



Rural girls' and women's perspectives for engendering poverty reduction strategies

Using an interdisciplinary approach, femSTEP builds on research partnerships between Canadian and African researchers. The program utilizes participatory visual methodologies to analyze gender issues in relation to rural poverty through the experience of girls and women.

Participatory Visual Methodologies

Photovoice and Drawing

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Participant's Toolkit

Participatory Visual Methodologies Toolkit

INTRODUCTION

This participatory training will highlight two visual methodologies: photovoice and drawing.

RATIONALE

Visual participatory methodologies help to give a voice to populations who are often marginalized within decision making and policy making. In the case of rural girls and women, their choices and capacities are often not taken into consideration when designing responses to health, water or agricultural challenges. With their input, sustainable solutions to fight poverty can be better understood.

OBJECTIVE

To provide hands-on training to researchers in the area of participatory methodologies, including all aspects of the data collecting process as well as ethical issues and critical issues around interpretation. A focus on gender-based analysis and gender equality will be central in both the substantive and procedural aspects of the training session.



PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGIES

Participatory Approaches/ Participatory Methodology:

Research has traditionally had the tendency to objectify research subjects. The researcher has all the power within the research context and the voices, experiences, and perspectives of the participant are only understood through the interpretation of the researcher or research team. Participatory methodology refers to a variety of research methods that can be used to help break down this power imbalance and to include research participants as collaborators within every part of the research process. In this sense, participatory methods are concerned with praxis and bridging the gap between research theory, why, and how we research with the real-life, practical and political consequences of research within a particular context and attempting to promote practical and relevant research outcomes for participants.

PHOTOVOICE

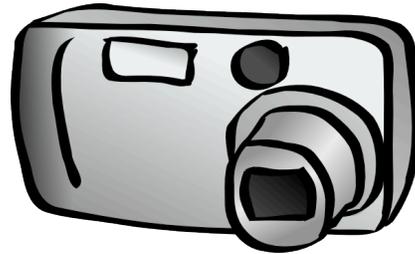


What is it?

- Use of cameras as a “voice” to explore a particular issue with the idea that some things are more effectively explored visually than through words.
- Well-established approach to ‘accessing’ the voices of groups who are often marginalized.
- Involves point and shoot or digital cameras.
- Is action-oriented and skills-oriented.
- Is entertaining and engaging.

Materials required

- Digital camera
- Printer and photograph paper
- Black cardboard for mounting photographs (+ glue or tape)
- Pens or coloured pencils to be used for writing about the photographs when mounting



Steps to follow: Part 1 Taking the pictures

- ✓ Select a prompt: keep it simple and focused. (eg “Take photographs of “feeling strong/feeling not so strong” or “challenges and solutions in addressing HIV&AIDS”.
- ✓ Work in a group so that group members share a camera and collectively take pictures and later interpret the pictures together (3 to 6 persons).
- ✓ Discuss issues of informed consent.
- ✓ Choose a time frame for the photo session: 40 min. is usually sufficient for taking approximately 8-15 photographs.
- ✓ Each person in the group should have an opportunity to take photos (or direct a photo shoot).
- ✓ Demonstrate the basic functions of the camera, including the effects of lighting and movement (e.g. use the flash when indoors, etc.).

- ✓ You may also want to talk about some very basic techniques or consideration in taking a good picture.
- ✓ Encourage people to choose a variety of different photo subjects such as scenes or abstract images and not just pictures of people.
- ✓ If participants are taking pictures of people, talk about a variety of positions that also help to address ethical issues (just a part of the body, the person from behind or from a distance).
- ✓ Encourage groups to make notes about each picture.
- ✓ Always try to take some pictures of the group at work (taking pictures and looking at pictures).

NOTES

Part 2 Working with the pictures

- ✓ Let the groups look through their pictures, number them, identify which ones cannot be used because of ethical concerns, and write comments next to the pictures selected.

How to work with the photos

- Phase 1: looking activity
- Phase 2: selecting and categorizing activity
- Phase 3: creating a visual display
- Phase 4: presenting to the rest of the group
- Phase 5: reflecting on the process

- Ensure that if relevant you state that the photo-subjects are role modeling or play-acting a scenario (if that is the case) and say how consent of the subjects was obtained.

**Example of a curatorial statement
Learning Together**

These photographs were taken by female community health care workers and teachers in rural KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. Both groups are ‘on the front line’ when it comes to working with young people. Both groups are very aware of the vulnerability of young people. More than 25 per cent of young people in their district are HIV positive. More than 20 per cent have lost one or both parents to AIDS. The women who took the pictures use simple point and shoot cameras to explore the challenges and solutions to addressing HIV and AIDS in their community. As we see in their image of the empty chairs at the beauty parlour, there are many gendered aspects of the pandemic. Their pictures also highlight the loss of a generation of parents so that it comes to the gogos (grandmothers) to raise the children. Their pictures though also suggest hope. We see a photograph of t-shirts from an AIDS awareness campaign. We also see that in their everyday lives people are receiving treatment and care. The community health care worker who walks by the cows everyday to reach her patients is committed to raising awareness about the needs in her village.

Source: Learning Together Project (DeLange et al.)

Ethical issues

- Who owns the photographs?: photographers and people being photographed
- Discuss the ethics relevant to taking pictures about sensitive issues.
- No person should be photographed without giving his or her informed consent.
- Examples of consent forms (see p.10)

NOTES

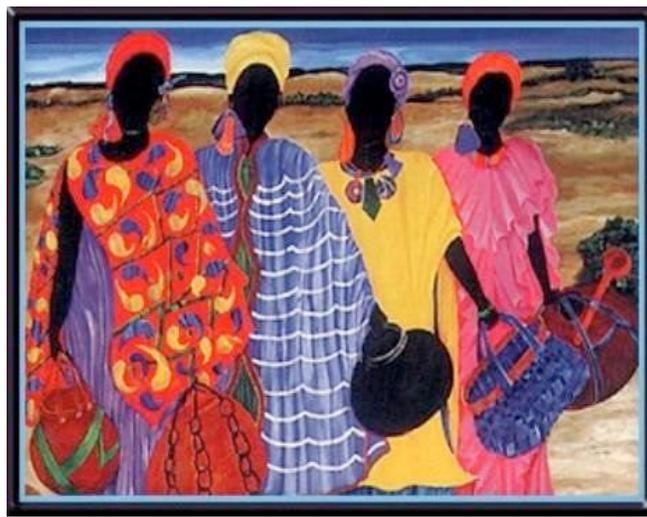
- What were some of the problems they had?
- If they were doing this again, how would they do it differently?
- Who do they think should see their images? Why?
- What do they hope their exhibition will accomplish?

The Products (the visual images and captions)

Because there are so many different ways to look at the images, it is important not to be too prescriptive on analysis. Some initial things to think about could include:

- Are there certain common themes or elements as raised by the participants themselves?
- Were there certain ‘subjects’ or ‘objects’ that dominate the work as a whole?
- Are there certain ‘moods’ that are prominent? For example are there more images on feeling unsafe, not so strong and challenges ... rather than solutions?
- Did people take more of pictures of abstract objects or landscapes or of people?
- Is there an image that ‘haunts’ you as the fieldworker/researcher? Why? Are there certain images that caused more reaction from the group or the audience than others? Why?

NOTES



PROTOCOL GUIDELINES

Photovoice as a participatory method: Challenges and solutions in addressing gender issues

What is photovoice? Photovoice refers to the use of cameras (either digital or simple point and shoot cameras) to visually explore social issues which are often difficult to put into words. In many contexts it has led to grass-roots policy making where marginalized populations finally have a voice to show and tell what needs to be done around critical issues.

How does photovoice work? In groups of 5-7 people and working with one camera, the group embarks upon a project of capturing what they see as ‘problems’ and as ‘solutions’. One of the most powerful aspects of photovoice happens actually during the review of the pictures, in the creation of captions (“The empty hair dryers in this picture show us that HIV&AIDS is very gendered. There should be beautiful young women sitting under these hair dryers. Instead they are at home, sick and disfigured, or they are dead.”), and in the general reflection on the process.

How will we conduct our photovoice work?

Step 1: Form yourselves into groups of 5-7 people.

Step 2: Taking the pictures: you are going to be taking two sets of pictures (although there can obviously be overlap).

Set 1: Challenges and Solutions in Addressing Gender

Your group will take 12-15 pictures related to gender. Each person should have a chance to direct a photo shoot, or compose a couple of pictures. Overall, you should have 5-7 pictures that are entirely about the problems and 5-7 that are entirely about the solutions. It may be useful to take notes as you proceed to record why you took a particular picture.

Step 2: Working with the pictures

Once you have completed the picture taking, your group should review the photos on the digital camera. As you look at them, see if you can agree on 2 or 3 that signify challenges on gender and another 2 or 3 that signify solutions on gender. If you can also think of captions that you would like to write for the pictures you want to display, that would be great.

Step 3: Reflecting on the process

How did people see gender? What do the pictures tell us? If you could chose one picture from your whole collection, which one would it be and why?

For further information on photovoice and other participatory methods go to www.ivmproject.ca or www.cvm.org .

Sample consent form for the girls and women participating in the study

Title of Research: _____

Researchers: _____ (Researchers' Names) _____

Contact Information: _____ (Principal Investigator's NAME) _____

Yes, I want to take part in this study.

I have read the Facts about the Study and I understand what the study is about and my rights as a study member.

While I am taking part in this study, I will follow the safety and privacy rules. I will not discuss things said in the workshop outside the group. I promise to respect the privacy of everyone in the study. It will be a matter of personal honour for me to keep my word.

If I am between the ages of 13-17, I will also get my parent/guardian to sign the Consent Form for Caregivers. If I am above 18 years of age and older, I will sign below.

Participant's Name	Sign here	Date
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Staff Person's Name	Sign here	Date
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Consent: I give permission to be audio-taped during the focus group session(s) ___ YES
___ NO

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research study, please contact _____.

Facts about the Study (SAMPLE)

Before you sign your consent forms, please read this fact sheet and talk it over with one of your _____. We must be sure that you understand this fact sheet before you can join the study.

What is this study about?

The _____ *Study* is an opportunity for you to share with us your ideas and thoughts on the greatest barriers and challenges you face in your daily life.

What is the point of being in this study?

If you join this study, you will get the opportunity to:

- Work on photography. The photography will be about identifying how the education, health and economic sectors can better serve your needs. It will also be about understanding what it means to be a women/girl and understanding the unique challenges that you have in your life in comparison to men and boys, particularly as it relates to working in agriculture and having access to education and information related to health issues. The photography will also be about other community issues you feel are important.
- Think of new ways for girls and women to get involved in your community and to consider how the issues you have raised can be addressed.
- Present your ideas as part of the group to members of the community as well as to other decision makers, like not for profit organizations, government and donors.
- Influence the way that issues that you think are important are taken up by the local community and by national groups as well.
- Make efforts to influence issues that you and the group believe are important.

• What will happen in the study?

First, you will participate in a workshop. Here is what you will do in the workshop:

- Learn how to use a camera and take photos.
- Talk about the challenges you face as a girl or a woman.
- Talk about the ideas you have for solving the challenges you have identified.
- Work in small groups to translate your ideas into photography.
- Meet in small groups to talk about your work with the other people in the study.
- If you want to, you can write about your work and say what it means to you.
- If you want, you can also write about your experience in participating in the workshops.
- On the last day of the workshop, you will present your work to the other people in the study. You will also present your work at a photo exhibition to be held within the community.

Could anything bad happen from being in the study?

We hope not, but there are a few risks. We are taking all the steps we can to lessen these risks:

- There is a risk that you may get upset or confused by something that comes up in the group discussions. You may find it hard to talk about issues related to poverty or to other challenges you may be facing in your life.
- People might get angry with you if you take their picture without getting their permission.
- Even though we will all promise to respect each other's privacy, there is a chance someone could break their promise and talk about you outside the group.

What are the good things that could come out of it for you?

- You will get training on how to use a camera. You will learn about how photos can be used to create social change.
- You will get a chance to talk about issues that concern you.
- You will get a chance to talk about the ideas you have that may solve the challenges you face.

How will we protect your privacy?

- Each person who joins the study will promise not to discuss the things said in the workshop outside the group. You do not have to say anything in the group that you don't want to, for any reason.
- The photos that you take for the study will belong to you. We may ask you to let us publish your photos to show the results of the study. We will only use your photos in any public display with your written permission. We will talk with you about which photos we can use. You will sign a form telling us which photos we can use.
- We will not use individual names in relation to photos on display and we will change your name on our records so that you cannot be identified. We will store the study records safely at our project's office, in a place that only the supervisor and/or her assistant(s) will have access to. We will not share any of your personal information without your permission.

Will the sessions be audio-taped?

- In order for us to understand and record your ideas accurately, all sessions will be audio-taped.
- If you do not wish the session to be audio-taped, notes will be taken.

Your rights as a study member

Everything you do in the study is voluntary. You do not have to take part in activities you don't want to. You can leave the study at any time you want. You do not have to answer any questions you don't want to. Your decision to leave the study will not affect your relationship with us. All data and materials collected in relation to you will be destroyed immediately.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a study participant, you can always contact the principal investigator, _____ at anytime. She will be happy to hear from you. She can be reached at _____

WHAT IS FEMSTEP?

femSTEP is a research program that aims to highlight rural girls' and women's perspectives for engendering poverty reduction strategies. Building research partnerships between Canadian and African researchers, this program draws upon an interdisciplinary approach utilizing participatory visual methodologies to analyze gender issues in relation to rural poverty through the experiences of girls and women in Rwanda, South Africa and Ethiopia.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON PHOTOVOICE AND OTHER PARTICIPATORY METHODS GO TO [HTTP://FEMSTEP.MCGILL.CA](http://femstep.mcgill.ca); [WWW.IVMPROJECT.CA](http://www.ivmproject.ca) AND [WWW.CVM.ORG](http://www.cvm.org), OR CONTACT: myriam.gervais@mcgill.ca



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