of the stories they wanted to tell. The constant cross-checking with the problem tree that was still hung up on the classroom wall was also a useful anchor to keep reminding children of the stories they wanted to tell.

On the negative side, since it was the first time children had handled a camera, many were nervous and were thinking so carefully about the possible pictures, as instructed, that they did not take many. Extra effort was given on the second day to encourage children to take more photos.

Step 8: Story and caption development

If you adopted the first approach to picture taking as detailed in Step 6, which involved taking photos guided by a series of questions, you will need to facilitate a process of selecting the most relevant pictures and stories to the project goal. You could for example ask them to choose six of their favourite photographs that show:

General
- How they get by
- Things they lack and
- Something or someone who is important to them

Thematic example
- How food insecurity affects them
- Causes of under nutrition
- Something or someone that improve their access to nutritious foods

Again, these instructions can either be general or be made specific to your thematic area. If you adopted the second approach, where photos were captured to illustrate themes identified using PLA tools, the process of reducing the number of photos could be guided by your interest to showcase photographs that have a good composition and a compelling story.

Either way, once participants have chosen the photographs to include in the project, their voices, describing the significance of the photographs, need to be heard. This can be done in a number of different ways. Caroline Wang, the founder of Photovoice, has used the following methods.

An easy and quick way of enabling participants to speak out on issues captured in their photographs is in writing. Reflection and story writing could be prompted by open-ended questions, such as:

- 'I want to share this photo because…'
- 'What's the real story this photo tells?'
- 'How does this story relate to your life and/or the lives of people in your community?'

If any of your participants have inadequate literacy and writing skills, you can ask them to narrate their answers verbally and write the stories down for them.

You can also facilitate group discussions or individual interviews, guided by the SHOWeD method:

- What do you **S**ee here?
- What's really **H**appening here?
- How does this relate to **O**ur lives?
- **W**hy does this situation, concern, strength exist?
- What can we **D**o about it?

These exercises are just a couple of examples of how you can, in a structured and systematic way, facilitate reflection and support Photovoice participants to communicate the significance of their pictures.

Remember –

➔ Photographs can be interpreted in many ways. It is therefore important that Photovoice participants have the opportunity to communicate their intentions and interpretations of the pictures they take.

➔ Do not rush the development of photo essays or captions. Give the children time and space to think through the exercise carefully.

➔ Continually remind the children about the purpose of the exercise and the project goal.

➔ In addition to highlighting problems and needs, we can learn much from positive stories. Positive stories can provide us with an insight to local resources and coping strategies. We can use this information to develop programmes that build on local resources and strengthen coping strategies.

Caption development in the Mollahat Photovoice project, Bangladesh

Because of limited time, the facilitators of the Mollahat Photovoice project filtered the pictures taken by children and identified 10 pictures from each group of children. The pictures were printed and presented to each of the groups. Participants were asked whether they supported the choice of photos, whether there was anything missing, and if they wanted to include any additional pictures that had not been selected in the first stage of filtering by the facilitators.

Day 4 of the Photovoice project was spent composing stories for each of the pictures (See example below). Save the Children staff brought laptops with them so the stories could be typed out in Bangla and printed off to accompany the pictures. Whilst we had prepared some guidelines on how the captions should be developed to demonstrate 'the story behind the picture', we opted to remain flexible in order to explore what works best with the children and how we could subsequently adapt our approach for future efforts at Photovoice.

Photostory example

"Our neighbor has an 8 month old son named Momin. His father is a poor van puller. When we went to photograph Nafisa Aunty's son, she said that Borhan Uncle had not been able to go to the village markets and they often eat meals of only rice and potatoes. She had not been able to have three meals a day even when she was pregnant. Although Momin is now 8 months old, she is only able to feed him breast milk and a mixture of flour and water. He frequently suffers from flu, fever, diarrhea, dysentery and pneumonia." (Photo: White Photovoice team/Save the Children)

The caption development process was easier amongst the older groups where the older children had taken good notes of the stories they wanted to tell, and it was relatively straightforward for the co-facilitator to type these up directly in Bangla on laptops. However, with the younger groups which had more children per group, this proved more challenging. Here, co-facilitators had to provide more support for the children to compose the stories as well as typing this up. Inevitably whilst the co-facilitators were typing up the stories, the children became distracted in spite of being given tasks to paste the selected photos on to poster paper. It also meant that there was a missed opportunity for documentation since the co-facilitators were dedicated to helping the children compose the stories and could not make notes of the discussions behind the composition on the paper. As an interim solution the coordinator sat with each co-facilitator to collect the details of the 'stories behind the stories' to find out more about the rationale for the selection of photos.

Step 9: Exhibition development

Related to step 6 and 'speaking out' are plans for exhibiting and showcasing the photographs and their accompanying reflections. This component is key to Photovoice as it provides the participants with an opportunity to voice their concerns and perspectives. To develop a strategy for showcasing the photographs and their reflections, a number of considerations will have to be made. These include:

- Being clear about who are you trying to reach, your **target audience**.
- Being clear about how your target audience will be able to **access** your exhibition and how will they **react** to it
- Being clear about what **messages** you want to convey
- Being clear about what **action** you are trying to prompt

One of the first considerations is to be clear about who your target audience is. The target audience(s) will differ between contexts and will relate directly to your project goals. Examples of target audiences include:

- **Individuals in local communities** – raising their awareness and understanding of the topic communicated, encouraging behaviour change.
- **Community leaders** – helping them to understand what is important to their constituents and to get a better insight into their everyday lives and struggles.
- **Save the Children** – helping us develop programmes that are tailored to local needs, and making sure we stand by our values of children's participation and accountability.
- **Donors and the general public** – improving awareness of our work, increasing our credibility. This can lead to improved public perception of Save the Children and donations.
- **Public institutions and policymakers** –informing them about what is important to children, in the hope this can lead to policy change, new programmes and the improved allocation of resources.

A Photovoice project can target a number of different audiences, but their ability to access the exhibition will differ. It is therefore important that you carefully consider what media are best suited for your target audiences. You can develop and share the photographs in many different ways. You could for example:

- Develop a set of **PowerPoint slides** where each slide contains a photo and its reflection. The slides can be emailed around and used to present the findings in various forums.
- Create a **video** and post it on various social media sites, including YouTube, showing snapshots of photos and their captions.
- Take advantage of the various **social media** tools available for sharing pictures and ideas. Internet sites such as Flickr, Pinterest, Facebook and Twitter can all help to make voices heard.
- Create **posters** that each convey a clear 'take-away' message. The posters could include photos and their captions. Photovoice participants can for example glue pictures and their written reflections onto a flipchart paper and exhibit their poster in a local community or religious building.
- Create **leaflets** or **booklets** exhibiting the photos and their captions. These resources can be shared on websites and in print.
- Circulate a press statement or contact **media outlets** making them aware of your project, asking them if they would be interested in featuring some of the images and their captions in print or in a slideshow on their website.
- Develop and share one-page **policy briefs** that use images and their captions to summarise and communicate key messages from the Photovoice project.

- Write an **academic article** giving detail about the Photovoice process and key findings.
- Develop **exhibition** boards that clearly depict images and their captions

Once you know who you will be targeting and how you can best reach this audience, you can begin to select images and captions that can communicate your message clearly and in a way that will encourage action.

Remember –

→ Some reflections may be very long and you may struggle to fit them onto exhibition material. If that is the case you can shorten or extract parts of the reflection. It is recommended you get permission from the Photovoice participant whose caption you have abbreviated.

→ To consider the safety of participants. Be careful not to exhibit material that is sensitive and puts the photographer, or those who appear in the photo, in any danger.

→ Involve your project committees and draw on their networks and expertise to develop a strategy for disseminating the Photovoice material.

Save the Children

Developing an exhibition in the Mollahat Photovoice project, Bangladesh

To prepare for the exhibition for following day, we had a mock trial for the day where one of our senior staff pretended to be the upazilla chairman (local government authority) to ask questions about the stories behind the photos and what they felt about the whole process. Two of the older children were selected to play host to receiving guests into the class room to see the pictures. Others were asked to welcome the chairman and to take him around to explain the photos. This was also important for the children to defend the process and the images that they had taken as their own and to build their confidence. Children were given time during this day to develop their posters with the printed out photographs and the captions which were typed out. Different ways of doing this are possible. The children

Children preparing their exhibition posters
(Photo: Tanvir Ahmed/Save the Children)

can choose to do this in writing or if you have the equipment with you, staff can type it up and print them out on separate pieces of paper.

Step 10: Going public

Once the exhibition material has been developed, you can begin to think about how to go public with this material through different forums. How you go public will depend on your primary medium. Through some media, such as social media, your exhibition material will go public the moment you upload it. For other media, such as posters and exhibition boards, you will have to distribute the posters or mount the boards. Whichever medium you are using, you may wish to consider the following tips and ideas about going public:

- You can **organise a meeting** and invite key stakeholders (your target audience) to come and have a look at the photos and their accompanying reflections.
- You can also **organise a workshop** where participants, made up of both key stakeholders and the Photovoice participants, discuss the images and use the findings of the project as a platform to discuss and develop a plan of action for change.
- Work with **key stakeholders to distribute** your marketing or advocacy material, whether it is leaflets, books, PowerPoint slides, in print or electronically.
- If possible, when you go public try to **pitch and relate** the Photovoice material to other activities. You could for example pitch your project and its messages to an international day (e.g., a day during the Child Rights Week, International Women's Day or World AIDS Day), the publication of a high-level report, or a current and public debate. This, of course, depends on your topic and what other activities are happening.

Remember –

➔ Once the material goes public it is nearly impossible to retract. Make sure that all permissions have been sought.

➔ The Photovoice material belongs to the participants. You should therefore work closely with the Photovoice participants to decide how you can best go public with your material.

➔ If you want to promote dialogue at the exhibition, ensure that the space is conducive for that to happen. For example, a larger space, or fewer guests in order to allow plenty of space and time for debate.

Save the Children

Exhibition day in the Mollahat Photovoice project, Bangladesh

The exhibition was scheduled to last one hour and with focus to invite key officials such as the upazilla and union chairman, school government officials, officials from health and family welfare and the headmaster of the school. Members of the public who had been observing the Photovoice process were also invited to come and see the exhibition.

Prior to the official opening, time was spent finalising the last posters, pasting remaining captions and photos. The children also decorated the posters with drawings. A wall was dedicated to pictures showing the process of the Photovoice project and positive features of Mollahat which were then followed by each of the groups story-pictures.

When the chairman arrived, he was welcomed by the children and taken by a group of two children who explained the purpose of the exercise. They then led the chairman around the room to look at the posters. Following this, the children sat down and were given an

Exhibition visited by local leaders
(Photo: Julie Newton/Save the Children)

opportunity to talk more about the process of how they had developed the stories and the posters. The invited guests were then given the opportunity to reflect on what they saw. A detailed transcript of the speeches is available in the findings report (See Save the Children, 2014b). Speeches were given by the upazilla chairman, school principal, health official, director and programme manager of Save the Children programme, all of whom were impressed by how the children were able to identify the needs of the community.

Upon reflection of the exhibition day, a number of recommendations were identified: 1) Sufficient time is required for poster preparation; 2) a spacious and comfortable venue will ensure more people can visit the exhibition, encouraging more time and dialogue between the children and the invited guests.

The use of Photovoice does not stop at the exhibition!

There are ways to take the Photovoice outputs further for more advocacy purposes and according to the need of the programme. The Mollahat MCDP team organised further dissemination events targeting local government officials from different line ministries to introduce the programme and its objectives.

At these forums, the Photovoice stories were presented by some of the Photovoice children to highlight the 'need' for a programme (i.e. in this case tackling malnutrition) such as this and highlight the value of children's insights into these issues.

The experience of the Mollahat team was that this sparked provocative debate about nutrition itself and children's engagement in the issue which provided insights into

Speeches by local officials in response to Photovoice exhibition
(Photo: Julie Newton/Save the Children)

government officials understanding of nutrition itself.

More importantly it reinforced the importance of children and young people as legitimate actors with a valid voice on issues of importance to them as illustrated below

> We are indebted to the children who have told us their stories through these photographs. They have opened our eyes with true depictions of their lives and highlighted to us the most critical challenges that they face. Photographs are not only permanent; they are also useful in comparing the state of one's life at different points in time. Ten years later, these photos will not only remind us of where we were, but also how far we have come and how much we have accomplished. Coming back to the photos, I would like to commend the children for capturing several issues that affect nutrition and general well-being such as the condition of homesteads, the access and use of clean water. These issues of hygiene (washing hands etc) need to be addressed before/alongside issues of nutrition. If we can find ways of solving these problems, I am confident that the conditions depicted in these photos will change very soon
>
> **Upazilla Health and Family Planning Officer (UHFPO)**

Following this, the team also took the findings to the local community and local NGOs to use the Photovoice captions as a vehicle to develop a **code of conduct** to address the challenges highlighted by children in Photovoice. This describes a list of 8 -10 standards that have been jointly identified by a group of children, community elite and relevant NGOs working in selected village as activities that 'they' will do to address the problems identified by Photovoice children. Future plans for the Mollahat team include using this code of conduct as a basis for an 'information board' that will be displayed in school, union parishad and other key community places. The team are currently exploring how they can mobilize

Developing a Code of Conduct
(Photo: Oli Chowdhury /Save the Children)

the same group of children involved in Photovoice to 'monitor'/advocate for upholding the code of conduct. These children will require further training on child rights, nutrition and how to 'advocate' for child rights in the context of nutrition using the code of conduct as point of leverage.

FINAL WORDS

This guidance note has hopefully provided you with lots of ideas on how to involve children in a needs assessment through photography. We hope that the tips and ideas presented here, combined with the experiences of the Mollahat Photovoice project, underline just how flexible Photovoice is as a participatory methodology. It is now up to you to draw on some of the 'good practices' presented here to design and facilitate a Photovoice project in your thematic area and context that incorporates children's voices.

We wish you good luck and hope you will share your experiences with us. That way we can incorporate your experiences, tips and ideas into a second edition of this guidance note as well as future guidance on using Photovoice as an impact assessment tool.

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USEFUL RESOURCES AND WEBSITES

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Save the Children works in more than 120 countries. We save children's lives. We fight for their rights. We help them achieve their potential.

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