

Photovoice: participatory visual research

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Visual research

The use of visual images and technologies such as video, film, photography, art, drawing and sculpture in qualitative social research to both produce and represent knowledge.

These artistic mediums include, but are not limited to: film, photography, drawings, paintings, and sculptures.

It is mostly used in social sciences (anthropology, sociology, geography) and humanities (cultural studies, semiotics, ...).

Photovoice: main goals and intended outcomes

1. to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns,
2. to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion of photographs, and
3. to reach policymakers

Advanced Review

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Picturing waters: a review of Photovoice and similar participatory visual research on water governance

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23 scientific articles, pertaining to 20 separate research projects on

- water and health, sanitation, hygiene (N=5)
- participation in water resources management (8)
- experiences and perceptions of landscapes and water spaces (4)
- domestic water and urban water management (3)

<http://wires.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WiresArticle/wisId-WAT21226.html>

Methods

- Participatory visual research facilitating connections between people and institutions
- used together with other methods (mixed methods)
- similar methods (PhotoStory, PhotoNovella...)

Participants

By definition Photovoice focuses on vulnerable or subalterns groups (indigenous groups, women, girls, youth, or urban dwellers living in low income suburbs).

Both homogeneous and mixed groups.

Activities

1. Photo assignment (question should be clear and meaningful)
2. Photo interviews (individual)
3. Community/group conversation
4. Publication (articles, report, exhibition,...)

Illustrating participants' views and concerns



'So the important rule [is that] we take great care of the pump because we get clean water as a whole community.'

Credits: James
Gbomgbotoh, Kambama.
Source: Thompson

Recording emotions associated to water



'Even though the dead trees in the picture were not caused by lack of water (rather rising salinity) the desolate landscape that they present emphasizes the lack of hope that can be held by farmers when they have to look at the view everyday.'

Source: Keremane.

Linking participants' feeling with infrastructures.



*“That's the toilet,
this is the
outside...
there is no lock.”*

*Credits: 34 year old
woman. Photovoice
project.
Source: Scorgie.*