Statement of Ethical Practice

PV23-01
Published July 2023
© PhotoVoice 2023

Released under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

You are free to:
• Share - copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format
• Adapt - remix, transform, and build upon the material

Under the following terms:
• Attribution - You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.
• NonCommercial - You may not use the material for commercial purposes.
• ShareAlike - If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.
• No additional restrictions - You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

If referencing this document, please use the following citation:

‘The PhotoVoice Statement of Ethical Practice 2023 was written by PhotoVoice (www.photovoice.org), a UK based non-profit organisation specialising in designing and delivering participatory photography programmes worldwide.’

PhotoVoice is a Community Interest Company limited by guarantee, and registered with company number 14574182.

www.photovoice.org
hello@photovoice.org
+44 (0) 333 011 7781

The trademark to the word ‘photovoice’ is owned by PhotoVoice across UK and EU territories.
Contents

Introduction 4

PhotoVoice and Participatory Photography 6
  The Participatory Photography Process 6
  Terminology 7
  Representation 8

Core Principles 10
  1. Choice 10
  2. Creativity 10
  3. Partnership 10
  4. Sustainability 11
  5. Cultural Sensitivity 11

Key Areas Of Ethical Consideration 12
  1. Protection 13
  2. Well-Being 17
  3. Control And Decision Making 19
  4. Public Exposure 22
  5. Facilitation 24
  6. Project Partners 26
Introduction

PhotoVoice’s Statement of Ethical Practice is a set of considerations and principles which govern how we design and deliver participatory photography programmes. It is intended to be universal, and applicable across all countries, projects, and topics.

It does not explicitly consider wider ethical considerations around photography and photographic practices, but instead relates specifically to our work using participatory photography methodologies. Our ethical practice is focussed primarily on the impact that PhotoVoice activities may have on individuals participating in them, as well as the wider community and societal context.

Ethical considerations arise as an everyday part of participatory engagement with community groups, especially when the resulting images are used publicly. PhotoVoice recognises a range of considerations may arise across different activities. If these are not given due attention prior to – as well as during - participant engagement, there is the potential for the activities to do more harm than good.

The purpose of this document is to:

- highlight the full range of potential considerations that might arise in an activity
- make others, particularly facilitators, partner organisations, and funders, aware of the typical ethical considerations which should be considered
- demonstrate the standards that PhotoVoice regards as responsible practice
- create a framework for discussing and agreeing procedures for managing ethical issues
- set a baseline of ethical considerations which can be universally applied, regardless of the country or context in which engagement is taking place

This document outlines five core principles of good practice which span all of PhotoVoice’s work. These are the principles we uphold when designing and delivering activities.
It then sets out six further areas of consideration, detailing the guiding standards of practice that we use within our own activities. These are the areas we consider to ensure that we are maintaining as high an ethical standard as possible.

This document is not prescriptive as there are few one-size-fits-all ethical standards, just as there are no one-size-fits-all projects or activities. Ethical decisions need to take into account the particulars of the individual, group, or community involved, as well as the immediate and broader context.

PhotoVoice believes that being open and alert to these considerations, and allowing time for discussion and reflection is the best starting point for good practice. PhotoVoice incorporates ethical considerations into its initial assessment of a project, and encourages ongoing engagement throughout all phases of community engagement.

Our ethical approach evolves and learns from every project we undertake. We are receptive to feedback from both participants and partners and seek to incorporate improvements into every project we develop and deliver.
PhotoVoice and Participatory Photography

PhotoVoice has delivered a wide range of projects around the world. We have extensive experience and expertise in designing and delivering tailor-made participatory photography projects to provide a voice to underrepresented and/or issue-affected groups.

The Participatory Photography Process

The participatory photography process is focussed on the creation and use of photography as a tool of change.

It incorporates a broad range of elements beyond ‘pressing the shutter’, with participants feeling supported to express opinions, to interpret and discuss images, to work as part of a group, to listen to others, to develop ideas and a voice, to edit and caption images, to identify and define audience and messages – deciding what pictures to take and for whom. All these elements are an equally important part of the process and the route to self-expression.

PhotoVoice’s activities begin by building participation and photography skills, encouraging the group to develop, and participants to gain confidence and recognising the value and power of their own voice.

During workshops, the taking and sharing of images is typically restricted to the group, project staff and immediate family or community.

Activities can go on to develop an external communications dimension, in which photographs are taken for and viewed by a wider, public audience in order to share perspectives, sensitise audiences, or influence attitudes or policies. This may be in the form of a resource, exhibition, display, slideshow, book, website and social media, or through other forms of media and news. The relationship between the relatively private and more public aspects of a project is a dynamic and delicate one, which requires careful balancing.

PhotoVoice recognises that opportunities for participation may change over time. Often decisions are made about project design in advance of participatory activities commencing. This may arise because of external factors, such as access to communities, funder
requirements, or expectations from partner organisations. Similarly, decisions made after workshops have been completed may not directly involve ongoing participant engagement, such as resource development, communications activities, publication design, etc.

PhotoVoice recognises that not all participants will have equal access to decision making processes over the whole duration of an activity. However, we strive to be as participant led as possible, and always leave space for reflection, amendment, and recalibration based on participant perspectives.

**Terminology**

PhotoVoice is committed to working with groups to facilitate their perspectives being articulated, shared, and understood. We often work with groups who are excluded from mainstream provision, policies and opportunities. We have specific considerations when using terminology to describe our activities.

*Community:* This can refer to either community of characteristic, issue, interest or geography.

It is important to note that some people may not feel kinship to the community that an activity has assigned to them, and sensitivity should be used when referring to groups in such a way.

*Groups:* When this document refers to groups, we may be talking about communities, as defined above. We are normally using the word to describe participants who have come together to explore and share their perspectives in a participatory photography workshop setting.

We recognize that no group is homogenous in its needs, and that individuals in such groups represent their own perspective rather than speaking on behalf of others in the group, or others who may share similar characteristics or perspectives within their community. The use of the word ‘group’ should be considered to encompass these distinctions.

*Activities:* This may be in reference to a participatory photography workshop or project, which may be a self-contained period of engagement, or span over a longer period of time with multiple points of engagement. When we use the word 'activities', we are referring to any points of engagement with groups to which the core principles and ethical considerations in this document should be applied.

*Lived experience:* We may refer to lived experience to emphasise that individuals are the experts in
their own circumstances. While we encourage people to share the perspectives that they wish to share, lived experience can also be labelling, and should be treated with sensitivity.

We avoid the use of certain words and phrases in this document and in our activities with groups. These include but are not limited to:

**Empowerment:** This is a loaded term and concept which is often debated as to its value and effectiveness. PhotoVoice avoids referring to activities being empowering or groups being empowered, as this suggests that PhotoVoice or our activities can bestow power onto such groups, which is often a distortion of what is realistic. It also embeds an inherent power dynamic from an early point; that there is power which can be given to those who lack it. We view our engagement with groups to be facilitating, emboldening, and supporting.

**Vulnerable, marginalised, at risk:** These are similarly loaded terms, and often viewed to be imposed onto groups, categorising them in often pejorative or negative ways. PhotoVoice will instead refer to underrepresented voices, or issue-affected groups, while also recognising the sensitivities and considerations needed when adding such labels.

**Hard-to-reach:** This can often imply that groups themselves are at fault, rather than it being the responsibility of others agents to ensure that space and opportunity for underrepresented voices are heard and listened to.

**Representation**

In our activities we aim to facilitate group members defining and representing themselves, and framing the stories and perspectives they wish to explore or share with others.

We always acknowledge and support individual voices, and recognise that a person’s individual context will affect the nature of their participation and the photographs they produce. We work flexibly and adapt activities and approaches on an engagement-by-engagement basis, in order to suit the needs of participants and the context of the activity.

The guiding ethos of our work is that photography is a tool for self-expression, which can be used to deliver positive social change. We act as a platform for participants
to represent themselves and document their views and ideas to others.

We recognise that participation in projects can have contradictory effects. Like most social interventions, PhotoVoice projects may use social categories to define the groups we work with, and some of these categories may be introduced by external organisations or policies, and will only be considered with sensitivity.

These may be used to identify and reach communities, recruit participants to attend and contribute to activities, and to adapt our methodology appropriately.

However, for the participant this can bring an unwanted social label. It is often the very label that groups look to challenge through their photography and contribution. PhotoVoice projects aim to support groups to challenge traditional/negative representations and put forward alternatives.

We recognise that there is the potential for bias and power structures being introduced when delivering activities. We strive to reduce these by working in partnership, and building a relationship where each participant and their contribution is valued.

Any processes connected to a project should never be extractive. PhotoVoice believes it has a responsibility to act and amplify other people’s authentic voices.
Core Principles

PhotoVoice’s ethical approach is based around five core principles:

1. CHOICE

PhotoVoice provides participants with clear choices about the content of their work, what insights and perspectives they would like to share, and the impact of public sharing. Choice also includes the right to withdraw from part or all activities, at all times, and extends beyond workshop activities – it is not time-specific.

2. CREATIVITY

PhotoVoice believes that creativity is the lifeblood of participatory photography activities. The creative space needs to be protected and respected for these activities to flourish. Creativity is an individual response, and should be nurtured with support which guides rather than confines.

3. PARTNERSHIP

PhotoVoice always works in partnership with other organisations, recognising that activities require the contribution of different experts to be successful. This may include a local organisation that is engaged with or embedded in the community, a topic partner who can provide insight on the broader considerations of the activity, or access to specific audiences and stakeholders, and individuals and groups themselves, who are experts in their own perspectives.
4. SUSTAINABILITY

PhotoVoice aims to build projects that are sustainable and have long-term impact beyond our direct involvement. This is achieved by encouraging training and capacity building of locally based staff and facilitators, building localised project networks and supporters, ensuring equipment continues to be available, and building sustainability measures into project design and activities.

PhotoVoice also recognises the environmental impact of its activities, and ensures that these are adequately considered and addressed throughout activities.

5. CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

PhotoVoice aims to ensure that all its projects are culturally sensitive and appropriate. We work with local partners to gain insights into the cultural sensitivities and considerations required in our projects. We train local facilitators in our approach where possible; amending our project design based on these interactions. We use culturally sensitive and context appropriate behaviour and language in workshops; and are sensitive to local customs around image content and image taking.
Key Areas of Ethical Consideration

There are six key areas of ethical consideration which PhotoVoice activities will always give recognition to, throughout all activity phases. Activities will be designed to recognise the impact that these considerations may have on participants, groups and communities. It is never possible to eliminate all risks, but understanding some of the specific mitigations can result in more successful and appropriate engagement.
1. PROTECTION

The recognition of participants' best interests is of paramount importance throughout all phases of a project.

1.1. Risk

Participation in an activity can entail a level of risk for participants. The risk varies depending on individuals and circumstances, and can be emotional, psychological, political, economic, cultural, social or physical. PhotoVoice aims to provide a workshop space which is sensitive to these factors, and which can be enjoyed as a safe space by participants.

Risk assessments will be undertaken in partnership which consider the impact of the activity not just on the participants but also on the wider communities directly involved in the project (geographic communities and/or communities of interest). Risks will be considered for everyone involved in designing or delivering a project – including facilitators, staff, and partner organisations.

While PhotoVoice will encourage the safe taking, selection and sharing of images within our workshops, it is not possible to be responsible for how participants take and share images outside of the confines of a workshop, or after a project has ended. Informed consent remains a priority throughout all phases of the project, but the actions and activities of participants and partners once PhotoVoice's direct engagement has ended may not have the same ethical considerations.

PhotoVoice has a ‘do no harm’ policy which guides our work, with our responsibility with the participants. By working in partnership, we ensure there are support mechanisms in place for the project participants when necessary. We never publish people’s identities, in photographs or text where it could cause harm. All safeguarding concerns are handled according to our comprehensive safeguarding policy, which is reviewed annually.

1.2. Ground Rules and Stakeholder Mapping

All PhotoVoice workshops begin by setting project ground rules.
These rules reflect expectations and standards from all sides around behaviour and participation. This process involves PhotoVoice, the partner, facilitators, support workers and participants. PhotoVoice will undertake analysis of the relevant local, national and other key stakeholders to ensure that the project context is well understood, and that the outcomes of the project reflect and contribute to the wider context in which it operates.

1.3. Self-Expression

PhotoVoice workshops, based on consultation with the partner organisation and project participants, usually follow broad themes. The themes act as a framework for participants to explore ideas and develop a personal creative voice. In the case of advocacy based projects, the themes are often issue-based.

PhotoVoice supports participants to express their feelings, ideas, opinions and experiences in relation to these issues. PhotoVoice avoids creating an environment which could put undue pressure on participants to produce particular content or reveal material that they would prefer to remain private, and no participant is ever required or obliged to create work based on events in their lives. As such, participants may produce work which has little direct relevance to the specific aims and intended outcomes of a project. Choices over content are regularly reviewed and discussed.

1.4. Caution

When working with individuals who are issued affected or have experienced trauma, caution is exercised to ensure participants are emotionally protected, particularly if they are producing work based on personal experiences. In such activities, there should be a trained support worker available at all times, to provide participants with professional guidance using trauma-informed approaches if needed. Facilitators should also have access to emotional support to ensure their own wellbeing is considered.

1.5. Confidentiality and Safe Spaces

All projects should be undertaken in the spirit of confidentiality with the understanding that anything discussed in the workshop is private to the group. While in practice it is not realistic to guarantee absolute confidentiality to participants, the creation, enjoyment and recognition of a safe space should be understood by all group members involved.
Safe spaces should ideally be in a neutral environment, which is accessible to all participants, and enables them the opportunity to reflect on their experiences away from the context which they might be describing. It is important that attendance to a safe space doesn’t potentially expose people or reveal characteristics about them to other community members which could cause them harm.

When assigning homework activities, facilitators should make sure that the use of a camera outside of a workshop setting is safe for them, and doesn’t expose them to risk.

While activities can take place completely in workshop settings, a balance of environments may provide better opportunities for sharing insights and perspectives. However, this may require specific risk assessments, as the safe space created by a neutral workshop space may not extend to different locations.

1.6. Attribution and Anonymity

As creators of the content generated in activities, participants are the owners of it. When images and captions are used outside of workshops, they should always be appropriately credited, with the credit lines always shown with the images.

Some participants will want their identity in the project to remain anonymous. PhotoVoice offers participants a range of options to protect their identities. By default, PhotoVoice will only use a single name in the credit line of images, unless discussed or agreed otherwise.

However, it isn’t possible to guarantee total anonymity as other participants could disclose participant identities. Facilitators will always make efforts to discuss the implications of images which can potentially reveal identities, or show details which could lead to anonymity being compromised.

1.7. Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection

Full child and vulnerable adult protection policies and procedures should be in place and followed at all times. All photographers and facilitators on the project will have received a full enhanced DBS checks, and training in protection procedures. Safeguarding policies and procedures as set out in other contexts should also be followed, for example a different countries equivalent of facilitator vetting. However, even if other contexts have more relaxed approached to safeguarding, PhotoVoice will
always use its own policies and approaches, even if not required by the legal structures of a location.

1.8. Data Protection

PhotoVoice will retain copies of images and captions produced by participants, along with the consent forms which give PhotoVoice permission to use them for agreed purposes. Photographs and/or captions which describe or refer to things such as religious or philosophical beliefs, racial or ethnic origin, sex life and sexual orientation, relationship status, political opinions, health circumstances, or other such personal information, is considered ‘sensitive’, and PhotoVoice will comply with UK Data Protection Laws in how such information is stored and shared.

By default, PhotoVoice will not store personally identifiable contact information as part of photographic metadata, using only the agreed name chosen by the participant for their credit line.

1.9. Online Activities

Increasingly the use of online communications is enabling activities to take place across dispersed locations. Special considerations should be given to online delivery, as some of the practical measures required to address ethical considerations may not be possible, or within the control of facilitators.

The creation of a safe space may be more challenging when operating in an online setting. Participants may be reflecting on topics in the same environment that they are exploring. This can present challenges for people who may not be able to speak freely, or would be better able to reflect on issues with some physical distance from it.

Group dynamics – while achievable in online activities – are often better served by being present in the same location as others in a group.

Facilitators should ensure that risk assessments are undertaken to mitigate the risks of online engagement.

While online activities provide opportunities to reach groups which might be more challenging to visit in person (due to constraints on access, budget, capacity), it is important to consider the infrastructure requirements, which may mean only those with access to reliable internet and equipment are able to engage.
2. WELL-BEING

Recognition of participants' well-being is the principal consideration of all projects.

2.1. Managing Expectations

It is important that any activities don't unrealistically raise participants' expectations. From the outset participants need to know the timetable, the end point, and what the project is likely to mean for them in concrete terms. They should never be led to believe that their circumstances will be dramatically or immediately changed by being involved, even if a project directly involves advocacy. How participant images will be used by partners should be clearly explained, including the potential impact it may have on a particular topic, or the ongoing activities of partner organisations.

2.2. Closure

It is important to provide a sense of closure to a project. Group bonds can become strong and the sense of group identity important. Projects should provide activities that are specifically geared towards preparing participants for the end of the project, or handed over to others to continue should this be appropriate or possible.

2.3. Exit Strategies

There should be planned exit strategies for all participants who are interested in continuing their photography, and opportunities for them to participate in any appropriate/available support networks.

We encourage participants to keep the cameras they have used, and recommend that each participant is given their own camera rather than sharing cameras amongst members of a group. Where there may be risks associated with ownership of a camera (as determined by a risk assessment) for individual participants, arrangements will be made with local partners to enable participants to still have access to them.
2.4. Equal Opportunities

Projects can contribute to uneven access to resources at a community level. This can create tensions, when some people have access to project opportunities and benefits and others don’t. While such problems can’t necessarily be avoided, it is important that they are not over-looked. By design, some activities will target participation from some community members rather than others, which may be incompatible with some principles of inclusivity.

2.5. Recruitment

Participant attendance in activities may involve a process of selection. This may mean that people become involved in activities because of specific characteristics they have, or their proximity to particular issues. This should be clearly described to participants as part of their engagement with activities. This may also mean that contribution to activities within a community is targeted, and may exclude others, or deny an open opportunity for involvement. It is important that any recruitment process or criteria doesn’t incorporate tokenistic engagement, or encourage partners to extrapolate an individual experience to those of others sharing similar characteristics.

2.6. Trigger and Content Warnings

Through conversation with partners and participants on a project, if PhotoVoice believes that content could cause a negative mental or physical reaction for a viewer we will include a warning on the content we publish. However, we recognise that specific triggers can often be unique to an individual, and it will not always be possible to consider every possible reaction.
3. CONTROL AND DECISION MAKING

Participatory projects are a meeting point for multiple agendas including those of participants, facilitators, partner organisations, and funders. It is important that key project decisions are discussed, that decision-making is transparent, and that the interests of participants are prioritised at all times.

3.1. Information

Participants should be provided with clear and regular information about the project, its purpose, key activities and about ongoing image use. Any pre-agreed objectives should be communicated simply and clearly to participants from the outset. Such objectives should also be receptive to change based on participant need throughout the duration of the activities and beyond.

3.2. Ownership

During activities, the level of ownership that participants experience may fluctuate. Participants may not have had any involvement in the establishment of a project, or directly involved in decision making about ongoing use of photographs and insights shared by them. It is important that participants remain informed, and engaged in the decision making process as it affects their own photographs and those of the group, and retain a full sense of ownership over their work. Their perspectives on ongoing activities beyond the workshop phase of an activity should be considered and incorporated.

3.3. Informed Consent

Participants are required to give their informed consent around image use. PhotoVoice views consent as a process rather than a one-off decision or paper exercise, and acknowledges that the notion of ‘informed' consent is complex. We discuss image use and purpose and offer choices through out the project. One-to-one sessions with participants are a key part of this process.

Informed consent is continually explored throughout workshops, with the formal process of agreeing which images are going to be shared beyond the safe space of a workshop undertaken at the end. No participants are expected to give blanket consent for their
involvement in a programme at the beginning, ensuring that participants are not under pressure to create or share content that they do not want to. This applies regardless of the policies or practices of our partners, or if pre-existing consent has been granted as part of their involvement with other activities or through recruitment processes.

3.4. Copyright

Copyright is owned exclusively by the participants. All PhotoVoice project participants are asked to sign a consent agreement, which states in simple language the different options for consent around image use. Participants will be given guidance in their choices by facilitators, to ensure that due consideration is given to protection issues. This grants a license for PhotoVoice and partners to use photographs. The copyright remains with participants.

Consent is also sought from parents / guardians for participants under the age of 18, or those without the legal capacity to provide consent. There will be cases in which individuals are not able to give appropriately informed consent. In these cases their images will not be shown publicly. Participants have the right to withdraw their usage permissions and their images from the PhotoVoice archive at any point.

3.5. Image Use

We will aim to support photographer to articulate their intentions in the work that they have created, and this will change from participant to participant. Photographers are encouraged and supported to add a caption to their image to minimise ambiguity in what they intend to communicate, and we will ensure that whenever practically possible, the caption accompanies the images when they are shared and used.

Through the process of facilitation, with both individual participants and the group as a whole, participants are supported to collaboratively explore what they are communicating, and any associated risks. Discussions between photographer and PhotoVoice ensure risks of sharing content are fully explored. We will always seek to avoid sharing or using content which could cause harm to the participants or their related communities.

We believe that as part of the creative process, photo manipulation can add to a story, but should not be undertaken to falsify or make unfair claims. In the unlikely event that a photograph contains copyrighted materials not
owned by the photographer and which is presented in a way which doesn’t significantly recontextualise these materials, permission will be sought for its use prior to any public sharing, and a note added to the caption. If such permission is not possible, an image will not be shared.

3.6. Income

PhotoVoice will not offer payment in exchange for people’s images and captions, or their stories. We may recognise that the impact of project engagement could have a financial impact on the individual, and expenses to cover attendance and/or loss of income may be appropriate on a project-by-project basis - as determined by project design with our partners. Any such payments may also recognise the time commitment which has been provided, and the expertise offered. No payments will be withheld on the basis of the content generated or consent given or withheld, and will not influence individual voice.

In some circumstances, payment may be made to PhotoVoice for the use of images or content generated during activities. This may be in the form of sponsorship, donations, or print sales.

If individual prints and captions are sold, PhotoVoice’s practice is to remit 50% of all income made from image and prints sales to the individual photographers within three years of project completion. Where this is not possible or appropriate, the funds are put towards the continuation of project. PhotoVoice cover all production costs out of their 50% income.

PhotoVoice doesn’t sell or license photographs to image libraries, believing that the lack of control over how these photographs are subsequently used is contrary to our ethical approach.
4. PUBLIC EXPOSURE

Projects which have a public element to them bring rewards as well as risks. It is the responsibility of PhotoVoice and project partners to put participant well-being and safety first.

4.1. Considerations for Public Exposure

Many projects culminate in a public or targeted exhibition of participants’ work, or resource publication. This is an exciting time in a project, when participants feel a sense of pride and validation. But it can also bring tensions and pressure. There are natural anxieties about public exposure; detailed decisions around editing and image use; protection considerations; and wider issues about communications and public messages.

It is vital that participants are given an understanding of the public environment in which their work will be displayed, as well as the potential consequences and impact – positive and negative – of their work being seen in public. All participants need to be provided with clear choices about whether and how their work is seen in public. There are cases where public exposure can jeopardise a person’s safety, well-being, or entitlement to privacy. PhotoVoice offers participants a range of options and methods of protection. We always work closely with the partner organisation in advising participants in their decisions.

4.2. Model Release

PhotoVoice and its project participants do not take images which will be published without the consent of people featured in them. This process gives the person featured in the photos a collaborative voice rather than only being a subject. It also makes the photographer consider their photographs and the ethics of taking them. The exception would be when they are incidental, such as a public space or part of a crowd, where, when obtaining consent is encouraged if realistically possible and safe to do so.

The implications of informed consent for the subjects of photographs is as complex as it is
for individual participants within the project. We explore these issues in our projects, ensuring that participants recognise the importance of informed consent not just for their own work, but when third parties are the subjects of photographs.

We encourage participants to consider using different creative ways of exploring an issue through photography to avoid images which could identify themselves or others, and that all subjects of the images are fully informed about their potential use. If fully informed consent has not been provided by the subject of a photograph, it will not be used.

Any country laws on photographing people in public spaces will be adhered to.

4.3. Media

A project with a public dimension may attract media attention. The media may have its own agenda and ideas about how to represent a project and the participants. Engaging with the media requires a very careful and sensitive approach. It is important to allow time to discuss media work with participants, and to explore the risks and benefits. Participants should never experience pressure to do media work or interviews. A participant who is interviewed by the media in any format (online, in print, broadcast or other) needs to always be appropriately prepared and supported.

4.4. Support

Public exposure can be a thrilling experience for participants. Once it is all over, there can be a sense of disappointment and frustration if nothing material has changed. It is important that the participants are well supported thorough the process.
5. FACILITATION

A facilitator can be many things: educator, motivator, negotiator, guide, artist, disruptor, role mode and mentor. They are often the lynchpin of a project, acting as the interface between the overall activity and the participants.

5.1. Professional

A facilitator is skilled in the methodologies of participatory photography, and may have limited knowledge of the issues that affect the participants. A good facilitator will be open, flexible and supportive towards participants, and will always maintain clear professional boundaries. A facilitator should be aware of their professional limits and not adopt the role of a therapist or social worker to participants.

PhotoVoice limits the number of facilitators during activities, so as not to create an imbalanced power dynamic; a disproportionate number of 'professionals' in a workshop setting can negatively affect how participants respond. Similarly, we discourage 'observers' sitting in workshops without a clear role, as this can create distrust in participants.

PhotoVoice staff and facilitators will not post images from projects on their own social media (or any other personal) channels, or seek to gain personal benefit from their proximity to activities. All PhotoVoice facilitators are expected to follow PhotoVoice’s ‘Code of Conduct’ when delivering activities.

5.2. Skills

The participatory process requires constant nurturing and support from facilitators. If practical, PhotoVoice uses at least two facilitators per workshop – one of who may be from the partner organisation – so that they can provide support to each other and to the group. PhotoVoice always employs a lead facilitator with proven experience of using participatory photography techniques with groups.

Any facilitators attending from partner organisations are expected to adhere to PhotoVoice’s safeguarding and ethical policies.
5.3. Training and Background

A professional facilitator will be unbiased in their relationships with the group, sensitive to group dynamics, and aware of their own feelings towards the group. PhotoVoice is committed to supporting facilitators throughout the project. We provide pre-project training, which includes techniques for responsible, self-aware practice. We also provide ongoing opportunities for facilitators to reflect on their practice, and discuss any emotional or personal issues arising out of the project.

As PhotoVoice is non-issue specific, we would not expect or require that facilitators have lived experience of any topics related to activities, or be from the same communities. In many situations, it is not appropriate for facilitators to have a direct link to the groups, as it may compromise the unbiased nature of facilitation we try to support.
6. PROJECT PARTNERS

A strong, open partnership between PhotoVoice and its partner organisations is the foundation for a successful project. PhotoVoice always works with partners that are committed to the participatory ethos and processes, and that can provide support to project participants throughout the project and beyond.

6.1. Support

Participation needs support from not just from facilitators but from representatives from partner organisations who know the group and whom the group can trust. The partner organisation should designate a member of staff as responsible for the project and there should be a support worker available for workshops and meetings with participants. This person will also have a key role in supporting the logistical requirements of activities.

A partner representative may also act as an ambassador for participatory photography, championing its use within their context, which may mean organisation or community. By working in a co- or support facilitation role, they are able to build skills and capacity which will strengthen their use of participatory photography beyond the confines of defined activities.

PhotoVoice recognises that partners may incur substantial costs in supporting PhotoVoice projects, both financially and in terms of capacity. Activity budgets should include adequate provision to cover these costs. PhotoVoice does not assume that partners will work for free.

6.2. Participants

Facilitators treat participants first and foremost as creative individuals. Facilitators do not generally need to know personal details about participants, but it is useful if they have a broad understanding of the group’s needs. The project partner should provide PhotoVoice with background information about the group before activities begin, which may include information to ensure that specific needs of participants are considered during the design of activities.

This may include equipment adaptations, cultural considerations, safeguarding needs, easy-read...
versions of documents, translated versions of documents, or any other consideration which may arise based on the specific needs of groups. Specialist staff members may need to be recruited to address specific participant needs which exceed the skill-set of available facilitators, either from PhotoVoice or partner representatives.

6.3. Follow up

Participation in a project can give rise to a range of new feelings and aspirations. The partner organisation will often lead on planning for any follow-up support needed as a result of participation during the project, including identifying potential suitable support networks.

6.4. Interpretation

When working in countries or locations where an interpreter is required, interpreters should show insight and sensitivity towards the participatory nature of activities. Sufficient preparation with interpreters should be factored in to make sure they fully understand the importance of individual perspective, and are able to work with both translated text and real-time interpretation.
STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRACTICE

PhotoVoice’s Statement of Ethical Practice is a set of considerations and principles which govern how we design and deliver participatory photography programmes. It is intended to be universal, and applicable across all countries, projects, and topics.

PhotoVoice is an award-winning non-profit organisation based in the UK, and a global leader in participatory photography.

Its vision is for a world in which everybody has the opportunity to represent themselves and tell their own story.

Its mission is to promote the ethical use of photography for positive social change.

By working in partnership with organisations, communities, and individuals worldwide, PhotoVoice helps build the skills and capacity of underrepresented or at-risk communities, creating new tools of self-advocacy and communication.

PhotoVoice works in the UK and internationally with individuals, local communities, and partner organisations.

First established as a charity in 2003, PhotoVoice has delivered over 120 projects worldwide, addressing advocacy and campaigns, communications, co-designed resources, monitoring and evaluation, and research.