



2 | Participatory photography

Creative Expression

AT A GLANCE

This participatory photography workshop is the first of a two-stage workshop experience where young people are invited to reflect on their life and career aspirations through a hands-on creative and playful approach.

AIMS

- Hone visual and creative thinking applied abilities as means for expression and reflection on personal feelings and experiences
- Document the outer environment – spaces and people – that shape participants' development of aspirations as an applied, reflective exercise
- Generate insightful visual material to use in the subsequent session on zine making

SPACE AND EQUIPMENT

The workshop would ideally be held in both indoor and outdoor locations:

- indoors for basic photography techniques and discussion on themes: A room with movable chairs and furniture that can accommodate groupwork is advisable.
- outdoors for hands on photography, as a prequel to the camera work participants will do to document their environments.

CAMERAS

There is an array of good options for cameras available, with key pros and cons including:

Cheap rechargeable cameras. *Pros:* Even with basic functionalities, these cameras are best to use when the aim is to give basic skills in photography and hire a professional photographer, as participants can be taught basic settings and how they can be modified to change the look and feel of photographs. *Cons:* Pictures cannot be used in reflective sessions until printed; this process requires professional photo printing services or mobile photo printer available.

Disposable cameras. *Pros:* Their main advantage is that it makes participants aware that every shot matters – there is only a limited number available. Thus, it makes participants consider the value of curating each and every shot, away from the tendency to take multiple shots and choose the best one later, as typical of mobile phone photography. *Cons:* Just the

same is also a disadvantage as numbers of photographs are limited; also pictures cannot be seen until they are developed and they require professional services for developing.

Instant cameras. *Pros:* they are more engaging than regular cameras and give the feeling of immediacy; also they have a limited number of shots, so like disposable cameras convey the feeling that every shot matters. Pictures have an attractive retro look to them. *Cons:* Pictures are not as clear as high resolution digital cameras. There are special conditions for maintaining the films and there is the risk the film is ruined if kept in inadequate conditions, just before a session.

Choosing among these options might also imply thinking of the long-term use of the cameras. For example, if multiple participatory photography sessions are planned, a good option is to invest in digital cameras (even some with basic functionalities) and a mobile photo printer.

VISUAL AND PHOTOGRAPHY TRAINING

If a professional photographer is hired, they will be able to advise on the best techniques to cover. We have found the following combination useful, where tips and techniques are shared by the facilitator, showcased, and then participants asked to work individually or in pairs to exercise.

- Basic photography techniques, including: Composition rules and guides, e.g., rule of thirds & framing; using angles in photography; patterns and lines;
- Types of photography: portrait, landscape photography, street photography, documentary photography, etc.
- Using emotions in photography – how to evoke emotions and suggest moods using storylines, light and shadow, colours and subject positioning.
- Spotlight on documentary photography and creative storytelling photography using tasks related to the zine making exercise that participants will attend (see Themes below)

THEMES FOR PHOTOGRAPHY TASKS

A key aim of this workshop is to generate visual material for the subsequent zine making workshop. To this end, we advise using the main themes covered in the zine making as tasks for participatory photography. These tasks can be (partly) covered in the collective participatory photography session and/or in individual follow up sessions to be conducted by participants on their own.

These can include any or all of the topics in the aspirations zine. If participants will be invited to document these themes on their own, they can be given short inspiring guidance for inspiration. A sample of such texts is provided below:

Your dream profession: Think of what you really wish to do as a profession or work in the future. Now focus on how that profession or work would make you feel? Do you wish for a job that lets you express yourself creatively? Or a job that makes you feel connected to people or

a community? Or that allows you to be of help to others? Or that gives you the time & resources for travelling? Think in particular about what your dream profession enables you to do and to feel. And take a picture of that - it can be a place, another person doing the same thing, or it can be a completely different scene that represents the same feeling. Be creative!

Who inspires you? Please take a picture of the person or people that most inspire you. Think about why she or he inspires you so much, and try to capture those qualities in the picture.

Your power & confidence place. Think of a location or place where you feel most confident, comfortable, or where you feel your presence, competences and personal qualities are appreciated. This can be a physical place, or a group of people gathered around an activity such as a football club or a local youth club or the Church or even the school! Please take a picture of that place, or pick any other event or place that recalls the place you are thinking about. Remember that we will discuss these pictures during the workshop, and you will be able to explain the context for each photograph.

Your number 1 quality or skill - What are you very good at? Take a moment to think about your qualities and skills or competences. Are you very creative? Or good at organising others? Are you a great cook? Or you always lend a hand to others? Think of what is your number 1 quality, what others appreciate, but also and mostly what you believe that you are really good at. How can you represent this in a picture? Be creative, remember you take this picture for being able to talk about it, in the second part of the photography workshop.

The biggest challenge to your dream career. Take a moment to reflect on what stops you from realising your dream. Please take a picture of the biggest barrier or obstacle or challenge that you consider stops you from fulfilling your aspirations. Be creative! This can be about time that you don't have; it can be about money that you don't have; or the support of others; or a diploma that you still need to obtain.