

Using Everyday Media Making Tools to Address Gender-Based Violence



Participatory Visual Methods & Community-based Technologies

BRIEFING PAPER



INTRODUCTION

Community-based technologies—such as cellphones or mobile phones and tablets—are everyday tools that are readily accessible and used by diverse members of a community on a regular basis. While smartphone—a cellphone with the computer-like ability to take and share photos, watch and create videos, send e-mail, etc.—ownership is not universal, across the globe, many people are dependent on their smartphones to access the internet (Pew Research Centre, 2015).

Progressing beyond its origins as a mobile phone, cellphones are now a primary means through which people document life events and share ideas. As such, cellphones have attracted the interest of participatory visual researchers, community organizers, activists and teachers. This pairing of community technology and PVR opens opportunities to explore and address a wide range of both local and global issues (e.g. gender-based violence (GBV), environmental sustainability, language revitalization, issues of identity and civic engagement).



Images are often more accessible to people than dense academic texts, and they also have a novelty factor which in my experience keeps people, particularly youth...stimulated and engaged in the research process for longer.

Naomi Richards, 2011*



WHAT ARE PARTICIPATORY VISUAL RESEARCH METHODS?

Participatory visual research methods (PVM) are qualitative research methodologies that rely on the use of visual materials, for example a video, to examine and or represent knowledge.

Some common images in visual research include drawings, maps, video diaries, cellphone video-productions (cellfilms) collages, photographs, and film.

These images are studied for what they represent about society, the individuals that produced the images, as well as how they are interpreted by different audiences. PVM requires the participation of the research participants in the producing the visual images under study, analyzing the images and disseminating and archiving the findings. Naomi Richards (2011) argues that PVM can encourage participation.

Some popular forms of participatory visual methods include: photovoice, bodymapping, drawing method, participatory video, cellfilming, and digital storytelling. When using these methods there are particular steps and ethical considerations to take into account. These include anonymity and confidentiality, image ownership, and how these images are presented to different audiences.

*Richards, N. (2011). Participatory Visual Methods: Toolkit #17. Realities, Morgan Centre, Sociology, University of Manchester.

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PARTICIPATORY VISUAL RESEARCH METHODS & GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Globally, people who identify as girls and young women are amongst those most likely to experience gender-based violence. Gender-based violence (GBV) can take many forms, and there is increasing recognition that responses need to be cross-sectoral and inclusive of health, educational, and justice systems. Amongst the most persistent barriers to addressing GBV are:

- Community silence
- Shame, and the
- Potential re-victimization of people who have experienced assault.

1 IN 3 WOMEN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD WILL EXPERIENCE PHYSICAL AND/OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE BY A PARTNER OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE BY A NON-PARTNER (WHO, 2013).

For any response to be effective, it needs to include young women and recognize their human right to lead and make decisions on policy that will directly impact their lives.

PARTICIPATORY VISUAL RESEARCH METHODS

Participatory visual research methods offer multiple ways to explore experiences and understandings of GBV in communities. Increased access to mobile digital technologies such as cellphones and tablets have resulted in the experiences of GBV moving between on-line and off-line spaces. Therefore, incorporating digital technologies into responses to GBV is pertinent.

There's really no such thing as the voiceless. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard.

Arundhati Roy*

*Roy, A. (2004, November). *Peace and the new corporate liberation theology*. Lecture for the Sydney Peace Prize, Seymour Theatre Centre, University of Sydney.

IN THIS BRIEFING PAPER...

We will focus on the use of participatory digital methodologies to increase young people's involvement and leadership in responding to the social dynamics connected to GBV.

We will look at photovoice, digital storytelling, and cellphilm as three examples of PVM, and how they may contribute to the creation of resources that can be used with young people to address GBV in their communities.

QUICK FACTS

50%

Of all women who were the victims of homicide globally in 2012, almost half were killed by intimate partners or family members (UNODC, 2014).

70%

Of girls & women who account for overall trafficking victims worldwide (UNODC, 2014).

700M

Women, worldwide today were married as children (UNICEF, 2014).

120M

Girls worldwide have experienced forced intercourse or other forced sexual acts at some point in their lives (UNICEF, 2014).

200M

Women and girls alive today have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting in 30 countries (UN Women, 2013).

246M

Estimated girls & boys experience school-related violence every year (EFA, UNESCO & UNGEI, 2015).

3.5X

Indigenous women of Canada who are 15 years and older are 3.5 times more likely to experience violence than non-Indigenous women (NWAC, 2010).

27%

Of Indigenous women of Canada reported experiencing 10 or more assaults by the same offender, as opposed to 18% of non-Indigenous women (NWAC, 2010).

16%

In South Africa, the experience of sexual violence by any partner was highest among women who are divorced or separated, followed by those who are living together with their partner but are not married (10%) (Stats SA, 2017).

21%

One in five partnered South African women has ever experienced physical violence by a partner (Stats SA, 2017).

WHAT IS CELLPHILMING?

Cellphilming is a research method where participants use mobile technologies to film a response to a prompt, question, community issue or challenge. While most cellphilm research is conducted with cellphones, it is also possible to use other mobile technologies such as iPods and tablets.

The aim is to use local technology to expose power relations and create opportunities for participants ways of knowing to be represented. Thus, cellphilming embraces people’s everyday media making practices (filming with their mobile technologies) and refocuses these practices on a particular prompt or concern.

Cellphilming has been used to address various issues, such as language loss, but it has also become an important tool in exploring and addressing issues of gender-based violence. For example, Katie MacEntee (2015) worked with girls from KwaZulu-Natal, using cellphilm to examine and reflect on the relationship between cellphones and GBV in and around high schools in the area.

HOW TO CELLPHILM

We offer an 7-step example of how to conduct a cellphilm workshop from our own research practices, and also wish to suggest that these steps should be tailored for the specific community that you are working within. What is appropriate in one context (e.g. working with ethnic minority youth in Hong Kong) might not be appropriate in another (e.g. working with girls in South African schools). The workshop may take place in one session, or might be broken down over several sessions where participants might engage with a step or two per session.

CELLPHILMING STEP-BY-STEP

[1] BRAINSTORMING

Workshop participants brainstorm and discuss a cellphilm prompt.

[2] STORYBOARDING

Participants use the brainstorm to come up with an idea for their cellphilm. This is developed into a visual narrative.

[3] FILMING

Cellphilm may be filmed in one shot with no editing required (NER). One also has the option to use an in-phone editing application (there are free apps that allow for films to be easily edited and shared across social media), or edit their cellphilm on a computer. This choice should be made with participants and respond to their wants, interests, abilities, and needs.

[4] UPLOADING (OR NOT)

Participants may upload their cellphilm to social media, e-mail them to the workshop facilitator and/or keep them on their own mobile devices. Ensuring that participants are consenting to and aware of the opportunities and challenges to sharing their visual products is an important component of cellphilming.

[5] SCREENING

Screen the cellphilm in the workshop space using available technologies (e.g. a projector, a computer, a television, participants’ phones, etc.).

[6] REFLECTING & DISCUSSION

Guide participants to discuss and react to the cellphilm viewed. Cellphilm producers should have the opportunity to discuss their productions and respond to questions an audience may have.

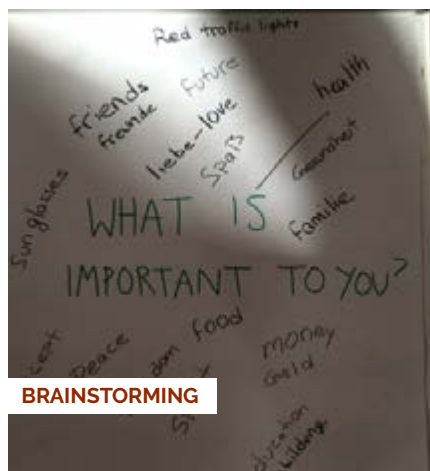
[7] ARCHIVING & ACTION

Ask participants how they would like to archive their cellphilm.

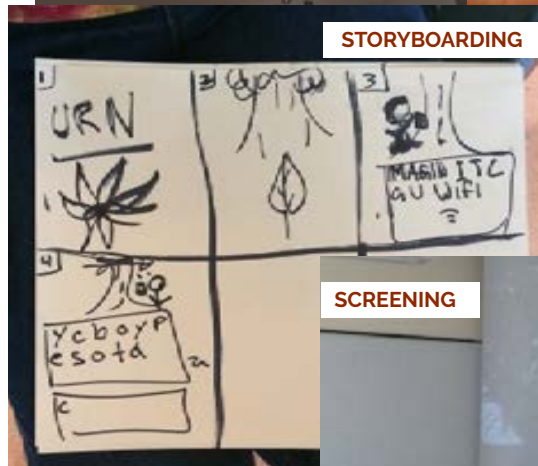
- On a shared YouTube page?
- On the researchers’ computers?
- On their mobile devices?

Participants should also be asked what they would like to do with the cellphilm.

- Would they like to share the cellphilm with policy makers?
- Would they like to publicize the cellphilm through social media?
- Would they like to organize a community-based screening?



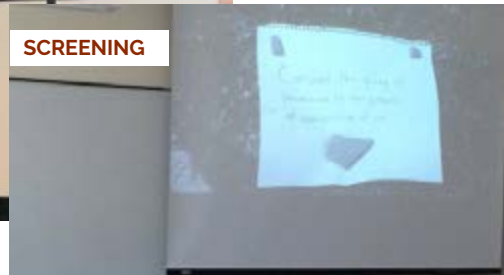
BRAINSTORMING



STORYBOARDING



FILMING & EDITING



SCREENING



WHAT IS PHOTOVOICE?

Photovoice is a qualitative visual research method which utilizes photographs taken with disposable cameras, digital cameras, cellphones, or tablets to explore stories, experiences or ideas about a particular community concerns through group dialogue. Participants typically add short captions about their photographs.

The aim of this research method is to try improve conditions by making changes at the community level. Photographs in this context may serve as a visual “voice” for historically marginalized communities to express a difficult issue or concern from their/ participants point of view in a meaningful way that matters to them and their community. The visual images and accompanying captions and stories are tools used to reach policy- and decision-makers.

STEPS IN PHOTOVOICE

Photovoice was designed as a flexible research approach, to examine and reveal a variety of issues in different contexts. Participants use their photographs to determine what critical issue(s) their community needs to address. Community issues or concerns vary from setting to setting. Workshops can take place over one session or over several sessions depending on the participant’s’ goals and agenda.

Photovoice has been used to help victims of GBV deal and confront their trauma. Chistensen’s (2016, p.1) study seeks to address “How does a photovoice intervention address trauma that is a result of GBV, among women and girls?”.

According to Christensen, photovoice allows victims of GBV to not only express the pain felt through photographs that could not be verbalized, but also allows victims to cope with the trauma and break the cycle of victimization.

Christensen also notes that photovoice allows for both a more comprehensive and individualized way of addressing GBV trauma.

Images teach, pictures can influence policy, and community people ought to participate in creating and defining the images that shapes healthful public policy.

Wang, 2006, p. 148

Wang, C. C. (2006). Youth participation in photovoice as a strategy for community change. *Journal of Community Practice*, 14(1-2), 147-161.

STEP BY STEP

An example of young women participating in a photovoice activity in Ethiopia

[1]
Discuss an issue or research topic



[5]
Creating captions



[2]
Visual ethics



[6]
Creating poster narratives



[3]
Taking pictures



[7]
Presenting



[4]
Selecting photographs



[8]
Exhibiting photos and/or poster narratives



WHAT IS DIGITAL STORYTELLING?

Digital stories are short 3-5 minute mixed-media pieces that tell a participant's experience. They are usually told from a first-person perspective and focus on personal narrative. The method is somewhat technical, as it requires participants use software (on a computer or mobile technology) to bring together a voiceover with photographs, video, and music.

It was developed by The Story Centre (<https://www.storycenter.org>), in Berkeley California, as a method that helps people critically reflect on the world and how they live. It has been used around the world to draw attention to people and communities who are marginalized in some way as it relates to youth, public health, education, language, and social policy.

STEPS IN DIGITAL STORYTELLING

The digital storytelling process is focused on participants developing a narrative, or story. Then they create or find images and video to help visually tell their story. A voiceover of the participants telling their story is edited together using a computer software program. Depending on people's computer and media literacy skills, digital story-making usually takes time (around 9 hours over several meetings) in order for participants to develop their scripts, work with their images, and compile it all together into the final multi-media story.

Once a draft of the digital story has come together, participants screen and discuss the work, identifying themes and giving feedback. It may be that revisions to the digital stories are needed, in which case screening should also be repeated until the participants are satisfied with their stories. At this point, the digital stories can be screened publicly and stored online for viewing by different audiences.

STEP BY STEP

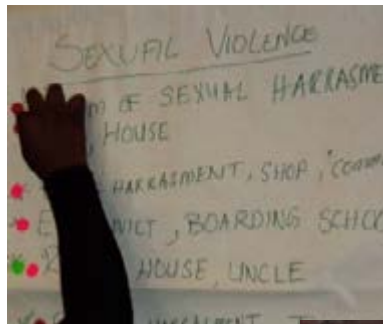
- [1] Brainstorm the prompt.
- [2] **SCRIPT WRITING & STORY CIRCLES**
Participants write (or orally tell) a story in a narrative format. The stories are shared amongst the research group and feedback is given. This process of writing and sharing may repeat several times before participants feel their script is ready to produce as a digital story.
- [3] **STORYBOARDING**
Participants consider what visuals they would like to make/find that will support their scripted narratives.
- [4] Review how to search for video and images on the Internet and/or use cameras and visual ethics.
- [5] Find/take photographs or produce drawings..
- [6] Synthesize visual in narrative sequence on computer.
- [7] Add text and voiceover/music.
- [8] Screen and discuss.
- [9] Revise (if necessary).
- [10] Public screening.

Girl-talk-Girl is a program of the Footage Foundation, which uses local technology and media arts to support young people and amplify their voices. Through this foundation the project Girl-talk-Girl brings together young women from St. Petersburg and New York, while utilizing an mobile app designed by young women, which in turn allows other young women to create their own digital narratives to share their experiences with GBV.

Through this platform participants not only bring local and international awareness of GBV from victims themselves, but perhaps most critically it becomes an important platform for young women to learn and teach and find ways to support one another.

...all of these stories call to mind the issues surrounding social acceptance both from the external world and from within ourselves.

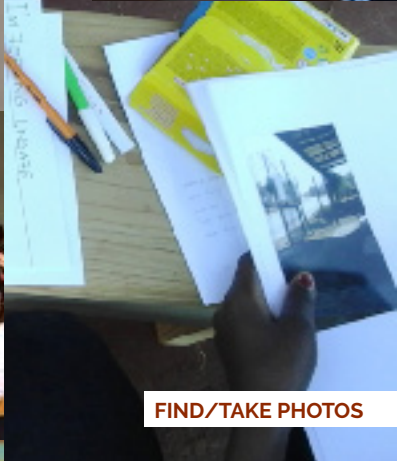
girltalkgirl.org



BRAINSTORM



PUBLIC SCREENING



FIND/TAKE PHOTOS



REFLECT & DISCUSS

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following are critical questions in relation to visual research methods that attempt to 'do most good' and 'least harm.'



Young women in Khetani

CONSENT

- How will consent be negotiated during the visual production process?
- Who will be pictured in the images?
- Will participants need to obtain 3rd party consent?
- Can ongoing consent be negotiated so that participants can easily rescind their participation after the project is finished?
- Can cultural differences between researchers and participants affect the understanding of privacy, or consent?

OWNERSHIP

- When work is done collaboratively, who owns/ has the right to say how the visual products will be created and used?
- How might the visual products be taken up by audiences away from the research context?
- What happens to the cellfilms, photographs, and digital stories over time? How might communities be involved in the archiving process?
- Can the acknowledgement of ownership have implications on the participants' privacy/safety?

SECURITY & SAFETY

- Can footage from cellfilms where role playing is used to dramatize a GBV event, which stays on the phone, endanger the participant when viewed by others?
- What happens if the research products 'go viral'? How might research participants, communities, and their ideas be ethically represented and archived?
- What happens when the images or narratives created are themselves violent or tend to reinforce problematic norms and relationships?

CHOOSING BETWEEN DIFFERENT MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES



"Learning Together" project, Vulindlela, South Africa

As technology evolves, so do the questions surrounding its impact on visual research. When photovoice first emerged, a debate started over using point and shoot self-loading cameras versus single-use disposable cameras. Early participatory video relied on professional video cameras and, later, smaller and easier to use camcorders.

The advent of the digital camera allowed participants to take a collection of photographs and record videos on one relatively easy-to-use device. Now, mobile technology such as smartphones and tablets are even more multifunctional, combining cameras, video, as well as editing software access the internet, on one user friendly and relatively affordable device.

With technical barriers reduced, more people are familiar with consuming and producing images in their daily lives. As a result research methodologies have—and should continue to—adapt and evolve accordingly.

Rather than emphasize the use of one of various devices over others in participatory visual research, it is more important to pay attention to the suitability of the different devices in different communities.

This includes for example, looking at cost, access, and how 'user friendly' the different technology is.

It is also important that communities are diverse and different people may have different access and familiarity using different devices.

*Mitchell, C., De Lange, N., & Molestante (2017). *Participatory Visual Methodologies: Social Change, Community and Policy*. London, Sage.

...this discussion on choice of technology should be a reminder of the need for continuous reflection and re-assessment on the part of the research team in close consultation with community members and participants.

Mitchell, De Lange & Moletsane, 2017*

Ideally, the ways in which mobile technology is integrated into the participatory visual research should disrupt, not reproduce, community- and research-based power hierarchies. In these ways, mobile technology in PVM should go further in conducting research that increases community participation and gains.

QUESTIONS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN CHOOSING THE MOST APPROPRIATE DIGITAL DEVICE IN A PVM PROJECT

Technology can be a double-edged sword that can have both **positive** and **negative** effects that need to be thought of during the project development phase.

Different communities have different access to mobile technologies, and within communities, access may also be unequal. Thus, how do researchers choose the right digital device in their PVM projects?

Before a researcher asks themselves how the community wishes to engage with mobile technology (e.g. the how would require defining the parameters of whether the community wishes to disseminate the content publically) they must ask the community if they want to engage with mobile technology.

POSITIVE

For example, using existing technology and participants skills making for a more autonomous project.

NEGATIVE

For example, trying to prevent the further encroachment of globalizing effects on the community.

We offer a set of questions to guide practitioners in making the best choice of technology and method. These questions are by no means an exhaustive list, but highlight some key factors to consider based on practical/ field work experiences.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>[1] <i>What types of infrastructure are in place to support the use of mobile technology?</i></p> | For example, is there access to electricity for charging technology? |
| <p>[2] <i>What technology is already available and being used in the community?</i></p> | Is it feasible to use the technology already present in the community? |
| <p>[3] <i>Who is using what technology?</i></p> | Is access to mobile technology divided along lines of gender? Age? Ability?
Can the research technology match the technologies that the participant population is already using? |
| <p>[4] <i>How important is the aesthetic quality of the visual product?</i></p> | Different tablets and phones have different pixel rates. Higher pixel cameras will affect the quality and the digital file size of the images. There are benefits to high quality film in terms of clarity. However, the larger file formats may be more difficult to store and transfer. It may be that a camera with fewer pixels can be used, which may also make the technology more affordable and accessible. |
| <p>[5] <i>Does the method require particular accessories?</i>
<i>Will the addition of a tablet keyboard aid in the editing of visual productions?</i>
<i>Does the technology require additional protective cases to prevent from damage?</i></p> | Not only are these additional costs researchers need to keep in mind, they may increase the accessibility and sustainability of technology as well as the impact of the final visual product. |
| <p>[6] <i>Is the research project providing the mobile technologies for use in the research?</i></p> | If so, what will happen to the technology when the project is finished? Which technologies will be multifunctional and most beneficial over the long term for the community? |
| <p>[7] <i>What brands of technology are most commonly used in your research context?</i></p> | Not all technology brands are used globally. For example, Apple products, while very popular and accessible in affluent communities in the West, are less readily available and integrated into communities globally. |
| <p>[8] <i>What are the potential social drawbacks of bringing outside technology?</i></p> | What might the longterm affects these practices (not technology) have on the community? |

FURTHER READINGS

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Resisting

RESISTING



Sexual violence

SEXUAL VIOLENCE



Eskasoni



Networks for Change and Wellbeing, Eskasoni

Example of turning photovoice images into media/policy poster.

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