



Photovoice Process Reflecting Women's Lives

Presentation by

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To the Conference

Looking Back, Thinking Ahead:

Using Research to Improve Policy and Practice in Women's Health

Halifax, Nova Scotia, March 17, 2009

Atlantic Centre of Excellence of Excellence for Women's Health

Today's Presentation

- Describes the intent of photovoice
- Outlines the photovoice process
- Describes four PWHCE projects
- Identifies the limitations and strengths of photovoice

"What experts think is important may not match what people at the grassroots think is important."

(www.photovoice.com)

Food Bank Collage

"Give us this day our daily bread"



Free for all!

Would you take this?

Photovoice Process

***Participants take photos, engage in discussion
and write text about their lives and their
community.***

***Photovoice is more than a photo essay project.
Photovoice is a research technique.***

***Photovoice was originated by Carolyn Wang in
California.***

Photovoice Goals

Photovoice has three main goals:

1. Enabling people to reflect their community's strengths and problems.
2. Promoting dialogue about key issues.
3. Engaging policymakers.



Photovoice Steps

1. Connect with and consult community
2. Plan project: budget, ethics review
3. Recruit participants, target audience
4. Begin project
5. Photography and discussion
6. Data collection – from stories
7. Data analysis
8. Sharing the exhibit
9. Social action and policy implications

Promotes Empowerment & Change

- Participatory action research, participants active in research, question and assess process
- Participants recognized as experts
- Researcher seen as part of process, re their social location (age, race, orientation, class)
- Uses respectful relationships
- Empowering process for women
- Option to use pseudonym reduces barriers
- Researcher and participants committed to working towards societal change

PWHCE and Photovoice

PWHCE engaged in photovoice because we:

- Already had research on how poverty affects health and need for changes
- Saw that photovoice was a compelling way to portray what we knew, and to gain added insights
- Thought photovoice would be effective in inspiring action by decision-makers



Shosana Funk 2005

Behind the glass you can sort of see the mannequin, the idea of the “real woman”. And then you see the reality- the real people at the bus stop, who can’t afford to shop there. It’s like they’re mocking us.

Poverty: Our Voices, Our Views

Winnipeg, Manitoba - 2005-2006

- Partner - Winnipeg North End Women's Centre
- Six women, diverse backgrounds, 30 photos
- Photography training, ethics of taking pictures of people, took photos with throw-away camera
- Discussions of photos audio-taped and transcribed, used to make captions for photos
- Displayed at university, library, galleries & events
- Calendar, photos reproduced by Winnipeg Social Planning Council, national on-line magazines



Valerie Charles 2005

It was ironic because this is a path. It shows a sense of loneliness, nowhere to go and obviously no support. To me, it was a very lonely place of unworthiness.



Valerie Charles 2005

I feel like the system keeps you there.

I'd like to be one of those people considering all of the things that I've been through that I tend to want to carry the world on my shoulders. I want everybody to live in peace and harmony. I don't want anybody to go through anymore pain and suffering because I went through it. Money and greed is not going to feed my future generation.



Suzanne McLeod-Chartrand 2005

I'm thinking, as women, "Do we feel alive? Do we feel empowered?" No. So, we need to look at the root problems. The tree grows because the roots are healthy. If you're not healthy, you won't feel alive; you won't feel empowered. You'll feel disgraced and you'll feel hopeless.



Suzanne McLeod-Chartrand 2005

There are no brownie points for being poor.

We must change the fact that 60% of Aboriginal women are living in poverty. It has to. The monster of poverty has knocked at my door and I say "Bring it on," because I am educated and my friends are with me.

Looking Out/ Looking In: Women, Poverty & Public Policy - Saskatoon, Saskatchewan - 2006

- Partner - Saskatoon Anti-Poverty Coalition
- Ten women, diverse backgrounds, 28 photos
- Photography training, ethics of taking pictures of people, took photos with throw-away cameras
- Discussions of photos audio-taped and transcribed, used to make captions for photos
- Displayed at Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Programming storefront art centre, galleries, shopping centres. Presentations at national conferences, Senate committee on poverty.



It's a Beautiful Day in the Neighbourhood

Lynn*, 2006

With the amount of freedom and privacy taken away from me it is difficult for me to appreciate a beautiful day without feeling like I'm looking at it from behind the oppressive bars of the prison of poverty.

In order to survive, I cheat a little from time to time and pay the price of feeling like a criminal.



Bad Weather

Elaine Gamble, 2006

This is a picture of me driving out to my reserve to try to get financial aid because my power and my rent was due. My husband lost his job and we were having a really hard financial time. I had to take my kids on the highway in this kind of weather because if I didn't, my power was going to get cut off and I wasn't going to have a place to live with my children. It was a gamble to go out because I wasn't guaranteed anything, and, in fact, I didn't receive anything.



The Empty Shopping Cart

Butterfly Russell*, 2006

To me the empty shopping cart is symbolic. A shopping cart should be full of groceries and have a little kid bouncing up and down in the seat. But for many, every time they look at a grocery cart they feel guilty because they don't have enough money to fill it up with groceries. And the other thing I think when I look at a grocery cart is, 'Thank God I'm not the one who's got all my worldly possessions in it.' Or I could be wandering up and down back alleys picking up pop bottles. So the shopping cart has a lot of meanings.

Cooking Together

Smith, 2006

This is a picture of Mary Ross and another member of the cooking group.

Once a month, we pay two dollars to make meals and bring some home with us. It's a lot of fun to get together.

We make pizza. They are quick and easy and there's lots of good stuff in them. I've made them at home too.





A Simple Birthday Party

Moe S., 2006

\$14.99

Smiles Free!

Photovoice: Freedom from Poverty

Regina, Saskatchewan - 2007

- Partners - Regina Work Preparation Centre, Regina Public Library
- Twelve women, diverse backgrounds, 85 photos
- Learned about group process, camera, photo critique, writing and editing, copyright, media training, moving to policy, display set-up
- Displays at libraries, high school, university, church, corporate office, mental health conference. Photos in publications. Media. Group - sharing practical advice, socializing, workshop binder, possible photo projects, discussion & action on issues.



Prisoner of Poverty

The chains of poverty hold me captive – no matter how hard I struggle it just seems to tighten its grasp. I was led to believe that hard work and endurance would set you free but that does not seem to be the case. The “choice” of poverty has never been mine; it was given to me as a burden to carry to ensure the prosperity of others. The reality is that utilities in arrears are deferred and if employment is ever found the pay cannot realistically maintain both the monthly bills and the arrears. The arrears are no longer on hold and I must pay the total amount or live in the cold and the dark. How can I ever be free?



Freedom

This is the only thing upon which is available to me to use while on the poverty line. Being disabled it is a double whammy here as for me to obtain freedom and independence I need to be out, not isolated. Poverty is isolation and loneliness. I need to break a cycle even if I have to use my scooter to obtain that goal and reach. Freedom is that what we all want from the chains and bondage of poverty?

Photo Topics

*Topics developed with
participants for exhibits*

- Housing
- Food
- Transportation
- Health
- Education and Opportunity
- Children
- Public Spaces
- Social Change
- Legal & Taxation

Some underlying themes:

- Justice and injustice
- Charity and social programs
- Exclusion and loneliness
- Identity and stereotyping
– Who Am I
- Endurance
- Dignity, value, respect
- Inspiration



Who Does the Hot Housing Market Really Benefit?

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For sale, for sale, houses for sale! Low-income houses for sale end up being bought by landlords that then rent the homes to low income tenants. How can even moderately low income people even begin to contemplate actually buying these houses, making a home when the prices head North while their incomes are standing still or heading South, relatively speaking?

Sooner or later those new homes are boarded bones, abandoned. Why are landlords allowed this, at the same time as the low-income tenants have no rights or a decent home?



'Comes With Fridge and Stove'

Many people assume that a rented place comes with appliances that work. I first realized this when my doctor assumed I had a fridge that had all its shelves, could be washed and kept mould free and would keep cool things cool and frozen things safe, ready for when they were needed. You need this so that you can buy wisely and feed your family.

But poverty is relative. When I showed my photos to someone who's spent time as a street kid, they said: "Empty fridge. Reminds me of the times I had no food."



Normalcy

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Dependency created from poverty breeds and flourishes into further forms of dependency. Addictions of all types become normalcy within our social channels. The addictions become the only assurance that we can escape the reality of our existence. The dance takes on a third partner that is just as jealous and just as hard to escape from.



A Quiet Strength

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Education is one of the basic rights and yet the opportunity to get it is not equal. What if there were policies in support of everyone who wished to have an education? Think about how this would improve the lives of individuals, families and communities.



Untitled

Our sisters living in pure pain
Holding on to what they can
Using what they know to survive
Daily fighting to stay alive

We continually ask "why"
They do what they do to get by
While inside I cry

As my sister stands alone
I know now not to pass judgement or condone
My sister is a warrior and yet she walks all alone

Note: A person posed for this picture to illustrate the situation
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Outside Looking In: Young Aboriginal Women's Photovoice Project

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan - 2007-2008

Purposes

1. Enable Aboriginal young women to express their ideas about important issues, community programming and public policy
2. Deepen understanding of how public policies and program development affect young urban Aboriginal women
3. Develop policy recommendations and influence public policies around issues important to Aboriginal girls

Project description

- 15 to 18 year old young Aboriginal women, eight participants, from school and community group, 66 photos
- Discussed issues affecting their lives, how they influenced delivery and access to community programming, influence of policies on Aboriginal youth, solutions and how youth programming could ignite change at local level. Analysis using Atlas TI.
- Displayed at City Hall, at school during teacher's convention, participants presented at CU Expo in Victoria, 2008

Issues

- Poverty
- Lack of resources
- Limited Supports
- Generational Impact of Residential School
- Societal Complacency

Reliance on False Supports

- Street Life
- Gang Activity
- Addictions

Systemic Issues

- Housing/
Homelessness
- Racism
- Loss of Culture

Programming Needs

- Positive Role Models
- Return to Cultural Teachings
- Hope/ Plans for Future



“Storms A’ brewing”

Under a dark sky at a treaty reserve. It was the warning of a storm to come. So what of today's youth? A lot of them are pregnant, strung out on drugs or hung over on a school day. Can we stop the 'reign' before it washes everything away?

A.D.



“Memories”

Taking a look at these, I remember some things I'd rather forget- a chance at being raped, being called some derogatory names, being afraid because there is a man lying on the ground. For an aboriginal woman, this is pretty normal. And it was normal for a while, for me. It's hard to imagine being used to this all the time.

A.D.



“Housing”

The fact is this was an Aboriginal family's house. Do you think this would have happened if it was a \$200,000+ home? That this would have happened if this weren't substandard housing in a decrepit neighbourhood?

A.D.



“Blockage”

It feels like to gain success, I have to break through the door..the door being labels, racism, stereotypes..... only when you see the door you are intimidated because it's strong, scary and still standing.

C.C.

“Hidden”



This picture is a little more symbolic- a girl wearing moccasins, which are half-covered with some new slacks. This could represent past events, or how young girls of our culture don't really practice the tradition anymore.

A.D.



“Harmony Sunshine”

***Life is difficult
with a new baby,
especially being
so young.
Feelings of
frustration...but
when she smiles,
every emotion
disappears and
all the world is
still. I am free in
her eyes.***

V.Mc.



“Dancing”

I got one of my friends to dance for me and blurred the images together, and it turned out like this- stages of dance and it just looks... cool and beautiful, for lack of a better word. A traditional dance is always beautiful.

O.A.D.

Limitations of Photovoice

- Time commitment for facilitator, participants
- Participant expectations, personal barriers, assumptions and barriers between diverse participants
- Maintaining healthy communication
- Keeping in touch with participants when work is disseminated
- Creating policy change easy to say, more difficult to do

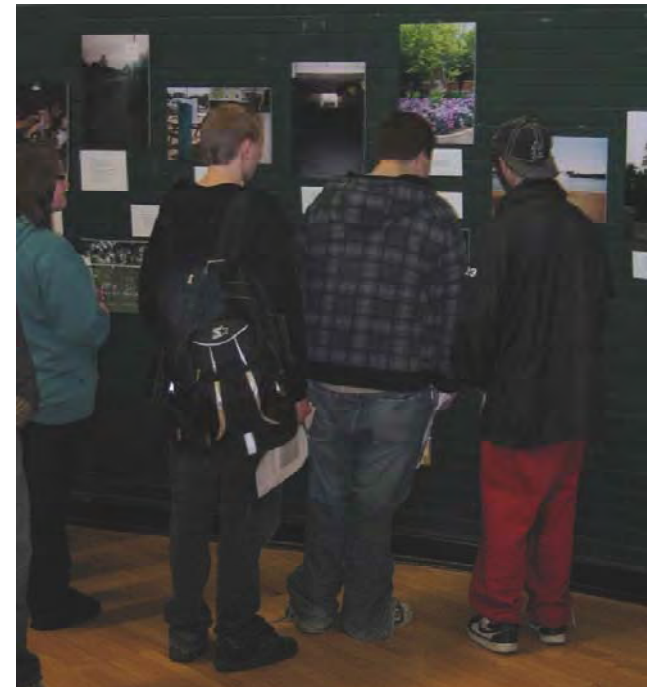
Strengths of Photovoice

- Empowering and creative process for participants and researcher, inspires participants to act towards their personal goals
- Stimulates discussion and motivation at the community level
- Informs and inspires professionals and decision-makers from community perspective
- Able to cross language, socio-economic boundaries
- Creates common voice of experience nationally and internationally



Young Woman Being Interviewed
About Display

Students Viewing Display





Mural by Campbell Collegiate Students in Response to Regina Photovoice Display, 2008

Resources

“A Practical Guide to Photovoice: Sharing Pictures, Telling Stories, Changing Communities”

by Beverly Palibroda

with Brigitte Krieg, Joanne Havelock and Lisa Murdock

PowerPoints of PWHCE Photovoice projects

www.pwhce.ca

Questions



Shosana Funk 2005

This is the world, full of beauty and diversity - plants, animals and people. The sun is shining down reminding us that things will be ok. We can make changes, but we have to work together.