Using Participatory Photography
A Guide for the Ardyaloon Community
Contents

Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................................... 2
Creativity in Ardyaloon ..................................................................................................................... 5
What is Participatory Photography? ............................................................................................... 6
Why use Photography? ..................................................................................................................... 7
Participatory Photography for Education Outcomes ...................................................................... 8
Participatory Photography for Research Outcomes ....................................................................... 9
Planning a Project ............................................................................................................................ 11
Designing a Workshop .................................................................................................................. 14
Introducing Visual Literacy ............................................................................................................ 15
Photo Dialogues ............................................................................................................................... 17
Types of Cameras ............................................................................................................................. 19
Handing Out Cameras ...................................................................................................................... 20
The Four F’s .................................................................................................................................... 21
Treasure Hunt .................................................................................................................................. 22
Telling Stories .................................................................................................................................. 23
Culturally Safe and Appropriate Facilitation .................................................................................. 24
Informed Consent and Copyright ...................................................................................................... 27
Cultural Considerations with Consent ............................................................................................ 29
Camera Sign Out Sheet .................................................................................................................... 30
Template Evaluation for Project Participants .................................................................................. 31
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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which parts of this work was created - the Bardi Jawi Peoples.

We give respect to the Elders - past, present and emerging - and through them to all Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We honour their continuing connection with land, place, waters and community. We celebrate these shared places of learning.

Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers should be aware that this document may contain sensitive information, images or names of people who have since passed away.
Production of this Guide

PhotoVoice

PhotoVoice is an award-winning non-profit organisation based in the UK and working worldwide. Its vision is for a world in which everybody has the opportunity to represent themselves, speak out and be heard. It uses participatory photography as a mechanism to understand the unique experiences of individuals and communities across a range of different topics and issues. Since first being established as a charity in 2003, it has worked on over 120 projects which use ethical photography for social change.

The content in this guide draws both from PhotoVoice’s methodological materials, and insights gained from Stakeholder Engagement Workshops which took place in 2023. This guide is intended to support the Ardyaloon community and One Arm Point Remote Community School (RCS) to implement participatory photography activities which will strengthen their community insights and activities.

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Please contact hello@photovoice.org for any enquiries.
‘Our World Now’ is a one-year research project developed by Curtin University, School of Population Health, supported by PhotoVoice and funded by Telethon 7. The project works in close partnership and co-design with One Arm Point RCS.

‘Our World Now’ aims to support school children to explore themes of community wellbeing, using photography and photographic storytelling. The process will produce new and engaging youth-led insights and build skills and confidence in students.

The process is being continuously scoped with nine community stakeholders who have provided expertise on the Ardyaloon community, the cultural practices of the Bardi Jawi people, and local education pedagogies.

It is envisaged the project will have a clear ongoing legacy in two ways.

1) Through the development and distribution of new learning resources for the school which are based upon educational need and participant insight
2) Through embedding key concepts of photographic storytelling into school practice through provision of materials and capacity building activities with key stakeholders

This guide is one tool which community stakeholders can use to help shape their use of photographic storytelling to enhance education.

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**Our World Now – Stakeholders**

In June 2023, Lauren Parr (PhotoVoice) and Christina Pollard (Curtin University) held five days of workshops at One Arm Point RCS with teachers, Aboriginal Education Officers and broader Ardyaloon community members. These stakeholders have been invaluable to the production of this guide in the following ways:

- Sharing cultural expertise on safely engaging on community
- Sharing knowledge on school logistics and ways of working
- Creating photographs and photographic stories which explore themes of community and well-being
- Codeveloping ways in which participatory photography can be used with students
The Bardi Jawi people are the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the town of Ardyaloon on the Dampier Peninsular, in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

Country has inspired artistic visualisations for hundreds of thousands of years. The people have a profound understanding of the role of visual arts and use artistic practice as a way of self and community expression, storytelling and capturing beauty.

Elders often pass down art and artistic practice and teach techniques within community. Elders tell dreamtime stories about the land which they pass down through storytelling to preserve cultural wisdom for future generations. In this way, art plays a profound role in cultural preservation with both creative practice and storytelling being central community traditions.

The tools and processes within this practice guide have been discussed and scoped with members of the Ardyaloon community, including Bardi Jawi peoples. Working together, we have decided which PhotoVoice tools will be most useful for the community and how they can be applied in culturally appropriate ways.

All tools within this practice guide are designed to be broad and flexible so that members of the Ardyaloon community including the Bardi Jawi people can apply their creative expertise when using participatory photography. The creative expertise and histories of storytelling within this community far predates that of participatory photography. This expertise provides an exciting basis for successful and innovative uses of the tools within this guide.
What is Participatory Photography?

Participatory photography is a broad term with lots of different elements. As a methodology, it is rooted in photojournalism, research, and international development. However, how it is used varies greatly and is dependent on the specific issue it seeks to address, the participant group, and the context of the project. It is based on the power of image as a means of self-expression, documentation, imagination, advocacy, and communication.

The process of participatory photography involves a facilitator working with a group to support them to take photographs and tell stories in workshops. These workshops usually include some or all of the following elements:

- Taking images using a camera
- Learning about photography and photographic concepts
- Practicing photographic techniques
- Talking about images in the group “show and tell”
- Exploring different topics or themes
- Group discussions
- Writing stories (captions) to go with images
- Selecting or curating images to share with a chosen audience

Participatory photography always involves combining photography with stories rather than simply creating visually pleasing photographs. Both the photo and the text work together to tell the story of the photographer.

‘The road to the Hatchery has been bituminised.

The importance of this is because the Hatchery is one of the main tourist attractions for the community. The road before was very rocky and unsurfaced which a smaller car wouldn’t be able to access.’

© Chichi 2023 | PhotoVoice | Curtin University | ‘Our World Now’ | Australia
Why use Photography?

All forms of art and media can be used to express opinions. The positive impact of participation in creative projects is well documented. It is useful to understand the characteristics that are specific to the medium of photography. How do such qualities or characteristics help or limit participation?

Photography’s characteristics:
- Photography is an accessible and inclusive medium
- It can document by creating a visual record of things
- It can represent community truths and cultural practices
- Cameras are portable, and can be taken to different locations
- Photography can be linked to people’s memories
- Photography is both creative and technical
- Photography can be used as a social tool
- Photographs can help overcome language barriers and express complicated ideas
- Photographs can be instantly reviewed, reproduced and distributed to global audiences
- Social media is changing the way photography functions socially and culturally

"Photography is seen as a method to validate multiple local knowledges and practices, thereby disrupting existing hierarchies and power relations. The basic idea behind this approach is to provide people ... with the power to decide for themselves what kind of information and representation is most appropriate to capture the social, political, ethical and psychological challenges they face."


“[What I liked best about the workshops was] that they were hands on and engaging, both technical and thought provoking”
‘Our World Now’, Stakeholder Feedback, Ardyaloon, Western Australia 2023
Participatory Photography for Education Outcomes

Participatory photography is often used in education settings and is a highly effective tool for youth work and engagement. When using participatory photography in education, the following aims are commonly achieved:

- Help build confidence and self-esteem
- Improve skills communicating in groups
- Promoting positive wellbeing
- Creative play and fun
- Building skills in technical photography
- Promoting dialogue
- Support development of social and media skills
- Vocational skills

Participatory photography does not need to only be used in art lessons. It can be used in any type of lesson to explore the topics within the curriculum. It may be particularly helpful for assisting with discussion-based activities and exploring different issues, as well as breaking up longer lessons with a short engaging activity.

Strength-based practice in One Arm Point Remote Community School

One Arm Point Remote Community School uses strength-based practice to inform its teaching and educational activities. This means that the school approaches the curriculum in ways that honour each student as an individual with their own special strengths. Participatory photography fits in well in this practice in the following ways:

- Creating a safe space to discuss ideas
- Building skills in photography
- Allowing every child, a space to share their ideas and photographs
- Celebrating achievements throughout the process
- The process has many different elements for use of different skills
- The process can be conducted with very few words so that those with additional needs can participate
Participatory Photography for Research Outcomes

Participatory photography is often used in research settings, where it can be referred to as ‘photovoice’. Using participatory photography for research often has the following benefits:

- Communities are involved in the research process as active participants rather than ‘subjects’.
- Perspectives shared can be more in-depth.
- More people can take part because photography is inclusive.
- It is more fun than traditional forms of research.
- Community members benefit from the research through developing new skills.
- Actions from the research can be informed through discussion with the community.

Participatory photography can be used in both formal and informal research projects, conducted by academic researchers or teachers. If teachers at One Arm Point RCS want to find out views of students on a particular topic, they can theme workshops around that topic.
Using Participatory Photography for Research in Ardyaloon

Curtin University’s School of Population Health and Education developed the ‘Our World Now’ research Project in consultation with PhotoVoice. The Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (AIATSIS) 2020 Code of Ethics sets out four key principles for ethical research: 1) Indigenous self-determination, 2) Indigenous leadership, 3) Impact and value, 4) Sustainability and accountability.

With each principle, researchers should prioritise: recognition and respect; engagement and collaboration; informed consent; cultural capability and learning; Indigenous led research; Indigenous perspectives and participation; Indigenous knowledge and data; benefit and reciprocity; impact and risk; Indigenous land and waters; ongoing Indigenous governance; and, reporting and compliance.

‘Our World Now’ aims to follow these principles as well as those set out in PhotoVoice’s Statement of Ethical Practice. The research aims to be a meaningful partnership with One Arm Point RCS, notably through the following features:

- Ongoing consultation and development with community stakeholders
- Fun and engaging opportunities for youth engagement
- Co-design and co-delivery with the community
- Sharing resources and knowledge with the community to embed the ongoing use of tools.

How One Arm Point RCS can use these tools for research

Participatory photography projects are by nature an inquiry; a form of research. Not all research projects are led by academics. Participatory photography projects all explore new insights in co-design with partners and communities, with bespoke aims and outcomes for social change. In the Australian context, research is viewed as ‘investigation undertaken to gain knowledge and understanding’ and casts a wide net in terms of what constitutes research ((AIATSIS) 2020).

One Arm Point RCS can design their own community led research using participatory photography. This could look like:

- Collectively deciding an issue or topic that it would be useful to explore community views on, and who these views should be shared with and why
- Using techniques within this guide to work with community members
- Sharing the work produced with an audience (for example, other members of the community, or wider decision-makers).
Planning a Project

Using participatory photography for research can often provide the following benefits:

**Setting goals, aims and objectives**

Participatory photography projects come in many different shapes and forms. Establishing clear, concrete aims and objectives is essential to the success of a project. This can be a complex process and will involve discussions between all the stakeholders involved, which include participants, partner organisations and staff.

A project needs to be designed so that it can most effectively achieve its aims, have maximum impact and meet the needs of the participants. PhotoVoice designs projects to make them relevant to the specific circumstances in which they are happening.

Here are some questions that need to be considered when designing a participatory photography project:

**Goal**
- What need is this project addressing? How will participants benefit?
- Why are you doing the project?
- This can be aspirational and broad, and indicates the direction of change the project is hoping for

**Aims**
- What change, outcome or transformation are you seeking to effect through the project?
- What will be different if the project is successful?
- The aims should help you meet the goals you have already defined

**Objectives**
- How are you going to meet the aims?
- What is the process of the project, what is going to happen, when and how?
- Think about how participatory photography, as a tool, is appropriate and strategically useful in meeting these aims.
- How and why is participatory photography being used?
**Key considerations**
What particular factors do you need to take into account in delivering this project such as access issues, language issues, cultural sensitivity, disclosure of status etc. How do these factors inform your objectives?

How have these needs, aims and objectives been identified? Who has identified them? Does this process reflect participatory values?

**Participant Group**
- Who is the participant group you are working with? What is the context and environment they are living in, and how will their situations affect their ability to participate in and engage with the project?
- Do the participants have any specific needs that need to be catered for, such as health or protection considerations that will affect how they can be involved?
- How will participants get involved in the project? How will they be recruited – through a partner organisation or by directly working within the community?

**Partners and project team**
- Who are the people and organisations participating in this project?
- What will be the roles and responsibilities of different partners and people in the project?
- What level of capacity, availability and commitment does everyone have to the project?

**Resources**
- Is there a budget and funding available for this project?
- What costs will the project entail?
- What kind of equipment and resources will the project need?

**Timeframe**
- Over what timeframe will the project work?
- Are there specific dates and deadlines around which the project needs to be organised?

**Outputs**
- What will the project outputs be?
- Who is/will be involved in deciding this and at what stage in the project?
- How will the images be used? Will they be shared with public audiences? How will the audience be defined, and how will they be shared?
- How do the outputs relate to meeting the project aims?
Impact

- How will the project know it has achieved its aims? What indicators do you plan to use and how will you measure them?
- What monitoring and evaluation activities will you do before, during and after the project?
- Will the impact of this project be sustainable? Is sustainability a priority or concern?

Project Design in Ardyaloon and One Arm Point Remote Community School

During the ‘Our World Now’ stakeholder workshops in 2023, many ideas were shared about potential projects led by teachers at One Arm Point Remote Community School. Stakeholders expressed that participatory photography can be used within the school to deliver a variety of educational aims, including:

- To document trips on country, using instant printers to share views and experiences
- To strengthen the arts provision offer
- To improve student well-being through linking images to emotions
- To build student confidence in speaking in groups

One Arm Point Remote Community School and the broader Ardyaloon community could also consider developing specific projects around specific topics. These could include themes like:

- Evaluating perspectives on the development of the solar hub to feed back to those involved in its development
- Exploring perspectives on education provision in the school to highlight its strengths and seek to understand what could be improved

In any project which uses participatory photography, it is necessary to think about the purpose of gaining views and who the audience for those views is. There is potential in participatory photography to create powerful tools for advocacy, but these aims are most successfully achieved where there is a clear goal, aims, objectives and a robust plan. Also, managing expectations on where advocacy can be successful (or not) is important.

New materials, such as cameras and printers, from the ‘Our World Now’ project may assist the school in devising new and exciting ways to use participatory photography.
When designing a workshop, it’s important to keep a balance of different tasks to keep participants engaged, including activities that are fun, reflective and build a group dynamic.

Some suggested participatory photography activities for individuals and groups

1. A day in my life.
2. Alter egos.
3. Commonalities and differences (across individuals or communities)
4. Chose a minute past each hour and set an alarm – take a photo once an hour.
5. Bring in a photograph from this week’s news and ask participants to respond to the theme.
6. A photo that tells us something about you.
7. Touchstones – places, objects, people that are important to you.
8. My neighbourhood
9. Self-portraits without the face
10. Think of 5 words to describe you. Take 5 photographs associated with those words.
11. Bring in a photograph that has a strong message. What is the message? How else could you photograph that message?
12. Shadows and reflections
13. Old and new
14. Strange and familiar
15. Dreams and realities

Activities should also be geared towards the aims and objectives of a project. If a project is around a particular theme, specific activities can be created around that.
There is a language of photography often referred to as visual literacy, which along with enabling self-expression, is at the core of participatory photography projects. Visual literacy is about considering the aesthetic elements of an image and the choices the photographer has made, which can be helpful for participants to plan and talk about their photographs. Visual literacy can also relate to other forms of visual art.

**Useful Terminology**

Includes, but is not limited to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape</th>
<th>Portrait</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Black &amp; white</td>
<td>Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close-up</td>
<td>Depth of field</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreground</td>
<td></td>
<td>Low angle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>Background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame</td>
<td>High angle</td>
<td>Flash</td>
<td>Shapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Visual literacy is the ability to read, analyse and interpret images. It provides participants with a language to describe, understand and plan their photographs, and interpret other peoples'.
- Having an existing visual language can help participants to communicate through images, but is not essential and can be developed throughout the project.
- There is no fixed approach to visual literacy – it depends on the project, the experience of the group, the context and the aims. It may involve technical understanding and skills, which you need to assess the importance of in any given project.
- Visual literacy is best introduced informally and playfully, not as a technical to do list. Simple questions are the best, for example: 'What do you see?'
• It is best to respond to, develop and name what participants find interesting. Be wary of slipping into formal photographic education and avoid ideas of what makes a ‘good’ photograph.
• The aim is to support participants to develop their own visual approaches that reflect their concerns and interests.
• It’s important to emphasise the relationship between image content and image composition. The composition will help frame the content in a particular way, and change how it is perceived by an audience member.
• Frequently refreshing learning and providing a list of words or key concepts to participants can be helpful.

**Exercises to help explain visual literacy:**

• Two participants, one is blindfolded, and the other describes a picture.
• Pass a single image around the group - each participant adds/says a new word to describe its composition.
• Provide the same picture to participants. Ask: 'What do you see?' Write down key words and compare answers.
• Prepare a slideshow of different images. Ask a different question for each image to stimulate thinking about different aspects of the pictures.
• Provide a picture to every participant with white space around it. Annotate the space beyond the frame with writing or drawing.
• Call out words such as nature/documentary/constructed/portrait and ask participants to choose photographs corresponding to them.
• Arrange different photographs in pairs based on visual connections.
• Crop or re-frame photographs to change the meaning.
Photo Dialogue exercises use photographs to generate discussion around images, attitudes, emotions, priorities and viewpoints. A good photo dialogue exercise gets participants to reflect on how an image communicates (the photographic techniques it uses), while simultaneously considering what it communicates (the themes, attitudes, content and perspective it conveys).

Different forms and variations of photo dialogue exercises are one of the foundations of the participatory photography workshop process. Photo dialogue exercises often:

- involve the facilitator setting a task based around the activity of looking at, discussing, selecting and organising photographs according to a particular theme or criteria.
- use found or externally sourced images – not personal images or those that could suggest that there is a 'right way' to take a photograph. T
- help demonstrate the idea that photos can be read. They are ambiguous and have multiple meanings. We all see the same picture differently. We draw on personal ideas, references and memories to interpret a photograph. Our response to an image is about us as individuals as much as the image.
- mediate discussion
- help participants develop group skills, listening skills, and communications skills. They allow participants to get used to the idea that people have different opinions, and that there is no single correct answer.
- support understanding how to look at pictures; and can reflect on what being part of an audience means or involves.
- can act as an entry point into an issue. When discussing photographs there is overlap between the photograph, the idea, the content, the subject and ourselves.
- require careful preparation - never seek to provoke or trigger a response through images which are too close to participant experiences.
- can use ranking, ordering, organising, choosing, pairing.
- should have clear objectives with prepared questions or frameworks for discussion.
- can use photographs around a particular theme that participants have been asked to bring in themselves (note that found images rather than personal photographs may be preferable at earlier stages of a workshop).
- are flexible and can be used for multiple purposes, such as:
  - building photographic language and understanding.
  - exploring photographic techniques.
  - exploring how a particular issue or community is represented through photographs.
  - using photographs to develop ideas around important themes, such as human rights, diversity, well-being, equality, the environment, mental health etc.
Photo Dialogues

Photo Dialogue – School Activity Example

Aim: To improve knowledge of healthy and unhealthy foods

STEP 1: Find a selection of approximately 10 images of various healthy and unhealthy foods that are available within the local community. These could be taken by a teacher and printed out.

STEP 2: Put students into groups of 6-8 and give them the selection of images.

STEP 3: Ask students to discuss the images and rank them on a scale from ‘Healthy’ to ‘Unhealthy’. The groups should agree on their order and have reasons for their choices.

STEP 4: Ask the groups to feed back to the teacher. The teacher can build upon the student’s responses to further educate them on the topic of healthy eating.

STEP 5: The teacher can reflect on knowledge gaps to help inform future lessons on this topic.
Types of Cameras

The cameras sourced for a participatory photography project do not need to be expensive or professional camera models but should ideally be at least 8 megapixels. If possible, try to source the same camera model for all participants to ensure consistency.

The model of camera used within the ‘Our World Now’ project is a Kodak FZ55. Below is a simple graphic which explains the main buttons.
Handing Out Cameras

- Make sure the cameras have safety straps.
- Always number the cameras and SD cards – full SD cards rather than micro-SD cards are better as they can be clearly labelled.
- Prepare a camera sign out sheet so that you can keep a record of who has which camera.
- Make sure the cameras are all set to the highest resolution, producing the largest files.
- Ensure you turn the focus beep on or off on all cameras as you wish.
- Ensure that digital zoom is switched off.

Preparing participants
- Tell participants you are going to give out the cameras (note that as soon as you have done so you will lose their attention for a while!).
- Ask them:
  - who has used a camera before?
  - to use the wrist strap.
  - not to take pictures of anyone else in the group without asking permission first. You can relax this rule later.

Introducing cameras to participants
- Introduce different elements of the camera, including:
  - ON/OFF.
  - The shutter button.
  - Holding the camera – demonstrate how to hold the camera with two hands to keep it steady.
  - Lens.
  - Zoom – it’s better to zoom with your feet. Explain that you only need to use the zoom when you are not able to get close to the subject.
  - Playback – review images. Discourage deleting.

Flash – demonstrate its use and compare images with/without flash.

Using cameras - some introductory exercises
1. Place a plant on a chair. Ask participants to take five pictures from different distances and angles. Share pictures on the back of screens asking for feedback on how distance and position change the picture. Use this to introduce the importance of FRAME.
2. Write up 3 words on the board. For example: window, table, book. Ask participants to take one photograph of each. Compare results to show how everyone takes pictures differently, even of the same subject.
3. Light and dark. Explain that a photograph is created when light hits the surface of the sensor. Photography - in a technical sense - is all about light. Play with light to create an image.
The Four F's

A useful way to demonstrate the basics of the camera and techniques to take a better photographs is illustrated in PhotoVoice’s ‘Four F’s’ Guide:

1. **Framing**
   Choose carefully what to include in the photo and what to leave out. Think about what story you are telling and remember that everything in the frame will influence the viewer, and they won’t know anything that you don’t show them.

2. **Focus**
   Many cameras will focus with a half-press, then take the image with a full press. Only complete the press when you have chosen the frame you want and when it has focused.

3. **Follow through**
   After you make the decision to take the photograph, the camera still needs to do the work, so don’t snatch the camera away. If you pull away too early you could have motion blur, or miss the frame that you want. The camera will take less time to take the photo if there is lots of light, and if you are not zoomed in.

4. **Flash/light**
   Think about where the light is coming from. People standing with bright light on them may squint, but with bright light behind them they might end up in shadow. Try to keep the flash off as standard and only put it on when you know you need it – your camera may suggest using flash when it is not necessary, and light from the flash can look unnatural, or reflect off eyes, glass, metal, and even skin.
Treasure Hunt

PhotoVoice employs a variety of photography activities within its workshops to build different skills and achieve different outcomes. One of our most commonly used activities is the Treasure Hunt – a highly flexible activity which builds the photographic skills of participants and can be used to explore specific themes, and illustrate visual literacy.

Treasure Hunt Example:
1. Something that’s your favourite colour
2. A pattern
3. A portrait
4. Something natural
5. A detail you think no one else will have noticed

Key points

- This is a great activity to do early on in a project – it is structured but also allows for interpretation and creativity. It shows how we each take different photographs, even when responding to the same prompts.
- It’s fun and can also be used as a warm up game or energiser activity.
- Make sure your list encourages experimentation beyond the usual view (think of different angles, things in the sky and on the ground).
- You can do this anywhere (inside or outside).
- Vary the categories as appropriate. The first treasure hunt might start with simple objects (see example above) and as the project develops, progress to include emotions, techniques and concepts.
- Accompany those participants who are under 16, vulnerable or you feel would benefit from additional support.
- Agree a time for participants to be back from the Treasure Hunt.
- Before they start, discuss the ethics of taking portraits. Always ask for permission if a person is the main subject of the photograph. You don’t need to do this for wider scenes.
- Be prepared to download and view some of the pictures.
- When reviewing, focus on how and what the photographs communicate, not on whether they are good or not. You can play a guessing game to see which categories others in the group think has been taken in a particular photograph.
- Ask participants about their experience of taking the photographs. Be conversational.
Telling Stories

Participatory photography works best when it uses stories accompanying the images taken by participants. The stories that go with images can be spoken, audio-recorded or written down. Having words that go with images helps to provide additional context to the image and help others to understand the photographer’s intention. Stories can be as simple as a few words or be much longer. Each participant should have the freedom to approach their story the way they would like, with guidance provided by facilitators.

What makes a good story?

During the stakeholder workshops with Ardyaloon community members in June 2023, the idea of storytelling was explored with the group. The community has much expertise on the idea of storytelling, and how participatory photography may be used to support children to have their own stories about their culture and land. Stakeholders identified the following areas as being important to a ‘good’ story:

- History
- Background
- Context and surroundings
- Mixes of old and modern community elements that show past and present
- Elements from the land and the land’s stories
- Humour
- Descriptive words
- Feelings and emotions
- Vulnerability – pieces of you
- People and characters

Language

The children of the Bardi Jawi community of Ardyaloon use a mix of Bardi language and English. It is important to consider this when writing stories to go with images. Stories may be written in Bardi or in English, or combine both languages.

When showing images and stories to wider audiences, using some Bardi words may help to preserve the language and educate those from outside the community on key Bardi terms and phrases.

It is common to write captions with translations when sharing with wider audiences, to maximise possible reach.
In line with PhotoVoice’s Statement of Ethical Practice, ‘cultural sensitivity’ is a key element to successfully using participatory photography. PhotoVoice aims to ensure that all its projects are culturally sensitive and appropriate. We aim to work with and train local photographer facilitators where possible, using locally-relevant images, culturally sensitive codes of behaviour and language in workshops; and showing sensitivity to local customs around image content and image taking.

Some key characteristics of culturally safe and appropriate facilitation:
- Non-judgemental, neutral.
- Non-discriminatory; accepting of difference.
- Respectful.
- Friendly.
- Open.
- Comfortable with silence.
- Accepting of conflict.
- Responsive and flexible.
- Patient and calm.
- Speaks in a polite and gentle manner.
- Uses appropriate language.
- Respects group rules and policies.
- Recognises his/her own strengths and weaknesses.
- A good listener.
- Interested in exchange and dialogue.
- Affirming towards participants.

During the stakeholder workshops in 2023, facilitators noticed how intently everyone listened to tasks. The group were deeply reflective about the questions that were asked throughout the sessions and carefully responded to prompts.

The stakeholders dedicated time each day to engage with the workshops, despite busy schedules and multiple roles within the school and community, including paid work, additional voluntary tasks and personal or family commitments. This significant time, dedication and community expertise would provide an exceptional basis for facilitating strong participatory photography projects. Key challenges may be coordinating logistics and finding time amid other pressing priorities.
Cultural Safety in Ardyaloon

Throughout the Ardyaloon stakeholder workshops delivered in June 2023, ongoing discussions took place around cultural safety and cultural appropriateness.

Co-design and co-facilitation
The Bardi Jawi community of Ardyaloon know their land and these perspectives are invaluable within the delivery of participatory photography on community. Within the ‘Our World Now’ project, stakeholders have been consulted on the safe use of this methodology both within the research project and independent uses within the school for educational outcomes.

Where possible, stakeholders involved in the development of the project should continue to both co-design and co-deliver research activities. These stakeholders can also deliver their own workshops and projects using skills and materials gained from the ‘Our World Now’ project.

Culturally Sensitive Land in Ardyaloon
Photographic activities should take place in areas that are allowed. Local stakeholders can advise on where these are because non-Indigenous facilitators should not go to them, take participants to them, or hear some stories that relate to these areas.

Gender Dynamics on Community
Men, women, boys, and girls play different roles within community and these may differ depending on family relationships. There are cultural traditions with regard to separate men’s and women’s business. They may also have different roles in creating art.

Traditionally, men lead on the production of creative cultural artefacts, though many community members of both genders produce art and creative work. Because of this, in workshops, it may be useful to separate boys and girls so they can participate fully and confidentially.

Involving families
The Ardyaloon community and Bardi Jawi peoples’ value family and community and all projects, workshops and ongoing work should involve families and the wider community where appropriate, so they are aware of, and involved in projects.
Culturally Safe and Appropriate Facilitation

Trauma Informed Practice in One Arm Point RCS

One Arm Point RCS uses trauma-informed practice to inform its teaching and educational activities. This means that the school approaches the curriculum in ways that are sensitive to trauma that children and adults may experience. Participatory photography can support this pedagogy in the following ways:

- Allowing participants to share as much or as little as they feel comfortable with
- Providing a new creative tool of photography for self-expression
- Allowing every child to have a space to share their ideas and photographs
- Providing opportunities for structured play and photographic games
- Entrusting participants with cameras to increase self-confidence and self-worth
- Supporting healthy conversations and the development of healthy relationships
Informed Consent and Copyright

In line with PhotoVoice’s Statement of Ethical Practice, informed participant choice is central to our approach to all projects. It is essential that participants are provided with clear choices about the content of their work, including the right to withdraw from part or all of project activities, at all times.

Participants should never be pressured to produce particular content or reveal material that they would prefer to remain private. Choices over content and copyright should be regularly reviewed and discussed views consent as a process rather than a one-off decision.

Informed consent
Informed consent is term that signifies that the consent a person gives meets certain minimum standards. Consent is said to be informed when given freely and with the capacity to understand all the information. Critically, the person should understand the potential consequences of giving consent. Equally important is that facilitators are aware of the impact of participants giving consent. Informed consent processes are not pre-determined but should be responsive to community and participant need.

Key points

- A consent process is only necessary if participant photographs are going to be shown publicly by the project or project partners.
- Participants hold the copyright on all their images. A legal agreement is required whereby they agree to share usage rights over images. PhotoVoice participants share copyright with PhotoVoice enabling further use of the images for a range of purposes, including exhibition and promotion.
- Informed consent is best understood as a process and undertaken as an ongoing dialogue with participants. Where appropriate participants should be invited to discuss possible consequences of giving consent.
- There are three methods of obtaining consent: written, filmed and oral (the latter must be witnessed by a facilitator).
- Always provide an option for participants to use a pseudonym if they don’t want to use their real name. Ensure the pseudonym is used in all internal records/archives.
- It can be useful to have dual language versions of consent forms, particularly when referencing them later on.
- As part of the agreement, agree a credit for the photographs. This might be combination of the participant name/project name/partner name.
• Everyone has the right to give informed consent, but there are some key exceptions which can include different legal requirements to ensure compliance with the law:
  o Young people under the age of 16 (in the UK, may vary by country). You can undertake a process where the child assents to share image rights, but the parent or guardian still has to give consent to young person’s decisions.
  o People affected by fluctuating mental health considerations may not be able to give informed consent.
  o People with learning disabilities have the same rights to give informed consent as all other adults. Even if they cannot communicate with speech, they may be able to use their behaviour to show what decisions they would like to make. Only people who lack capacity will need to have decisions made for them; this is a specific consideration which has its basis in UK law.
  o Even if laws in different countries may be more permissive on consent, informed consent should go beyond legal considerations and focus on participant well-being
• Every participant has the right to withdraw consent at any time, though it is rarely possible to withdraw images that are already in the public domain.
• Consent should cover an identified edit/selection/group of images, not the entire set of images produced by a participant during the project. Attach thumbnails or filenames of the images, clearly named/numbered, and any captions or text to the informed consent agreement.

Other consent agreements
• **Model release for participants and other people appearing in participant images.** You need to also ask permission for other participants to retain and use any photographs in which they appear. You can do this as part of the same agreement, with the same terms applying. For other community members, separate consent forms will need to be agreed.
**Acknowledgment of Historical Art**

Australian indigenous art is extremely popular and lucrative which has given way to historical and current appropriation and theft (see more from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies). Work has often been used without appropriate credit or pay for indigenous peoples.

All consent processes undertaken with community members should acknowledge this history and current practice and seek to continuously explain how artwork created within projects will be used, and for what purpose. While all PhotoVoice projects are governed by a robust process of informed consent, it is particularly important in this context to recognise this history and explore with participants how they may use the work they have created independently. Every effort should be made to highlight opportunities for exhibition and promotion of work if participants desire.

Facilitators should not bring a preconceived idea of what indigenous art should look like. While there are some well-known features of some indigenous art, there are thousands of styles and approaches, both traditional and contemporary. All of these approaches should be encouraged within participant photography.

**Photography of members of the community who have passed away**

When working in Aboriginal communities you must have permission to take images and videos if using any people and children.

Consent forms should make clear that where images of community members who have passed away have already been printed or published, it may not always be possible to retract them. However clear contact details will be provided to participants in order to try to do so. Within any project or workshops, it will be necessary to discuss with families and communities this possibility so that informed choices can be made about whether images which show faces are included.
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Template Evaluation for Project Participants

Think about how you felt before starting the PhotoVoice course and how you feel now. We are interested in understanding what changes might have come about because of the workshops.

You can write your name or remain anonymous if you wish to. Please answer the questions below using the following scores, thinking about how you feel now compared to how you felt at the beginning of the project:

5 = Much more confident
4 = Somewhat more confident
3 = The same as before
2 = Somewhat less confident
1 = Much less confident

1) How do you feel about your ability to use a camera?

2) How do you feel about your ability to take photographs?

3) How do you feel about your ability to take photographs and write captions which share your feelings?

4) How do you feel about using photography to help share your feelings with other people, either in your community or outside of it?

5) How do you feel about using photography to help share important messages about the issue of [INSERT TOPIC]?

6) How do you feel about speaking to people in the workshops to share your feelings?

7) How do you feel about speaking to people outside of the workshops to share your feelings?

8) How do you feel about using photography in the future outside of the workshops?

9) Following the exhibition, how do you feel about how much your community understands issues relating to [INSERT TOPIC] because of photography?

10) Following the exhibition, how do you feel about your community working together to address issues relating to [INSERT TOPIC]?

Do you have anything else you would like to add? If you would like to say anything else about your answers, please do so.
This guide includes images taken by ‘Our World Now’ participants during the stakeholder workshops held in 2023.

The cover image has the following copyright:
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Written and compiled by Lauren Parr and Tom Elkins

This document makes reference to ‘The PhotoVoice Manual’ 2007, written and compiled by Anna Blackman and ‘The PhotoVoice Manual Training’ 2016 written and compiled by Liz Orton, Tom Elkins, Kate Watson and Becky Warnock. This guide heavily references PhotoVoice’s Statement of Ethical Practice, found online at www.photovoice.org

Sections in orange have been constructed between Lauren Parr and Tom Elkins (PhotoVoice), Christina Pollard (Curtin University), Jacqueline Hunter and Vivienne McDermott (One Arm Point RCS) with input from the ‘Our World Now’ Stakeholder Group.

www.photovoice.org
The front cover image is part of a two part image series which has the following caption and copyright:

‘Two Young Bardi Boys’
Two young Bardi boys from Ardiyooloon standing on some rocks, looking at the tide, waiting to go spearing with their traditional spears.

They found a perfect rock waiting and watching for the right time to spear the fishes. The two Bardi boys get their spears in for a sharp and deadly hit.

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