

## PHOTO ADVOCACY TIP SHEET

### What is Photo Advocacy?

Photo advocacy involves the use of documentary photography skills to inspire lasting change. Photo advocacy seeks to give voice to the marginalised members of society by placing the camera in their hands, allowing them to become the producers of their own stories. Such initiatives can be used to advocate for social and political change, and can influence and inspire local, provincial, national and international policies that defend the rights and interests of the marginalised.

### PhotoVoice (<http://www.photovoice.org/>):

**History:** While Social Anthropology graduate students at Edinburgh University Anna Blackman and Tiffany Fairey developed what would become *PhotoVoice*. With interests in documentary photojournalism Blackman and Fairey integrated participatory photography into their MA dissertations, independently establishing the *Street Vision* project in Vietnam and the *Rose Class* project in Nepal in 1998. These two projects became PhotoVoice's first two initiatives.

**Mission and Philosophy:** PhotoVoice's mission is to bring about positive social change for marginalised communities by providing them with photographic training that they can then use to:

- Advocate for a social or political cause
- Express themselves
- Generate an income

### PhotoVoice Works To:

- Set up long-term photographic projects that train marginalised and disadvantaged groups worldwide in photojournalism skills
- Provide training and consultation to individuals and other international development organisations and grassroots organisations wishing to introduce participatory photography into their work
- Promote the images produced in participatory photography projects through the web, newsletters, mainstream media, development media, events and exhibitions
- Provide a network and forum for participatory photography projects around the world – their practitioners and beneficiaries.

You can join the PhotoVoice Network for free at:

<http://www.photovoice.org/html/workingwithphotovoice/jointheforum/index.html>

## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN DOING PHOTO ADVOCACY WORK:**

### **Who is your audience?**

When doing photo advocacy work you must consider who your ideal audience would be. It is important to establish who your ideal audience is before starting your project. This way you can design your work and approach with your target audience in mind.

### **What motivates you?**

It is also important to consider, prior to starting your project, why you are doing this work? What is your personal attachment to the project? Will your attachment strengthen or inhibit your project ambitions? What are your personal biases regarding the project?

### **What are you trying to communicate?**

If you were to communicate ONE main point through your project, what would that message be? What are some secondary points you want to communicate? How do you envision your audience receiving your work? What do you hope your audience will take away from your work?

### **What are you hoping is the outcome of your work?**

#### **Here are some examples of what can be done with your work:**

- Exhibit your work publically, either in a gallery, public space and/or online (e.g. blog, photoblog).
- Create an educational package which includes tools, techniques and resources that can be used by schools and non-governmental organisations to reproduce your project.
- Use photos for fundraising purposes to support your cause and/or future initiatives.
- Change social and political policies
- Change public opinion and garner support and sympathy for your cause
- Provide an alternative perspective to a given issue that might not otherwise appear in the mainstream media.

### **Who do you hope will benefit from your work?**

Who are you doing your work for? Are members of this group involved in this project? If so, how? If not, why?

### **REFERENCE:**

<http://www.photovoice.org/>

**Source:**

PhotoVoice. The PhotoVoice Manual: a Guide to Designing and Running Participatory Photography Projects. London: PhotoVoice, 2007.