2007

Voices of Islam: A Photovoice Project

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Voices of Islam
A Photovoice Project
in the Pioneer Valley,
Massachusetts

A Master's Thesis Project
by Erin Michelle Myers,
Center for International Education,
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Voices of Islam – A Photovoice Project
Project Description and Lessons Learned

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WHAT IS PHOTOVOICE?

Photovoice is a methodology mostly used in the field of education, which combines photography with grassroots social action. Subjects are asked to represent their community or point of view by taking photographs. It is often used among marginalized people, and is intended to give insight into how they conceptualize their circumstances. As a form of community consultation, photovoice attempts to bring the perspectives of those "who lead lives that are different from those traditionally in control of the means for imaging the world" into the policy-making process. It is also a response to issues raised over the authorship of representation of communities.

It was developed by Caroline C. Wang of the University of Michigan, and Mary Ann Burris, research associate of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London. In 1992, Wang and Burris created what is now known as "Photovoice" as a way to enable rural women of Yunnan Province, China, to influence the policies and programs that affected them. It has since been used among homeless adults in Ann Arbor, Michigan and among community health workers and teachers in rural South Africa and by Dr. Claudia Mitchell et al.

The concept owes a debt to the Paulo Freire's pedagogy related to critical consciousness, feminist theory and empowerment.

Photovoice has three main goals:
1. to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns;
2. to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about personal and community issues through large and small group discussions of photographs; and
3. to reach policy makers.

Photovoice Methodology
"Photovoice is a method that enables people to define for themselves and others, including policy makers, what is worth remembering and what needs to be changed."
- Carolyn Wang

The photovoice concept was developed by Caroline C. Wang and Mary Ann Burris and described in a series of research articles. They used three main sources to create the photovoice concept: the theoretical literature on education for critical consciousness, feminist theory, and documentary photography; the efforts of community photographers and participatory educators to challenge assumptions about representation and documentary authorship; and their experience applying the process in the Ford Foundation-supported Yunnan Women's Reproductive Health and Development Program.
Photovoice blends a grassroots approach to photography and social action. It provides cameras not to health specialists, policy makers, or professionals, but to people with least access to those who make decisions affecting their lives.

The stages of photovoice include:

1. conceptualising the problem
2. defining broader goals and objectives
3. recruiting policymakers as the audience for photovoice findings
4. training the trainers
5. conducting photovoice training
6. devising the initial theme/s for taking pictures
7. taking pictures
8. facilitating group discussion
9. critical reflection and dialogue
   * selecting photographs for discussion
   * contextualising and storytelling
   * codifying issues, themes, and theories
10. documenting the stories
11. conducting the formative evaluation
12. reaching policymakers, donors, media, researchers, and others who may be mobilised to create change
13. conducting participatory evaluation of policy and programme implementation

(Communication Network Initiative website, 2007)
DESCRIPTION: VOICES OF ISLAM PIONEER VALLEY

Project Description:
With the goals of counteracting Islamaphobia, this project aims to change the discourse about Islam and its people, by creating a counter-narrative to the narrative that has been engineered by the U.S. government and world. This

The Photovoice project will be housed at the West Springfield Islamic Center. Ten to sixteen participants of Islamic faith between the ages of 18 and 100 years old, will form the core working group.

The overarching themes of the project are “the truth about Islam and its people” and “the politics of spiritual well-being – how we can stop the process of dehumanization.” The participant group will select 3 subtopics to focus on. Each subtopic will be assigned a week. The group will meet no less than 6 times. The first meeting will be for training in Photovoice methodology – how to frame an issue with the camera lens, how to speak through photography, and the ethics of photographic documentation. The following three meetings will be focus groups where photographs on a given subtopic will be shared and discussed. At the fifth meeting, the group will decide on how they would like to share their photographic story with the public. The sixth meeting will be an exhibition of the work, which will be planned and programmed by the participants in conjunction with the project advisors.

Materials Needed:
One laptop computer
One projector
Ten digital cameras
White board and markers
Meals for participants
Photographic print-outs of photos for exhibition
Easles for display
Workspace
Transportation

Personnel Needed:
Ten participants
Spiritual Advisors
Facilitator/Trainer
Drivers
Participant Observer/Project Assistant

Running Dates: April 5 – approx. June 30
Project Roles and Responsibilities

As **project facilitator**, I will:
- Make manuals
- Train assistants and participant observers
- Train participants
- Correspond with project advisors
- Handle IRB-related issues
- Facilitate focus groups
- Store and organize photos and captions
- Act as media liaison
- Facilitate or co-facilitate strategic planning session
- Schedule follow-up to strategic planning
- Facilitate evaluation with participants
- Compile documentation and, with participant consent, produce project report

As a **participant observer**, you will:
- One observer will research what is involved in taking methodological field notes
- The other observer will research what is involved in taking ethnographic field notes
- Participate in selection of subtopics
- Take photographs each week in preparation for the focus group session
- **DURING FOCUS GROUP:**
  1) Will share his/her photograph last, after all other participants have shared
  2) Will not discuss other participants' photographs
  3) Will take notes while other participants are sharing and discussing
     (methodological and ethnographic, respectively)
  4) Will participate fully in the discussion of his/her photographs

As **project assistant**, you will:
- Complete IRB training
- Complete assistant training
- Assist in collection of consents
- Send out reminder e-mails each week about the theme for the coming week
  and/or upcoming activities
- Aid in set up and break down of each session
- Help to coordinate child care and transportation
- Schedule venues
- Print photos
- Mount photos and captions
- Coordinate set-up
- Make press-releases, if required
- Optional: lead activities at initial training OR strategic planning schedule
The Project Advisor will:

• Advise project facilitator on specific community needs
• Facilitate venues and aid with coordination of childcare and transportation
• Act as spiritual guide and advisor to the project, ensuring accurate depiction of Islam
• Help to inspire, coordinate, and advise participants
• Act as liaison in the case that participants need someone other than project staff to speak to about a concern
**Project Stages**

**Part One – Photovoice Training**
Participants learn photovoice methodology and choose subtopics

**Part Two – Taking Photos**
Participants take photos independently

**Part Three – Focus Group Sessions**
Participants “study the problem” or “research – sharing photos

**Part Four – Strategic Planning**
Participants plan community education session

**Part Four – Community Education Session**
Photographs shared with public in a format of participants’ choosing

**Why Photovoice?**

- Broad appeal and worldwide on-line support network
- Visual elicitation is unique and universal
- Can be done and shared with people who cannot read or write
- Reduced distance by replacing media images and stories with images and stories produced by members of the local community
My Process

Initial inspiration: Attacks on Gaza and biased media coverage

Initial Steps: March 15 - I went to Hampshire Mosque and spent the day in prayer, asking God to show me a sign and guide me if this project idea pleased him. I met Mohammad Abdelaal, the Imam at the mosque, who asked many questions and said he would think about advising to the project. I also met Alex Cacinero-Gorman, student leader of Students for Justice in Palestine, who agreed to be an assistant and participant observer to the project. The following week, after reviewing a project description, Mr. Abdelaal agreed to advise the project and gave his first piece of advise – “Be sure that your intention is always to please God.” He then arranged a meeting with UMass Muslim Student Association, where I found my 2nd participant observer/assistant, Safia Albaiti, student leader of Campus Anti-War Network, which is leading a divestment campaign at UMass. Mr. Abdelaal also arranged a meeting in the mosque with congregants and Dr. Ali Hazratji, who also agreed to advise the project. Dr. Ali arranged a meeting with congregants in West Springfield Islamic Center and Imam Wissam Abdel-Baki. Eventually, I had about ten participants between the two mosques and two assistants.

Our meetings would be in West Springfield. I met with each advisor individually and corresponded by e-mail. Communication by e-mail was difficult.

April 25 - The first training was poorly attended, but went beautifully. Alex did not show up. Participant Wajdi helped with taking field notes alternately with Safia, participating in every other activity, making up for Alex’s absence. Safia was ill for the second training the following week, which was arranged to accommodate the rest of the participants and Alex and I took notes.

Alex and Safia could not make it to the first Focus Group session. Many others were late. When they arrived, they said they needed more time to take photos, so we decided to reconvene in a week.

Alex was late for the make up Focus Group and student participants’ were absent. Salim, a participant with computer skills and Wajdi, a student participant, suggested using an on-line tool. So, Salim and I met to set it up. We have been using the on-line tool for three weeks now, progressively adding photos, and will reconvene for a focus group and planning meeting in one week. Today is May 25, 2009.
Things That Worked

- Working with mosques
- Having project advisors
- Flexibility
- Showing intention by visiting mosque regularly and maintaining phone and e-mail contact
- Training assistants in IRB and field note-taking
- Having manuals for both participants and assistants
- Maintaining constant contact with advisors
- Housing workshops in mosque
- Saturday meetings

Things That Did Not Work as Well

- Having student leaders as assistants - too busy
- Poor coordination of childcare and transportation
- No budget
- Infrequent meetings with assistants
- Combining observer role with participant role
- Having participant observers double as assistants
- Not enough assistants
- Not enough groundwork/needs assessment time to study group habits, communication styles, and schedules

Major Lessons Learned

- Clear and sincere intentions in this field of work are essentials and go along way for keeping group cohesion. Even though we struggled with scheduling, the group intends to continue the project to the end.
- Having project advisors who are community leaders provides support for the project. Champions.
- Make adaptations based on the needs and recommendations of the champions among the project participants.
- Make sure assistants and participants know their responsibilities and can commit the time.
- Plan ample time to do groundwork and needs assessment.
- See footnotes in training manual for other lessons learned.

Special Thanks to: all participants, Cristine Smith, Barbara Gravin Wilbur, Imam Wissam Abdel-Baki, Imam Mohammad Abuelaal, Dr. Ali Hazratji, Azra Hazratji, H. Wajdi, Salim Ibrahim, Hamilton, Alex Cacinero-Gorman, Safia Albaiti, Rachel Myers, Frances Lassor, Pape Bathie Pouye, Ola K., Abdrabu Abuely, Tariq Habbibyar, Harriet and Tom Myers
VOICES OF ISLAM
PHOTOVOICE TRAINING MANUAL
PART ONE: PHOTOVOICE TRAINING
With fieldnotes and suggestions compiled from Voices of Islam Photovoice Project (see footnotes)

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WHAT IS A PHOTOVOICE TRAINING SESSION IN THE CONTEXT OF PHOTOVOICE?

DURING THE PHOTOVOICE TRAINING, PARTICIPANTS WILL LEARN ABOUT PHOTOVOICE AND HOW IT HAS BEEN USED AROUND THE WORLD FOR PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AND TO SHIFT THE PARADIGM OF SOCIAL DOCUMENTATION. THEY WILL ALSO LEARN HOW TO "FRAME AN ISSUE" USING THE LENS OF A CAMERA. PARTICIPANTS WILL GAIN FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE IN VISUAL ELICITATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PHOTOGRAPHER (LEARNING PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES) AND THE AUDIENCE (DISCUSSION).
PHOTOVOICE TRAINING SESSION

Purpose: The purpose of the Photovoice Training session of Photovoice is to train participants to use photography to “frame an issue.”

By the end of this session, participants will be able to . . .

- articulate the goals of the overall project
- use symbolic language and visual elicitation to communicate an idea
- describe photographic techniques that can be used to elicit responses from an audience or to communicate an idea
- demonstrate their ability to apply those techniques in order to “frame an issue” using the lens of a camera
- articulate ethical consideration for photographing human subjects

By the end of the session, participants will . . .
- understand their rights and responsibilities as participants and sign a contract committing themselves to the fulfillment of their responsibilities
- articulate their expectation of the project, the facilitator, and project staff
Activity 1: The Web

OBJECTIVES: By the end of this activity . . .

- Each participant will know at least one other participant's name.
- A physical representation of community will have been created.

MATERIALS: A ball of yarn

SET-UP: Ask participants to stand in a circle. Explain to the group that this activity will be a fun way for them to get to know each other. Join the group.

TIME: 15 minutes

STEPS:

1. State the name of the project and the project goals. Welcome all participants.

2. Give the ball of yarn to one of the participants. Ask the participant holding the ball of yarn to say his or her name, role in the project, and what he or she hopes to gain from the training.

3. Ask him or her to hold the end of the yarn and throw the ball of yarn to another participant, and so on, until everyone has been introduced.

4. Once a web is drawn with the yarn, connecting all participants, note that the pattern they have created is one of many symbols known to represent community and invite them to reflect on the following:

   - Why might a web represent community?
   - What other symbols represent community?

5. Challenge the group to untangle itself. The catch – explain that no one is allowed to speak to anyone else without addressing him or her by name.

6. Once the group has successfully untangled itself, or in worst case scenario, given up, Ask a few participants to name as many other participants in the room as possible, also sharing any information they remember about the goals of those participants.

ADAPTATION: THIS ACTIVITY CAN BE DONE WITHOUT THE BALL OF YARN. HAVE PARTICIPANTS SIT IN A CIRCLE AND ASK EACH ONE TO SHARE HIS OR HER NAME AND WHAT HE OR SHE HOPES TO GET OUT OF THE TRAINING.

1 While running this activity, I ended up asking questions for clarification. Once everyone had shared, I paraphrased what participants had said that they wanted to get out of the training and mentioned ways that I thought their expectation may be fulfilled in the course of the project. I also made clear those expectations that would not be addressed and repeated the goals of the project.
Activity 2: Consent Forms

OBJECTIVES: By the end of this activity . . .

- Each participant will know what the project involves and what his/her rights and responsibilities are.
- Each participant will have indicated the level of confidentiality he/she wishes to maintain throughout the project.

MATERIALS: Two copies of the consent form for each participant – one to sign and return and one for his/her records

TIME: 15 minutes

STEPS:

1. Read consent form aloud to participants, slowly and clearly, periodically stopping to allow for any questions.

2. Make sure that all questions are answered before asking them to sign or stamp with a fingerprint.

3. Sign each consent form yourself, verifying the participants’ choices verbally.

4. Place all signed consent forms in the locked file.

ADAPTATION: IF YOU HAVE A FEW ASSISTANTS WORKING ON THE PROJECT, ASK THEM TO COMPLETE THE IRB TRAINING AND DIVIDE THE GROUP INTO SMALLER GROUPS. EACH ASSISTANT CAN READ THE CONSENT FORM TO HIS/HER RESPECTIVE GROUP, BUT YOU MUST SIGN ALL OF THEM. SEE FOOTNOTE AND EXAMPLE CONSENT FORM IN APPENDIX.

2 In my run of this project, participants spoke a diversity of languages. Some had a great deal of trouble understanding the language of the consent forms. If there is not one language that you can translate the consent form into, I suggest keeping it succinct and using the simplest language possible. Participants whose English is weaker may turn to friends who can translate for them and the talking can be distracting to those who are listening. The result is that very few people listen to the consent form being read aloud and they go right to the end to sign, but may not sign and check boxes correctly. If I could do this over, I think I would have three assistants and break into very small groups to read the consent form, and of course, as I said, simplify it.
Activity 3: Group Norms

OBJECTIVES: By the end of this activity, the participants and team will have ... collectively established a list of norms that the group will agree to abide by for the duration of the training.

MATERIALS: Newsprint
Markers
Post it notes

TIME: 15 minutes

STEPS:

1. Explain to participants that it is necessary to agree on some norms or rules that will apply for the time that we are together in this training. This is to ensure smooth functioning of the training.

2. Hand out three post-it notes to each participant and ask them to write the three most important norms they would like to see implemented during the training. Ask them to write one expectation they have for themselves, one expectation they have for others, and one expectation they have for the facilitator.

3. When they are finished, ask them to stick their post it notes to a blank sheet of newsprint hung in a prominent place in the front of the room.

4. Ask participants to gather around the newsprint and together group the post it notes into like categories.

5. Have participants return to their seats. Read aloud from each grouping of post-it notes and agree on a paraphrasing of each category as a norm. Write the norms that the group consenses upon on a clean sheet of newsprint.

6. Post the group norms in a prominent place in the room.

Note to facilitator: If there are some critical rules that you think are missing that may compromise people’s comfort in the training, don’t be afraid to bring them up to the group for their consideration. To optimize group expression and freedom, you may want to consider allowing “foul” language as long as it is not an insult to any group of people, such as an ethnic or racial slur, sexist or homophobic remark. It may also be useful to have some kind of norm regarding what to do in the case of oppressive remarks such as those listed above.

3 Be sure to leave time for this. It is important to know what participants expect of you, each other, and themselves.
Activity 4: Artifacts

OBJECTIVES: By the end of this activity, participants will have . . .

- experimented in using symbolic language to describe their relationship to Islam
- practiced active listening

MATERIALS: A bag full of household, office and others items, toys, etc. Recommended items (things that traditionally do carry recognized symbolic meaning in the cultural medium you are working in) – In the U.S.: flashlights, dolls, toy animals, medicine, tools, soap, gloves, weapons, etc.

TIME: 30 minutes

STEPS:

1. Explain that the goal of the activity is to practice visual elicitation. Ask them what they understand of that term. Ask them what they think the value of visual elicitation is. Have your assistant write their comments on a piece of flipchart.

2. Ask if anyone has any anxieties or concerns about how to do visual elicitation. Acknowledge that it is challenging and that is why the project is set up to train them and to provide a supportive atmosphere for practice. Refer to the norms you have agreed upon to ensure that people feel comfortable learning.

3. Show the group the flipchart poster on “active listening,” and explain that each person will have an opportunity to share and the others should try to listen actively.

4. Each participant has been asked to pick an “artifact” – an object which represents one of the following: how he/she came to Islam, why Islam is important to him/her, OR something he/she would like the non-Muslims to know about Islam.

5. Invite any participants who wish to share to do so.

6. After each participant shares, invite others to comment, asking them politely to keep comments brief to be sure everyone has a chance to share.

7. Recap, showing each item, and giving a brief summary of what the participants said about it.

8. Ask participants if the concept of symbolic representation is becoming clearer to them. Discuss.

This activity was particularly successful. Success depends on the items you choose. At least some of the items should be items that are familiar and recognized as symbolic. Choose well, and then also include plenty of items that may have no known symbolic meaning. I also recommend modeling the activity if participants are hesitant. During Voices of Islam participants were eager, but also seemed a bit embarrassed. When I modeled the activity, they became more engaged and a lively discussion ensued. Some commented, “I never thought you could communicate so much with just a simple object.” Also, note that participants may point out that objects may carry different meaning for different people. If this happens, I suggest asking them to elaborate, and after the ensuing discussion, point out that the object still inspired dialog, which is one of the goals of Photvoice. I also suggest modeling the activity if the group is hesitant.
Activity 6: Introduction to Photovoice and Photographic Technique

OBJECTIVE: By the end of this activity, participants will have developed a common understanding of how art can be used for activism and community education

MATERIALS: Copies of handout #1
Copies of pictures
Pieces of construction paper with the words “Look” “Think” “See” “Feel”
Notebooks and pens

SET-UP: Hang the signs with the words ‘look,’ ‘think,’ ‘see,’ and ‘feel’ in different places around the room.

TIME: 30 minutes

STEPS:

1. Before the participants come in, prepare the room by placing pictures from Folder 1 face down in different places around the room. (On tables or chairs where people are likely to sit is the best place. Put them down in such a way that participants can sit 2-3 next to each photo.)
2. Ask participants to sit down next to a photo, 2-3 people to each photo.
3. Explain that the object of this activity is to begin to look critically at photography as a tool to frame issues that are important to us.
4. Give each participant a copy of handout #1. Ask participants to write for three minutes about what they see, think, and feel upon looking at the picture that is assigned to them.
5. After the three minutes, ask participants to discuss in their groups what they wrote.
6. Bring the group back together as a whole. Ask each group to share briefly their impressions of their photo with the entire group as the photo is passed around the room.
7. Ask participants what photographic techniques they think the photographers of the selected photos used in order to elicit the feelings and thoughts of their audience. Highlight any techniques noted in your guide for this activity that have not been mentioned. Then, write the techniques on the backs of each of the photographs and put them back on the table for participants to look at during break.

ADAPTATION: IF THERE ARE FEW PARTICIPANTS, GIVE ONE PHOTO TO EACH PARTICIPANT.

5 The trick here is in the timing. Watch participants and if someone seems at a loss, wait a while, and then ask him or her what he or she is thinking. This may help. See the attached photos and the techniques that are written on the back for ideas for step 7.
Activity 7: Photovoice Practice

OBJECTIVE: Participants will take a picture to depict an idea about a given theme.

MATERIALS: Prop bags (consists of a tote bag with random household items of your choosing that may be used in staging and taking photos)
- Tripods
- Digital cameras and accessories
- Computer, digital projector if available
- Newsprint
- Markers

TIME: 30 minutes

STEPS:

1. Explain to participants that it is now time to put what they have learned about framing principles and use of the camera into practice by taking some pictures to communicate a message about a given theme.

2. Divide the group into two. Hand each group a prop bag and instruct them to take at least two pictures pertaining to their assigned theme. Assign each group a theme. Make sure that the themes are general. If participants want to choose their own theme, let them do so. Point to the pictures used in the previous activity and remind them to use the photographic techniques they discovered. Tell them to experiment with the techniques and take several pictures.

3. Give participants about 20 minutes to take their pictures. When they are finished, instruct them to upload their two favorite photos to the computer. Show the pictures to the group either by projecting them or by having the group gather around the computer.

4. Next, lead the group through the SEE, FEEL, THINK, REACT questions used in Activity # 6 to analyze the pictures. If there are two groups, for each photo start feedback with a group that did not take that particular photos. Then, ask the group that did take the pictures what they intended to communicate. Compare and contrast the intended and perceived meanings. Would the group that took the picture do anything differently in the future to convey the desired meaning?

5. Ask the group what they learned about taking pictures on a given theme through this activity. Ask them what techniques they plan to use in the future. Take notes on flipchart and post them afterwards.

6. Hopefully, participants will be eager to try this activity. Be sure to watch and have your assistants watch to make sure that they understand the instructions. If you have enough assistants, have one assistant go with each group. The assistant should not participate, but only offer help in the form of guiding questions, like, "What feeling do you want the audience to have? How can you communicate that feeling using the techniques we discovered in the last activity?" He or she should only do this when it seems the group is stuck. In my experience, participants knew how to use the cameras, however, this will not always be the case, and it would be wise to ask ahead of time and give a general tutorial for everyone, if need be. Show them how to turn the camera on and off, snap a picture, zoom in and out, turn on the flash, view the picture after taking it, and upload a picture to the computer. Create a checklist and make sure each pair or group can do all the tasks on the list after you have shown them. This will take at least 20 minutes, so it's best to have an idea whether or not participants are photo savvy ahead of time if possible.
Activity 8: Ethics

OBJECTIVE: Participants will identify important considerations while taking photographs of other people and practice asking for consent to appear in a photo.

MATERIALS: Handout #2

TIME 5-10 minutes

STEPS:

1. Refer participants to handout #2.

2. Ask participants if they have ever been photographed when they did not want to be, or if they have seen photos depicting people who didn’t seem to know they were being photographed. Ask them to explain.

3. Ask participants to read handout #2 before taking anyone’s photo.

7 Be sure to research the local culture before running this activity. There may be local codes of conduct with regards to being photographed that are important to note, and if the facilitator is already aware of them, it helps, but you can also ask participants. In my case, I discovered that no image that is meant to represent the prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him!) should ever be taken. Also, the Holy Qu’ran should never touch to the floor or anything dirty or be handled by anyone who has dirty hands or has just engaged in any intimate activity with another person.
Activity 9: Naming the Issue

OBJECTIVE: Participants will determine an issue that is of importance to them on which to take photographs.

MATERIALS: Newsprint
Markers
Tape
Notebooks and pens
Circle stickers

TIME: 15 minutes

STEPS:

1. Explain to participants that they will be collectively deciding on the subtopics for the following 3 focus group sessions.

2. Instruct the group members to brainstorm on the question: What are the most important things that non-Muslims need to know about Islam? And to write one to three of them on sticky notes.

3. Ask participants to post their sticky notes.

4. Read them aloud and ask if any are similar. Group these together. If there are more than three themes, hand out one sticker to each participant and ask them to place their sticker next to the subtopic they think is most compelling.

5. The three subtopics with the most stickers will be the themes for the next three weeks.

6. Assign each week a subtopic.

7. “So, this week, you will be taking photographs about _________. Any questions?"

---

8 As facilitator, you should not try to drive the conversation toward the themes that you are interested in learning about. If participants ask you what you would want to learn about, you may answer, but otherwise, you are simply a recorder in this activity. You should not put down any stickers during selection either. If you have participant observers, they may vote, but assistants may not.
Activity 10: Piñata Evaluation

OBJECTIVES: Evaluate the first session. Close the session. Have fun!

MATERIALS: A piñata full of goodies and also numbers (equal to the number of participants). If participants aren’t numerate, use images of animals. A blindfold. A stick.

TIME: 15 minutes

STEPS:

1. Blindfold any volunteer. Give him/her the stick and allow him/her to try to hit the piñata three times, then take the next volunteer and so on, until it breaks.

2. Tell everyone to grab the goodies. Make sure to be equitable.

3. Then, ask them to each take a number (or animal image).

4. Each number or animal will correspond with one of the following evaluation questions:
   
   - What did you like best about this session?
   - What do you hope to learn in the upcoming sessions?
   - Name one thing you liked that the person standing on your left side did during the training.
   - Give one suggestion to the facilitator for future sessions.
   - Name one thing you won’t forget from this session.

   Have each participant answer the question that corresponds with the slip of paper he/she drew. If a participant prefers not to answer or prefers a different question, accommodate.

ADAPTATION: FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE SHY AND/OR PARTICIPANTS WITH CHILDREN... I HAVE ALSO USED PLASTIC EASTER EGGS WITH TOYS INSIDE WHEN PARTICIPANTS HAVE CHILDREN. EACH EGG COLOR CORRESPONDS TO ONE OF THE QUESTIONS ABOVE, AND ONE COLOR CAN BE A "WILD CARD," IN WHICH CASE THE PARTICIPANT WHO CHOOSES IT CAN SELECT A QUESTION TO ANSWER. IF PARTICIPANTS ARE SHY, LET THEM SEE THE COLOR GUIDE BEFOREHAND, SO THEY CAN CHOOSE WHICH QUESTION THEY WILL ANSWER. IF THEY ARE MORE COMFORTABLE, SHOW THEM THE COLOR GUIDE AFTER THEY HAVE SELECTED THEIR EGGS. TELL THEM THE TOYS OR CANDY ARE FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

9 If you choose the adaptation, be sure to know what general rules and feelings are about certain toys and candy. Do some research. Ask your project advisors. I did not do this, and I included a candy with gelatin in it (gelatin has pork fat in it). Luckily, my assistant caught the error when we were packing the eggs up and we did not put those candies in the eggs!
VOICES OF ISLAM PROJECT
PHOTOVOICE FRAMING QUESTIONS ACTIVITY #6

THEME_____________________________________

NAME OF
PICTURE_____________________________________

ARTIST_____________________________________

WHAT DO YOU SEE?
(DO NOT INTERPRET - JUST NAME OBJECTS, DESCRIBE COLOR, POSITIONING, SYMBOLS, ETC.)

WHAT DO YOU FEEL? WHY?
(HOW DOES THE PICTURE MAKE YOU FEEL?)

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU SEE THIS PICTURE?

WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO THIS PHOTOGRAPH?
SYNTHESIZE THE ABOVE.
ACTIVITY 8

ETHICS

Have you ever seen a photograph in a magazine and thought, "I don't think this person wanted his/her photograph to be taken?"

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- When and where would you prefer not to be photographed?

- Is the person doing something that you would not want to be photographed doing?

- Are there any cultural taboos about photography?

- How old is this person?

GUIDELINES:

- Do not photograph anyone doing something that you would not want to be photographed doing.

- If the persons face will appear in the photo or he or she might be recognized by his/her clothing or other features, do not take the photo without his/her explicit verbal agreement.

- If he or she might be under the age of 25, you must ask his/her age. You must have a parent or guardian's written and signed consent to photograph anyone under 18. Sometimes people look older than they are. This applies even to your friends. Write out a consent form and carry it with you when you go out to take photos.

- You must explain what the photo will be used for and who will see it before taking the photo.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Ask friends to pose for you.

- Carry consent forms for underage subjects.

- Practice explaining the project before you go out to take photos so you are comfortable asking for consent.
APPENDIX
ACTIVE LISTENING

ACTIVITY 5

1. Listen carefully until the speaker is done. Wait a few seconds of silence before commenting or asking questions.

2. Make eye contact. Nod. Make soft vocal sounds to show you are listening.

3. If you do not understand, show this with your face, but do so gently, so you don't make the speaker uncomfortable.

4. If the speaker pauses, take the opportunity to paraphrase what he or she has said to make sure you understand, if need be. “So, what you're saying is that . . . .”

5. Ask open questions, not yes/no questions. Open questions start with: Who, What, Where, How, and When
Guiding Question for Activity #7

1. What feeling do you want to communicate to your audience?
2. What were you thinking when you chose this object/setting/angle/arrangement?
3. What does this object symbolize usually?
4. What colors might you try to include in order to communicate your meaning?
5. How do you want to frame these objects in the lens of the camera?
6. How close will you take this picture?
7. Can you arrange the objects in a different way to convey a different meaning? How?
8. Are you thinking about creating oppositions? How? Why?
9. Is there anything you can do with the way you set up the photo to convey a different meaning? How?
10. What angle are you going to take this photograph from? Why?
11. I see that you will have ___, ___, and ____ in the photo, is there anything you will leave out to make the audience feel like something is missing?
PART TWO: FOCUS GROUP SESSION
With field notes and suggestions compiled from Voices of Islam Photovoice Project (see footnotes)

Erin Michelle Myers
Center for International Education
University of Massachusetts-Amherst
I. WHAT IS A FOCUS GROUP SESSION IN THE CONTEXT OF PHOTOVOICE?

THE GOALS OF THE PHOTOVOICE FOCUS GROUPS ARE:

- **TEAM-BUILDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:** TO SHARE PHOTOGRAPHS AND SHARE FEEDBACK IN ORDER TO FINE TUNE "FRAMING TECHNIQUES"

- **REFLECTION:** TO GENERATE DISCUSSION ABOUT THE OVERALL THEME OF THE PROJECT AND THE SUBTOPICS

- **RESEARCH:** TO DEEPEN PARTICIPANTS OWN UNDERSTANDING OF THE THEME AND SUBTOPICS

- **TESTING:** TO “TEST DRIVE” THE PHOTOS ON EACH OTHER IN ORDER TO GET A SENSE OF HOW THE AUDIENCE MIGHT REACT
II. THE SCHEDULE

Traditionally, a photovoice schedule will look like this:

PHOTOVOICE TRAINING

One week to photograph subtopic #1 independently

FIRST FOCUS GROUP (subtopic #1)

One week to photograph subtopic #2 independently

SECOND FOCUS GROUP (subtopic #2)

One week to photograph subtopic #3 independently

THIRD FOCUS GROUP (subtopic #3)

One week to reflect

STRATEGIC PLANNING

ADAPTATION #1: FOR YOUTH, TEENS, OR BUSY ADULTS, SCHEDULE A LONG WEEKEND FOR THE ENTIRE PROCESS. DO THE TRAINING ON THE FIRST DAY IN THE AM AND HOLD THE FIRST FOCUS GROUP THE FOLLOWING MORNING, SECOND FOCUS GROUP THAT NIGHT, THIRD FOCUS GROUP THE FOLLOWING MORNING, AND STRATEGIC PLANNING THE SAME AFTERNOON.

EXAMPLE:
Saturday AM – PHOTVOICE TRAINING
Sunday AM – FIRST FOCUS GROUP
Sunday PM – SECOND FOCUS GROUP
Monday AM – THIRD FOCUS GROUP
Monday afternoon – STRATEGIC PLANNING

Note: I have not piloted this, but it may work in cases where time is limited and participants have to travel in order to participate. Be sure to compensate adults for any work hours lost when possible. I suggest having several assistants for this format in order to assure participants have support at all times and stick to the schedule. You will also have to provide housing, meals, and possibly childcare.

1 You may need to hold a training session for how to use the on-line tool. It is best to work with someone who is very computer savvy who can answer any questions if you choose this option.
ADAPTATION #2: For busy adults who have access to Internet and relatively strong computer skills, use an on-line tool. (We set up a Google group with a Picasa album attached to it.) Allow only participants to access the site and be sure that they can upload their photos. Make a folder for each theme and provide a mechanism for commenting on the photos. Include the “see, feel, think, react” handout somewhere on the site and direct participants to comment accordingly. Monitor the site for any rude comments and remove them promptly. You can schedule this in two different ways:

1. Put all the theme folders up on the site at once and allow two weeks for participants to take and upload their photographs and one week to comment:

   Wk 1-2: take and upload your photos into the appropriate folders
   Wk 3: Please comment on each others’ photos using the SEE, FEEL, THINK, REACT format as a guideline for your comments.

2. Start with one folder and one theme, then add the others progressively.

   Wk 1 – take and upload photos for subtopic 1
   Wk 2 – Please comment on each others’ photos using the SEE, FEEL, THINK, REACT format as a guideline for your comments
   Wk 3 – take and upload photos for subtopic 2
   Wk 4 - Please comment on each others’ photos using the SEE, FEEL, THINK, REACT format as a guideline for your comments
   Wk 5 - take and upload photos for subtopic 3
   Wk 6 - Please comment on each others’ photos using the SEE, FEEL, THINK, REACT format as a guideline for your comments
   Wk 7 – Strategic Planning Session

2 See footnote #1 first. For ADAPTATION #2, footnote #1 is important. In addition to this, you will need to train your assistants, and assign each of them to a few participants. Have them check in periodically with their assigned participants, and also monitor the site to make sure these participants are keeping up.

3 No matter what format you select, constant communication with participants between sessions or postings is absolutely essential. If you can visit participants, do so. Incentives may be helpful as well, if possible.
III. CHECKLIST OF THINGS TO DO BETWEEN PHOTOVOICE TRAINING AND FIRST FOCUS GROUP SESSION

1. At Photovoice training, emphasize how important participation in the focus group section of the project is and ask if anyone has any concerns about being able to fulfill the commitment.

2. Ask what kind of support participants will need and adapt accordingly.

3. Adapt: If there are concerns, adapt your format accordingly. You need not adapt if you have plenty of participants and only a few have concerns, UNLESS those participants are “champions” of the project (individuals who tend to demonstrate great leadership and have good attendance, and those who speak well of the project outside of sessions and may have a good relationship with either the participant community or other stakeholders.

4. Train your assistants. Make sure they know how to support participants during photo taking and focus groups. Make they have access to communication devices and know the best way to contact participants.

5. Send out a reminder of the format, schedule, and subtopics that will be addressed.

6. Call, or have assistants call all participants the night before the photo-taking/focus group section of the project starts.  

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4 Many of these are things I neglected to do in my first run of Voices of Islam and people fell out of sync with the schedule, were confused about how to proceed and when we would meet, and were out of touch. My assistants were overcommitted at school and said they would contact participants, but did not follow through, so I ended up visiting participants in their homes after two weeks of being out of touch. Scheduling was difficult for people and they cancelled last minute, so I kept changing the schedule. Finally, we agreed to set up the on-line tool, but still, since we did not meet and go over how to use it, people were unsure, so when I met with them individually, I trained them. Working closely with the “champions” proved particularly effective in ensuring progress. It is important to note that this was all taking place during finals at the university, but I think the same roadblocks would be experienced no matter what was going on in the community at the time. This is why the above guidelines and footnotes are so essential. I am available for consultation in planning and trouble-shooting, and can be contacted at e_michellemyers@yahoo.es.
PHOTOVOICE FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

OBJECTIVES:

Team-building and Technical Assistance: to share photos and share feedback in order to fine tune “framing techniques”

Reflection: to generate discussion about the overall theme of the project and the subtopics

Research: to deepen participants’ own understanding of the theme and subtopics

Testing: to “test drive” the photos on each other in order to get a sense of how the audience might react

MATERIALS: a laptop computer
          a projector
          a photo card reader
          handout #1

SET-UP: post the words “SEE, FEEL, THINK, REACT” and the photographic techniques discovered in the Photovoice training / table with chairs, all with a good view of the projection wall / set up the computer and the projector / place 10 – 20 copies of handout #1 (one per photo, with three ring holes punched into them so they can be placed in the participants’ binders after the focus group) / ask each participant to select two photos and load all participants’ photos onto the computer and store them in a folder named after this week’s subtopic / ask participants to name the photos and put their initials in the file name (example – “humility_EM.jpeg”)

TIME: 5-7 minutes per photo

STEPS:

1. Review the photographic techniques.

2. Ask a participant to volunteer to go first. Retrieve one of that participant photographer’s photos and project it.

3. Ask everyone to take 1-2 minutes to take some notes about the photo.

4. Ask participants’ to volunteer sharing what they have written.

5. Ask the participant photographer to discuss his/her intentions and what techniques he or she used.

6. Ask the group if they have any comments or questions.

7. If time allows, brainstorm a possible caption for the photo.

8. After each participant photographer has shown one photo, if time allows, go through the second photos.$^5$

$^5$ Make sure to set up the table, chairs, computer, projector and handouts before participants’ arrive. It will take some time to upload and title the photos. People often file in progressively, some early, some on time, and some late. Have someone welcome them and someone upload the photos, whether it be yourself or your assistant. You may even want to have a game or other activity for the participants to work on while the photos are being uploaded. Meet with your assistant ahead of time to plan and practice this. Make sure the person uploading the photos knows how to use the card reader.
**Voices of Islam Project**

**PhotoVoice Framing Questions Activity #6**

**THEME**

**NAME OF PICTURE**

**ARTIST**

**WHAT DO YOU SEE?**

*DO NOT INTERPRET – JUST NAME OBJECTS, DESCRIBE COLOR, POSITIONING, SYMBOLS, ETC.*

**WHAT DO YOU FEEL? WHY?**

*(HOW DOES THE PICTURE MAKE YOU FEEL?)*

**WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU SEE THIS PICTURE?**

**WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO THIS PHOTOGRAPH?**

**SYNTHESIZE THE ABOVE.**
Feel free to add your own notes from the training – this is just an example.
Juxtaposition of iron Sequitur
(first handstand on handicapped parking sign)
Dramatic Effect (handstand triumphant)

7 Feel free to add your own notes from the training – this is just an example.
Framing: Position of Objects Within the Lens
(Statue toward bottom of frame, lots of sky = endless sky - infinity)

Color: vibrant, hopeful
Black and White Memory or Sadness

What’s missing?

Perspective - Close-up makes audience feel a part of the picture

9

9. Feel free to add your own notes from the training – this is just an example.
PART THREE: STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION
With fieldnotes and suggestions compiled from Voices of Islam Photovoice Project (see footnotes)

Erin Michelle Myers
Center for International Education
University of Massachusetts-Amherst
III. CHECKLIST OF THINGS TO DO BETWEEN PHOTOVOICE TRAINING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

1. At last Focus Group Session, review goals and schedule for strategic planning session. Answer any questions.

2. Emphasize how important participation in group section of the project is and ask if anyone has any concerns about being able to fulfill the commitment.

3. Train your assistants in strategic planning.

4. Decide on rules for the next session.

5. Send out a reminder of the format and schedule; ask for RSVP.

6. Call, or have assistants call all participants the night before the strategic planning sessions.
WHAT IS A STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION IN THE CONTEXT OF PHOTOVOICE?

DURING THE STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL DECIDE WHAT THEY WILL DO WITH THE PHOTOGRAPHS THEY HAVE TAKEN AND WHAT APPROACH THEY WILL TAKE TO COMMUNITY EDUCATION. THEY WILL IDENTIFY IMPORTANT STATEHOLDERS AND LEARN TO DEVISE A STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION STRATEGY. THEY WILL CODE AND WRITE CAPTIONS FOR THE PHOTOS THEY PLAN TO SHARE. FAMOUSLY, PARTICIPANTS WILL PLAN THEIR COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROJECT.
STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

Purpose: The purpose of the strategic planning section of Photovoice is to plan how the photographs will be used to inspire dialogue, to educate the community, and affect local policy.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to . . .

- set goals for community education and civic participation
- identify important stakeholders
- devise a stakeholder communication strategy
- select a format for their community education project
- code and write captions for photos they have chosen to share
- plan for community education project
Activity 1 – Non-verbal communication

OBJECTIVES: - To warm up and practice communication and teamwork.

MATERIALS: none

TIME: 5 minutes

STEPS:

1. Ask participants to stand in a line.

2. Tell them they may not speak, but ask them to arrange themselves in order of their birth month and day. Give them one minute and thirty seconds.

3. Periodically let the group know how much time they have remaining.

4. When the time is up, ask each person to name his/her birth month and day.

5. Ask them what worked and what did not work with regards to executing this activity without critiquing anyone.
Activity 2: Bottles of Sand

OBJECTIVES: - To emphasize the importance of planning and to list what will need to be planned to execute the community education part of the project.

MATERIALS: two pieces of flip chart paper and a marker
3 empty bottles of equal size
a bucket of sand

SET-UP: Work out side or lay down newspaper to protect the area. No seats are necessary. Hang flip chart. Set three bottles in a row, horizontally and the bucket about 5 meters away.

TIME: 10 minutes

STEPS:

6. Review the goals of the project and what group has done thus far in previous sessions. Write this on one piece of flip chart and post it somewhere.

7. Ask three participants to line up, one behind each of the bottles. Let them know that this will be a physical activity.

8. On the count of three, have participants run to fill their respective bottles with sand. Tell them the goal is for everyone to fill his/her bottle.

9. Give them 20 seconds only to do so.

10. Anyone who didn't make it back is disqualified. Compare the remaining bottles.

11. Ask participants to make observations - ex. there is sand everywhere, X was disqualified, Y fell down, no one was able to fill his or her bottle.

12. Now ask for three new volunteers. Tell them that they have ten seconds to fill their jars. Appoint a team leader to coordinate and give them 30 seconds to plan.

13. Start the run.

14. After the ten seconds have passed, compare the success of second group to that of the first. (The second group should have been more successful.) Ask why the second group was more successful.

15. Explain that all good projects require planning.

16. Ask participants to list the things that need to be dismissed and planned today.
Activity 3 - Self-Select Project Select

OBJECTIVES: - To select the format for the community education session

MATERIALS: flipchart
stickers

TIME: 15 minutes

STEPS:
1. Review the goals of the project.
2. Ask for suggestions for the format of the community education session.
3. Write each suggestion on flipchart. Ask the person making the suggestion to explain his or her choice. (Before writing the suggestion down, make sure that no one has any major objections to the idea.)
4. Give each participant three stickers. Ask them to place a sticker next to their top choices. Explain that they can put one sticker next to three different choices, two and one, or all three on the same choice.
5. Add up the stickers. The format with the highest number of stickers will be the format of the community education session.
Activity 4 – Stakeholder Analysis

OBJECTIVES: To gain awareness of who the major stakeholders for the project are and analyze the influence they can have on the final outcome of the project.

MATERIALS: 4 stakeholder analysis charts blown up to flipchart size
Markers
flipchart

TIME: 15 minutes

STEPS:

1. Post project goals.

2. Divide the group into smaller groups and give each group a chart and a marker.

3. Group One - On flip chart – list all people, groups, or organizations that can have a positive impact on the project outcome.

4. Group Two - On another flipchart – list all people, groups, or organizations that can have a negative effect on the project outcome.

Group Three – On flipchart – list all people, groups, or organizations that may be positively affected by the project.

Group Four – On flipchart – list all people, groups, or organizations that may be negatively affected by the project.

4. Ask each group to fill out the stakeholder analysis sheet that corresponds to their group.
Activity 5 - Self-Select Project Select

OBJECTIVES: To select the format for the community education session

MATERIALS: flipchart
              stickers

TIME: 15 minutes

STEPS:

1. Review the goals of the project.

2. Ask for suggestions for the format of the community education session.

3. Write each suggestion on flipchart. Ask the person making the suggestion to explain his or her choice. (Before writing the suggestion down, make sure that no one has any major objections to the idea.)

4. Give each participant three stickers. Ask them to place a sticker next to their top choices. Explain that they can put one sticker next to three different choices, two and one, or all three on the same choice.

5. Add up the stickers. The format with the highest number of stickers will be the format of the community education session.
Activity 6 – Division of Labor

OBJECTIVES: - To divide planning tasks for community education project

MATERIALS: flipchart
markers

TIME: 35 minutes

STEPS:
1. List as a large group all the big tasks that will have to be executed in order to have a successful project. Then, write one task on each flipchart and post them around the room.

2. Ask each participant to sign up for 1 task committees.

3. Have the groups meet for 15-20 minutes to:
   - break the large task into smaller tasks
   - assign roles based on talents and resources
   - set a timeline
   - set meeting times
   - exchange contact information
   - choose a team leader

3. Allow time for each group to report on their plan.

4. Invite participants who are willing and have time to sign up to support other groups.

5. Make sure team leaders have all contact information for the members of their group.

6. Write down team leaders’ names and contact information and assign an assistant to each team (if you have enough assistants).

7. Set a meeting for team leaders to come and meet with project facilitator in one to two weeks time.

1 This set up relies on good leadership skills. When recruiting at the beginning of the project, you may wish to look for strong leaders OR make sure you have enough assistants to lead each group. One team could be the media/venue team. See appendix worksheet.
STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

What is the goal of the project as far as you are concerned?

Identifying who the stakeholders are . . .
Stakeholders are any people who may have an effect on the outcome of the project OR who will be affected by the project.

List all stakeholders you can think of and then give each one a rating on a scale of (1-10) for:
- how important it is to influence them
- how much influence they will have

Then, list how you we many influence each one and what impact each one may have on the outcome of the project.

Key questions that can help you understand your stakeholders are:

* What financial or emotional interest do they have in the outcome of your work? Is it positive or negative?
* What motivates them most of all?
* What information do they want from you?
* How do they want to receive information from you? What is the best way of communicating your message to them?
* What is their current opinion of your work? Is it based on good information?
* Who influences their opinions generally, and who influences their opinion of you? Do some of these influencers therefore become important stakeholders in their own right?
* If they are not likely to be positive, what will win them around to support your project?
* If you don't think you will be able to win them around, how will you manage their opposition?
* Who else might be influenced by their opinions? Do these people become stakeholders in their own right?
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