PHOTOVOICE:
A READY-TO-USE INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAM

Hello! Are you interested in creating an intergenerational community center at your settlement house? These are spaces that intentionally bring together community members of all ages. They offer regular programs building on the resources all generations have to offer and benefit participants of all ages.

Generations Connect, an initiative of United Neighborhood Houses (UNH), helps settlement houses make intergenerational program approaches a core practice. This guide is part of a series of tools to support organizations embarking on the multi-year and iterative process of developing an intergenerational community center. Browse them all here: unhny.org/intergenhub

What is PhotoVoice?

PhotoVoice is a tool for developing, sharing and building support for community change. It is a creative, empowering and flexible process that combines photography with grassroots action.

PhotoVoice is based on the belief that individuals are the experts of their own experiences. It provides a powerful way for people to use photography to share their experiences in order to create change within their communities.

Why do PhotoVoice?

- It enhances community engagement, increases awareness of community resources, and fosters self-efficacy by empowering people to see themselves as taking action instead of being acted upon.

- A picture is worth 1,000 words. Photovoice provides an opportunity to visually portray experiences and share personal knowledge about issues that may be difficult to express with words alone

- Photography is fun, easy & creative. If you have a phone, you can be a photographer!

- The rewards are immediate - you get instant results.

- It's proof! - policymakers can't deny what photos are showing; they have to acknowledge the reality shown.

Who should participate?

A group of about 6 to 12 people, from across different generations.

How long is it?

At least 5 sessions, 2.5 hours each

Note: this is an outline based on a much more extensive curriculum developed by UNH called "A Guide to PhotoVoice." The full curriculum provides step-by-step instructions for each activity, worksheets, and more direction on how to prepare for the program. You can find the full guide in the programming folder here: unhny.org/intergenhub

BEFORE THE FIRST SESSION

Get your team together

Bring together participants from different generations. Make sure that any minors sign participation consent forms.

SESSION 1

Introductions

Have participants introduce themselves. Do an icebreaker activity to get everyone comfortable. And then introduce the goal of the project.

Discuss participant responsibilities, logistics, and expectations

- How often will we meet?
- Discuss participant responsibilities, agreements & group norms
- Who will facilitate? One or two people should be designated to do some prep work and facilitate each meeting.
- Who will be the "tech coordinator"? The tech coordinator will be in charge of "saving" the team's photographs on a central computer or shared file so photos can be accessed and shared with the whole group at team meetings. Note: you can also use something like Google Drive or Dropbox, to virtually share and store photographs.
- Choose a working style: will participants take photographs alone, in pairs, or as a small group?

Choose an issue to document through photography

- There are many ways you can determine an issue to document. Staff can pick something ahead of time and use that issue as a way to bring in participants. Participants can also choose the issue as a group based on conversations they have about issues impacting them in their neighborhood. Staff or participants can also talk to local neighborhood organizations to see what issues they suggest the team take on.

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SESSION 2

Photography 101

Provide a short tutorial on how to use a camera. Have participants practice taking a few photos in the room with specific guidelines (for example, you could have them take a photo of something close-up, a photo of something weird, and a photo of something interesting). Have them practice sending the "tech coordinator" their photos.

Review photography ethics

The following is a list of basic photo ethics. This list can be adapted to adhere to the values of your specific agency/community.

- No trespassing. Pictures should be taken on public property.
- Ask permission to take pictures on private property.
- Respect privacy. Do not take pictures that invade another's privacy.
- Get permission. You must get verbal consent to take pictures of a person or a small group of people.
- Taking pictures of large groups of people without permission is okay.
- Do not take pictures of illegal activities.
- Don't hide! You or the camera should not be hidden while taking pictures. Make yourself visible. Explain what you are doing if anyone asks why you are taking pictures.

Take photos

- Head out into the neighborhood in pairs, taking MANY pictures of whatever seems to best reflect or explain the chosen issue.
- When everyone meets back at the room, have participants send the "tech coordinator" their photos.

SESSION 3

Share and discuss photos as a group

Using the photos shared with and saved by the tech coordinator, the full group of participants will discuss the significance of the photos selected by using the **SHOWED** framework outlined below. The **SHOWED** framework asks the following questions:

- **S**ee - What do we see here?
- **H**appening - What is really happening here?
- **O**ur - How does this relate to our lives?
- **W**hy - Why does this situation, concern or strength exist?
- **E**ducate - How could this photo educate people?
- **D**o - What can we do about it?

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Select photos

Work together to select 20 or fewer photos for your story. As a group, decide on your selection process. Maybe a few small groups each make their own version and then you compare them and choose the elements you like best of each. Maybe you decide as a large group which ones to include through a voting process (you could give everyone 20 stickers and see which photos have the most votes). Be sure every participant has at least one photo included in the end.

Arrange photos

Arrange the photos in an order that tells a story. Keep in mind that the final PhotoVoice story should help you engage the larger community in a discussion about that issue. Think of the story as an awareness building and outreach tool!

- The beginning should demonstrate the problem: what do the pictures show?
- The middle should expand on the problem or demonstrate some of the consequences of the problem.
- The end should share a vision of a solution to the challenge: what can we do to address the problem?

SESSION 4

Create photo captions

- Go through each photo and have people suggest captions
- Write a few captions for each photo on a whiteboard or large paper
- Have the group vote on which one works best for each photo
- Remember, the goal is to increase awareness about a critical issue. How can you communicate with policymakers and other stakeholders who can bring about policy change?
- Develop a plan for how you will share your final story (Where will it be? Who will you invite? Who will introduce the project? Who will walk through the story? Who will write and send the invite?)

SESSION 5

Share your story

- Set up, display and discuss the project with community members. This can be done with printed photographs or as a PowerPoint presentation
- Make your presentation as engaging and dynamic as possible
- After the presentation, discuss as a group what you want to do next to share your story.

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