

## **PhotoVoice**

PhotoVoice is a creative way to open a conversation, inspire ideas and produce images on interesting aspects of community life.

In our PhotoVoice project with young people creative flair and a disposable camera were used to catch photographic images. These images spoke about the young person's life and community.

The Illawarra Legal Centre in conjunction with Wollongong Youth Services, organised photography workshops with young people from local youth services. The classes provided an opportunity for the participants to use images to talk about cars, trucks, family, work, friends, pets and places they care about. They also talked about things that concerned them and what might be possible to address them. We had previously used PhotoVoice in a collaboration with local Muslim women providing the opportunity to highlight important community issues.

The images could be about anything important in a person's life and sometimes told a story that could bring about social change.

National Youth Week provided a great opportunity to focus on the lives of young people, their needs, interests and ideas for the future. The photography workshops and the resulting exhibition of the photos were an opportunity to let young people know about local free services like those at the Illawarra Legal Centre.

We promoted that our Centre has a Children's Court Assistance Scheme (CCAS) that supports young people and their families when they are attending Children's Court. Also, a Centrelink specialist, Tenants Service and we were undertaking a project on young people and fines to assist young people reduce or get rid of their fines debt.

Your PhotoVoice project may simply be a way to let a specific community group know where your centre is and build a sense of connection through this creative activity.

It could be a way to explore human rights issues that particularly impact on a specific community group.

Photos developed through a PhotoVoice project could be your resource for future education and law reform projects.

PhotoVoice images could be used in your publications after obtaining the appropriate permissions.

*The following useful tips on PhotoVoice come from various workers and organisations that have undertaken PhotoVoice projects.*

### **PhotoVoice Tips and Guidelines**

The camera is a creative tool so you can make images that express issues or concerns. There are important responsibilities when using a camera such as:

It's best to ask permission before taking someone's photo

When you are asking for permission to take someone's photo tell them about PhotoVoice and why you are taking the photo.

You should get written permission before you can use the photographs.

If someone agrees to let you take their photo let them know how it may be used, for example, in a photo exhibition or for some other non-profit activities.

It's best not to take photos of people that may humiliate, ridicule or embarrass them

It's best not to take photos that can get you into trouble when you are taking them

It's best not to photograph something that is illegal or a crime or an unsafe activity

Be careful not to intrude into another person's private space, especially if you think they may not be able to say NO easily.

You can choose to get the contact details of the person you photograph in order to send them a copy later. If you wanted to do this you would need to note the time, date, description of the photo and get the contact details so you could send them a copy of your photo.

### ***Other sources of information:***

The Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment website on Effective Engagement has useful information on PhotoVoice. Here is the link:

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/DSE/wcmn203.nsf/LinkView/175E566FD326B56FCA257088001418835CB89DE2CF714D43CA257091000DD09B>

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