

# GIVING FAMILIES A VOICE THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHIC ART

Guide to the *Photovoice* method inspired  
by the *Optique Familles* initiative under  
the AGORA Project



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# Acknowledgments

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Un pour tous, tous pour un / [One for all, all for one!], Kassandra Malboeuf (Maison de la Famille Rive-Sud)

# Overview

Fédération québécoise des organismes communautaires Famille (FQOCF) is pleased to provide this guide on the *Photovoice* method, an action-research approach that uses photographic art to help give individuals and communities a voice. This tool is based on the experience gained during the *Optique Familles* [Through the family lens] initiative that the Federation conducted jointly with the Centre d'études interdisciplinaires sur le développement de l'enfant et la famille (CEIDEF) of the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR), as part of the AGORA Project.

The structure, content, and proposed methods aim to cover all aspects and stages of a *Photovoice* project, from developing the action plan to facilitating meetings to distributing photos. We hope that the suggested strategies will easily adapt to the goals, realities, and resources of the people and organizations who wish to pursue such an approach. This guide is our way of passing on the experience acquired during *Optique Familles* and of helping everyone support initiatives that give families a voice.

## About *Optique Familles*

The goal of the AGORA Project was to support the transfer and mobilization of knowledge on family support. During Phase 1 (2011–2015), people working in family resource centres (FRCs) set out to describe what characterizes their family support practices. In Phase 2 (2016–2019), to validate and enrich this knowledge, the FQOCF and the CEIDEF also wanted to gather parents' individual and collective perspectives and reflections on their experiences with FRCs and autonomous community action for and with families (ACAF1).

This is how the *Optique Familles* experience took shape. As part of this action-research, 51 parents who visited 6 FRCs expressed in photos what they experience, share, and observe in these places dedicated to support, discussion, and engagement. They met up and talked about their photos, and each person wrote a short piece. These photos and write-ups, as well as summaries of the discussions among the parents, were used to create an exhibition, a book, and various other communication tools, all of which helped share knowledge, developed collaboratively with the parents, about how to support families.



Émerveillement [Wonder], Anne-Marie Pelletier (Carrefour familial du Richelieu)

Throughout this guide, we present examples from the *Optique Familles* initiative. You will see how some of the methods suggested have been put into practice and how the research team has supported the initiative. Our goal is to show the range of possibilities and not to dictate a particular method or scope for this type of action.

With this practical tool, the FQOCF wants to support its members and the people who work in social action in the development of initiatives that foster civic expression, democracy, solidarity, and social justice.

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1. The ACAF corresponds to the actions deployed in FRCs. The “autonomous” nature refers in particular to the shared status of all community organizations set up on the initiative of people from the community and whose board of directors is made up of people who are not affiliated with the public sector. ACAF practices are based on a facilitation approach that creates welcoming spaces, fosters the enrichment of the parental experience, and uses popular education strategies. Reference and facilitation tools on these topics are available in the *Reference and Facilitation Toolkit on Autonomous Community Action for and with Families* (FQOCF, 2023).

# 1 *Photovoice*: Photographic art to support expression and action



The *Photovoice* method was developed to foster empowerment for people whose opinions are rarely sought or taken into account. It aims to help these people speak up, reflect together, and take action on issues they feel are important in their lives and in their community.

## **WHAT IS THE *PHOTOVOICE* METHOD?**

In general, a *Photovoice* project is an activity in which participants take photos on a given topic and then have a group discussion to share their thoughts. By facilitating the discussions sparked by the photos, the process helps articulate individual and collective messages, some of which are in writing, and ensures they are disseminated to decision-makers.

The idea behind using a camera is to encourage people to stop and take a close look at one aspect of a certain reality or situation. Participants have a chance to focus their attention and express what they observe, experience, and think. Thanks to advanced technology, taking photos does not require complex knowledge. Similarly, looking at photos taken by people living in environments and situations similar to ours supports us in our reflections on the various facets of our life experiences.

The use of the written word in a *Photovoice* project supports expression through photography. The writing exercises then become less intimidating and can take whatever form each person chooses.

Through the photos, the target audiences can more easily perceive and feel the core elements of the messages that participants are trying to convey.

## THE OBJECTIVES AND AIMS OF THIS METHOD



The objectives of a *Photovoice* project are generally to:

- allow and support expression
- encourage dialogue and critical thinking
- support action toward social change
- influence decision-making
- foster action

More specifically, participants will:

- acquire the experience and skills that come from being in a place of dialogue where what they have to say is valued and where the role of the people who support them is mainly to listen
- develop behaviours that help make this space a safe place that allows different forms of expression
- be actively involved in running the meetings and take ownership of the process

- become more open and able to build connections with a diverse range of people. Even if the process takes place in a specific community, it often brings in people that represent a variety of characteristics in terms of age, gender, family makeup, socioeconomic status, ethnic origin, appearance (Caucasian, racialized people, etc.), and so on
- develop pride and enhance their ability to help build collective knowledge and messages that can influence decision-making in their community and that will have an impact on their quality of life and that of others

A *Photovoice* project thus promotes the development of solidarity and action through the creation of collective messages that decision-makers can see and hear. Ultimately, these messages aim to generate social change.

### What the research shows

A *Photovoice* experience is a research method consistent with the broader family of participatory action research (Carlson, Engebretson, and Chamberlain, 2006; Goo Kuratani and Lai, 2011). It was developed by Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris (1997). In this method, participants take part in the entire research process (from the definition of the research subject to the dissemination of the results). They are active agents in the construction of knowledge, and the people in support roles serve as facilitators. When the people involved are at the centre of the research (rather than considered as mere sources of information), results are produced on two levels. First, the method fosters awareness of the strengths, limitations, and challenges encountered in the community. It also allows for the production of "content," knowledge about a subject being studied. The process of creating a collective message and the message itself become tools to promote concrete actions that will improve the lives of participants.

## 2 Establishing an action plan to carry out a *Photovoice* project



In this section, we offer advice to help you plan your *Photovoice* project. This advice is designed to serve as a support point, as such an approach can take several forms. It must be tailored to the needs and realities of the participants, as well as those of the organization supporting the project.

### **ESTABLISHING THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The goals of a *Photovoice* project reflect a desire to create social changes that promote well-being for all in our communities and a quest for social justice. Depending on the mission of your organization or your group, it may involve raising public awareness, influencing decision-makers, establishing enabling conditions to prioritize and carry out actions, and so on. Your goal reaffirms the purpose of everything you're doing.

The general objective of such an approach is to help a group of people speak up individually and collectively on a subject that concerns them. So the first step is to identify who you want to bring together for this experience and what these people have in common. Secondly, when deciding on a topic, it is important to target something that people have a specific interest in. Throughout the meetings, participants will be able to pinpoint together the topics they want to address.

### **Facilitation**

The main facilitation question put to the participants to guide their discussions and their photos helps make the subject in your overall objective clear, concrete, and specific. This question could be very simple and directly relate to the personal experiences of the participants. Their reflections allow the subject to emerge in diverse ways, and additional sub-questions can be introduced

as needed. As the method encourages participants to speak up, this question could also lead to an aspect related to transmission. The question could even focus specifically on transmission. For example: *What do you want to communicate or convey, through your photos and your messages on [the subject of your project]?*

Take all the time necessary to specify your subject and your main facilitation question. Don't hesitate to test your main question with a few people who have not participated until now in your preparations.



### A LOOK AT THE *OPTIQUE FAMILLES* EXPERIENCE

In the context of *Optique Familles*, the aim was to have decision-makers recognize the quality of the practices developed by family resource centres (FRCs) and to ensure that these centres are better supported. The general objective was twofold:

- represent parents' individual and collective perspectives and reflections on their experiences with FRCs and autonomous community action for and with families (ACAF)
- better recognize and value what parents can generate among themselves ("parent togetherness" and "family togetherness") when they have the opportunity to reflect together

To cover both the exercise of taking photos and the parents' points of view, the initiative became known as *Optique Familles*. The people who made up the groups were parents who visited FRCs, and the main facilitation question put to them was: *How do you as a parent, as a family, benefit from visiting [name of their FRC]?* The sub-questions were: *What do you experience in your family resource centre?* and *What do you do, feel, and observe there?*

### Who are the messages that emerge aimed at?

Although the reflections on this subject will be specified later, now is the time to target the "audiences" that you want to educate or challenge. Is it the participants themselves, the people who experience the same realities as them, those they are in contact with (family members, community members, networks of support specialists, etc.), managers of the services they use, public policy makers, the media, politicians, and the like? Along the way, you will identify audiences you hadn't thought about until now.

### Naming your project

In addition to a conventional title (which often summarizes the general objective and the method used to achieve it), it can also be useful to give your project a more evocative name, such as a slogan. That will facilitate communication activities with participants.

## PLANNING THE ACTIONS

### Establishing the timeline and resource needs

A *Photovoice* project is designed to be simple and accessible, but it still requires investment in terms of time, know-how, and resources. We suggest taking an initial inventory of what you already have at your disposal and identifying the additional resources you'd like to have. We also provide a few support points and questions to guide you.

#### *Timeline*

This type of approach can take place over a few weeks or several months. The duration varies according to several factors: number of participant groups, complexity of the media used to display photos, breadth of the target audiences, and so on. Depending on your reality, you might want to complete the entire process in a single sequence or spread the steps over a few seasons.

### Human resources

Given the number and diversity of tasks to be performed, the project works best when it is supported by multiple people. Everyone can contribute according to their skills and availability: facilitation, logistical and technological support, financial management, communications, and so on. In addition to the organization's staff, people from the community or the research environment may also wish to contribute. For example, you may know a local photographer or photo enthusiast who can teach basic photography skills to the production team.

*Which people in your team have time to get involved and for which roles? Do you need additional collaborators and for which tasks? Who in your network (volunteers, partners, etc.) could answer the call?*



#### A LOOK AT THE *OPTIQUE FAMILLES* EXPERIENCE

For the AGORA Project, the FQOCF and CEIDEF were able to count on the financial support of Avenir d'enfants. A portion of these funds was allocated to *Optique Familles* as a participatory evaluation initiative. The participating FRCs also made a significant contribution by appointing staff members to support parents throughout the process. The facilitation of parent group meetings was handled by FQOCF staff, thus freeing up FRC people to be fully attentive to the discussions between parents. The members of the research team attended the parent meetings as observers.

### Material resources

What spaces and equipment do you already have, or which would be available free of charge or at low cost through your partners? Photographic equipment can be obtained inexpensively (see "Selecting and developing support and facilitation tools" on page 16). Do participants need help getting to the meeting location? Do you already have specific plans for disseminating the participants' photos and write-ups? Are you aiming for dissemination in electronic format only or do you also plan to create an exhibition with enlarged photos and write-ups on physical media? In this case, what type of media are you considering?

### Financial resources

What financial resources do you have for the project? Which funders, partners, or sponsors could contribute?

#### Specifying the guidelines for recruiting participants

The nature of the project and the characteristics of the people whose voices you want to amplify will guide the selection criteria for participants. It is important to represent the various profiles found in the community: gender, age, ethnic origin, socioeconomic resources, etc.

As for the size of the group, we recommend no more than 6 to 10 participants. This will give everyone time to present their photos and allows time for discussion.



#### A LOOK AT THE *OPTIQUE FAMILLES* EXPERIENCE

The goal of *Optique Familles* was to highlight the contribution of FRCs to the well-being of families in Québec, and so the approach needed to cover the entire province. With that in mind, to keep the experience realistic and in line with the resources of the FQOCF and CEIDEF, its research partner, six FRCs took part. These organizations had to be located in different regions, in urban, semi-urban, and rural areas, and also in a variety of socioeconomic environments. The goal was to have a group of parents representative of the diversity of families who visit FRCs in Québec. The approach was thus able to bring together mothers and fathers with diverse profiles in terms of their children's ages, ethnic origins, family composition (nuclear families, single-parent families, blended families), income, etc.

## Planning the outline for the meetings

Meetings within the framework of a *Photovoice* project follow a simple outline. We suggest holding three meetings:

- First meeting: presentation of the main ideas behind the approach and an initial exploration of the subject
- Second meeting: discussion on the photos taken by participants and how to group them by theme
- Third meeting: discussion among the participants on their write-ups, topic identification based on keywords specified by the parents, and introduction of a call to action

The proposed duration of each meeting is three hours. Ideally, allow two weeks between the first and second meetings so that participants have time to get ideas for photos. Allow the same amount of time between the second and third meetings so that participants have enough time to write their pieces. How much support participants need for taking photos and writing their pieces will vary according to their skills and confidence in these types of exercises.

Pages 18 to 31 provide facilitation frameworks for each meeting. These frameworks correspond to an approach where in the second meeting, each participant will be invited to present two of their photos. It has been determined that two photos is the best number for a group of up to 10 participants. Per our suggested meeting outline, all participants should present their photos at the same meeting (the second). If each participant presents more photos, you will need to plan for a longer meeting. In the case of an approach designed to support participants in sharing highly emotional experiences, the frameworks are more suitable for groups of up to six people. It is important to give each participant enough time to present their photos, tell the story behind each one (why did they take it and how does it relate to the topic, according to them?), and hear what comes to mind for others.

These frameworks are also tailored to situations where ahead of the third meeting, each participant will be invited to produce a write-up for one of their photos. If you want to invite the participants to produce more write-ups, you will need to allow more time between the second and third meetings, in addition to planning a longer third meeting. Listening to the write-ups requires more concentration than a spontaneous oral presentation. Each participant must have enough time to read their pieces and hear others' reflections on them.

## Holding an initial brainstorming exercise for how to share photos and write-ups



Although the most concrete ideas take shape along the way, it is useful to start thinking about how the photos and write-ups will be disseminated.

This exercise ties in with work on identifying the objectives of the approach and the audiences you want to reach. It also allows you to think ahead and target when and where you want participants to present their photos and write-ups. These ideas will create a foundation for communication strategies and will thus guide the leaders towards certain types of physical or electronic media (depending on the budget, these might be a graphic summary distributed in PDF format, self-supporting structures, or photos printed by the facilitators and pasted on cardboard). For all actions related to the dissemination of photos and write-ups, see pages 33 to 36.

## Planning the collection of new knowledge and the evaluation of actions

A *Photovoice* approach is an opportunity to create a body of new knowledge that the photos and write-ups have brought to light. This new knowledge is also co-constructed by all the people involved in the approach and at every stage. The knowledge can be related to the subject of the approach, and it can be used to document the implementation of such an approach. It involves attentive facilitation during all participant discussions, along with formal evaluation of how the approach is implemented, how it unfolds, and what it produces.

All the people involved (participants themselves, creators, managers, facilitators, and support persons) are encouraged to keep their observations and reflections in mind throughout the process. From a reflective practice and participatory evaluation standpoint, this knowledge can be collected through various processes: participant feedback at the end of a meeting, facilitator wrap-ups, logbooks kept by facilitators and support staff, debriefing meetings, recap exercises, etc.

These reflective practices will allow you to adjust your actions to the realities of the participants and the organization to ensure that the objectives will be achieved. Adjustment experiences will themselves be a source of new knowledge on a *Photovoice* approach and, more broadly, on complementary approaches that encourage individuals and groups to speak up.



### A LOOK AT THE *OPTIQUE FAMILLES* EXPERIENCE

It was the CEIDEF researchers who introduced the FQOCF to the *Photovoice* method and the great potential it would have for learning how parents view FRC practices. In addition to their contributions in the development of support and facilitation tools, the researchers also led the way in developing ways to collect and analyze data. These actions were part of the participatory evaluation plan for the AGORA Project. These data collection and analysis methods are described in the evaluation report of Phase 2 of the AGORA Project (Lacharité, Gagnier, et al., 2019).



# 3 Implementing support



Even before you start recruiting participants and facilitating the meetings, support must be put in place and logistical actions should be planned. Here are some examples. They can be adapted to the aims and context of your approach.

## **BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH THE REALITIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND WITH THE CONTEXT OF THE APPROACH**

Whether or not you are familiar with the realities experienced by the participants, when you get ready to facilitate a *Photovoice* approach, you need to explore the various facets of their realities and aspirations. You could do this by drawing on interviews with people who share the same realities, by reading testimonials, and so on.

You also need a good understanding of the specific context for the approach. Each person on the team should know:

- where the idea to carry out the *Photovoice* approach came from, and whose idea it was
- what type of connections participants already have with the organization carrying out the approach
- how the participants are connected, if at all (do they already know each other?)
- how much photography experience the participants have (is it their first time taking photos, for most of them?)
- etc.

## ACQUIRING THE BASICS OF THE REFLECTIVE FACILITATION APPROACH<sup>1</sup>

A *Photovoice* approach is based on “reflective” facilitation. This type of approach provides a space and time for listening, respect, sharing, pooling experience and knowledge, and recognizing the importance of everyone’s contributions. The pooling of these experiences and knowledge is supported in a way that encourages individual and collective reflection.

Great care is given to the time, the place, the posture of the facilitators, the formulation of questions, and the formal and informal aspects of life experiences in a group.

### Time

Although the meetings must be limited in time, the facilitation framework will take into account that participants need time to open up and be comfortable speaking out, especially if they did not already know each other or the facilitators. At certain points in the discussion, the level of interest might be higher than anticipated. The facilitation frameworks must therefore be flexible.

### Space

The care taken in the choice and layout of spaces is designed to make participants feel comfortable to turn up and join the discussion. If the premises chosen by the organization are not familiar to the participants, facilitators should provide things like directional signs and make sure attendees feel immediately welcome.

### Roles and postures of the facilitators

Leading a *Photovoice* session involves taking a close look at what the participants saw through the camera lens and being attentive to what everyone notices in the photos presented. In this way, the leaders are facilitators and support people. As facilitators, they support participants in expressing what they experience, feel, and think, and in being open to and listening to what others say. They also support participants throughout the approach, including support for the more technical work of taking and sharing photos, as well as the work involved in producing the write-ups.

### Their posture is one of:

- being welcoming and open to the diversity of each person’s experiences, emotions, and opinions and to the facilitation situations that arise
- acting as custodians of the intentions and objectives expressed collectively by participants
- being flexible (following the pace of the group, modifying the framework during the meeting, etc.)
- trusting in the wealth of experience and knowledge and in the individual and collective strengths of the people in the group
- being full members of the group

Given the number and diversity of tasks involved in a *Photovoice* approach, it will be easier to carry out if more than one person is responsible for facilitation. Co-facilitation provides more support to participants. It also spurs a reflective dialogue that lets people take a step back from facilitation situations that may arise. Moreover, it helps people remember what was discussed in the meetings.

### Reflective questions

Besides the main reflective question, which will guide the entire process (as mentioned on pages 7 and 8 of this guide, this question invites participants to state what they wish to convey in relation to the subject of the approach), the facilitators will have in reserve open-ended questions to support discussion, connect the experiences shared by the participants, dig deeper on an idea, or help everyone take a step back from certain issues they observe in their environment. With the goal of pooling knowledge within the group, these open-ended questions will be:

- support questions to help participants describe what’s happening in a story, an observation, etc.
- follow-up questions to help identify the connections between experiences, ways of doing things, challenges, living and action conditions, etc.

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1. The principles of reflective facilitation are presented in more detail in the document “Basics on Reflective Facilitation in Communities of Practice on Autonomous Community Action for and with Families.” This tool is part of the *Reference and Facilitation Toolkit on Autonomous Community Action for and with Families*, published by the FQOCF (2023).

Although some questions can be prepared beforehand, support and follow-up questions will have to be adapted to the group dynamics, but also to the narratives and observations of the participants.

### Formal and informal aspects

The care taken at formal and informal moments during a facilitated meeting allows for the creation and maintenance of a respectful, productive, and friendly atmosphere. The formal aspects help everyone situate themselves in the process of the approach and not lose sight of the goals and objectives. The informal aspects



### A LOOK AT THE *OPTIQUE FAMILLES* EXPERIENCE

Although the parents who participated in the *Optique Familles* initiative visited the same organization, they didn't necessarily already know each other. In line with the objectives of *Optique Familles* and the mission of the FRCs, the implementation team and participating organizations wanted parents to be able to easily forge ties. Their goal was for the strength of "parent togetherness" and "family togetherness" to fully develop and be meaningfully expressed. From the beginning of the planning process, time for a group meal was factored into the meetings, in addition to snack time. The value of such an informal event has long been recognized in FRCs (as demonstrated in the care they take when setting up the kitchen as a gathering space).

Each participating FRC carefully planned the meal by drawing on ways of doing things that have proven successful with the parents they support: menu and supplier selection, organization of spaces, etc. In most FRCs, members of staff assigned to the meetings cooked parts of the meal themselves. Some of these FRCs have also integrated meal preparation into their group cooking activities, and the *Optique Familles* component is enriched by these other opportunities that showcase how much can be achieved when parents come together. In several FRCs, hosting a meal also demonstrates concrete support for families facing financial insecurity.

allow everyone to feel they can exercise free speech. They also make it possible to capture the richness of spontaneous dialogue and significantly strengthen the connections between the people involved in the process.



### IMPLEMENTING RESOURCES TO SUPPORT PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT AND ENSURE A WARM WELCOME

Involvement in a *Photovoice* approach requires significant personal effort from participants. In order for them to really get involved, the support they might need can take various forms, besides offering a snack or a meal: drop-in daycare or reimbursement of childcare costs, help with transportation, etc.

Based on the perceived needs, the objectives of your approach, and the resources available, it's important to plan for the implementation of possible support measures.

### IMPLEMENTING ETHICS AND CONFIDENTIALITY GUIDELINES

Given that one of the objectives of a *Photovoice* approach is to help a group of people speak up in public, it's important to discuss certain guidelines with the participants.



## A LOOK AT THE *OPTIQUE FAMILLES* EXPERIENCE

In addition to a snack and a meal at each meeting, several support measures were put in place to facilitate parent engagement during the *Optique Familles* process. Each FRC received the same financial contribution from the FQOCF, but they made their own decisions in terms of support methods based on the specific needs of their group of parents.

An on-site drop-in daycare was the first childcare option offered to parents by each of the six FRCs. This was the first option offered because having the children nearby made it a family-friendly experience. It also made it possible for the children to participate in the group meal. The desire to make this a family experience was consistent with the objectives of a *Photovoice* approach, fully in line with the mission of an FRC. Five of the six parent groups opted for the drop-in daycare. The sixth group preferred reimbursement of childcare expenses because the meetings took place in the evening. The facilitation framework also gave parents the option of having their toddlers with them. Some parents chose to do that.

In one FRC, taxi fares were reimbursed. In recognition of their efforts throughout the process, and aware of the tough financial realities faced by families in the community, one organization gave each parent a grocery store gift card at the end of the final meeting.

Some of these guidelines will be about taking and sharing photos. Laws and ethical guidelines aim to ensure respect for the rights of individuals. A document in the appendix summarizes the main rights and responsibilities of people taking the photos and people being photographed. A sample consent form for the distribution of a photo is also available.

Similarly, certain safeguards must be put in place to reassure participants that what they say in confidence will remain confidential. When you take notes during the meetings, you'll need to tell participants about the purpose of note-taking and how your notes will be used (with their prior agreement, of course). If researchers are involved in the process, they have specific ethics rules to follow, set by their institution.

## SELECTING AND DEVELOPING SUPPORT AND FACILITATION TOOLS



Once the planning has been finalized, the main features of the approach can be set out in a reference sheet: goals, objectives, main subject of the approach, brief description of how it started and who supports it, information on what the participants will actually do and on the support methods offered, description of audiences to whom the photos and write-ups will be presented, schedule of events, etc. Content can be taken from this sheet and used in a tool for seeking funds, recruiting participants, promoting the project, and so on.

The implementation of a *Photovoice* approach involves several other logistical steps for the facilitation part of the meetings. You'll need to:

- make the necessary purchases and gather the facilitation materials (lists are available on pages 18, 20, 25, and 29)
- select the photography equipment and set up the technical support that will be offered to participants (see the *Photography equipment for participants* box)
- decide how the participants will present their photos to each other (If your budget allows, we recommend that you print each one in colour on letter-size paper. Photocopying centres offer this service at low cost.)
- prepare the meeting facilitation framework (customizable versions are available on pages 18 to 31)
- prepare the other documents to be given to the participants, for example a reference sheet with photography tips and tricks (which, through the photos displayed, also takes into account the characteristics of the group and its cultural references), suggestions for books and websites on the basics of photography (suggestions are offered in the bibliography)
- prepare the tools to record the content of discussion among participants and other components of the experience (a tool to record participants' comments about the photos is suggested in the appendix)
- prepare the consent forms for the dissemination of photos (a template is suggested in the appendix)



## PHOTOGRAPHY EQUIPMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

You probably won't need to purchase (or borrow) a large number of cameras, as most adults now have access to a high-performance camera on their cell phones. The vast majority of these devices, even bottom-of-the-line phones or ones that are a few years old, have a photo sensor of eight megapixels or more.

The photos taken using these devices can be enlarged beyond 8.5 × 11 inches without any problems.

To verify that a participant's cell phone has a sensor of at least eight megapixels, check the device specifications (this information can be found on the Internet using the brand and model of the phone as keywords).

If participants also have a camera and the number of pixels is similar to their cell phone, encourage them to use the camera.

See also the box on page 24 for technical advice on transferring photos.

## 4 Carrying out the project



The support points and tools mentioned in this section are designed to be adaptable to the goals, practices, and realities of the organization in charge and the people who will participate.

### RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

Once you've put your know-how and your various networks of collaborators to work for the recruitment of participants (direct solicitation, mailing lists, social media, etc.), you can nurture connections with interested people in various ways. Talk to them in person about the main features of the meetings as well as the type of commitment required from them and what the organization in charge will offer (particularly in terms of practical support: transportation, daycare, etc.).

Once people have agreed to participate:

- share the main logistical information about the meetings: dates, times, places, etc.
- check whether they already have a device to take photos. If they do, note the camera or cell phone brand and model and ask them to bring it to the first meeting (see the box on page 16)

Depending on the realities of the participants, you might want to send a reminder a few days before the first meeting to confirm that they will be present and provide them with the main logistical information.



## A LOOK AT THE *OPTIQUE FAMILLES* EXPERIENCE

To help with recruitment, the FQOCF provided each FRC with a reference sheet briefly describing the objectives and main steps in the process. The six FRCs recruited a total of 53 parents. Of these, 51 participated in all stages of the process (43 mothers, 7 fathers, and 1 grandfather). The size of the groups varied between 6 and 10 participants, depending on the FRC. The composition of the groups reflected diverse parent profiles in terms of the ages of their children, ethnic origins, family composition (nuclear families, single-parent families, blended families), income, etc.

## FACILITATING THE MEETINGS

The facilitation experience is made up of time spent in group meetings and time spent assisting participants with photography and write-ups. The support points and facilitation frameworks suggested in this section can be adapted to the objectives and context of each *Photovoice* approach. They can also be tailored to the characteristics of the group and the cultural practices of the participants.

### Common elements for each meeting

Listed here are the materials and steps common to each meeting (general preparations, greeting participants, words of welcome and farewell, etc.).

#### General materials

- List of participants with the specifications of their device for taking photos
- Attendance sheet that can also serve as a consent form for taking notes during the discussions and taking photos during the meeting
- Materials to show what your organization does (related to the theme of the meeting or highlighting the initiative from which your project is derived)

- Tools to create a record of what was discussed and what happened at the meeting:
  - Notepad and logbook
  - Tool to take notes of participants' comments on the photos (a template is available in the appendix)
  - Camera
  - Recording device (optional)
- Facilitation support materials (board, pencils, paper, sticky putty, etc.)

#### Preparation

Depending on the characteristics of the meeting space:

- Arrange discussion areas, areas for snacks (and meals, if applicable), and spaces for any other services (e.g., drop-in daycare)
- Set up signs so that participants can easily find the meeting place, etc.

#### Welcoming participants

- Welcome participants in a spirit of appreciation and enjoyment (this will help create an inclusive and dynamic space for reflection)
- Invite participants to settle in comfortably
- Take advantage of the relationship-building opportunities this informal setting creates
- Present and circulate the attendance sheet (if applicable, explain that it also serves as a consent form for you to photograph the participants and record the discussions)

#### Words of welcome

- Introduce yourself and welcome everyone to the meeting
- Thank the participants for coming and thank the other organizations involved in the process, if applicable
- Present the general objective of the approach (restate this objective at each meeting and specify progress made towards meeting the objective)
- Present the outline of the meeting

### *Activities specific to the meeting*

These components are presented on the following pages. At various times during the meetings, take photos of participants in action (if the context ethically allows).

### *Meeting recap, evaluation, and wrap-up*

- Ask participants to summarize their experience of the meeting (if time is limited, you can ask each participant to summarize their experience in one word)
- Do farewells

- Remain available for questions that participants may have and take advantage of the relationship-building opportunities that this informal context creates

### *Feedback on the experience*

Take a moment within the team to:

- go over the main knowledge and experiences shared by the participants
- share observations on the facilitation experience (as new knowledge in facilitation and to guide the next meeting)



## FIRST GROUP MEETING WITH PARTICIPANTS

### General objective

- Help [term identifying the group of people who are participating] speak up individually and collectively on [your subject] in order to have an effect [on... or in... or with... ].

### Specific objectives of the meeting

- Present the approach and start an initial discussion.
- Get to know each other and encourage the participants to forge connections.
- Support participants in mastering a few photography tips and in beginning a personal and creative exploration of moments and places they could photograph in connection with the theme.

### Meeting-specific materials

See also the list of general materials on page 18.

- Cameras to be lent to participants (according to the needs of the group)
- Copies of a reference sheet explaining the process (optional)
- A few printed photos as examples of various strategies for the photography component (optional)
- Examples of consent forms for sharing photos (a template is provided in the appendix)
- Copies of the suggested meeting outline (optional)

OUTLINE	TO GUIDE FACILITATION
<p>The time for each activity and the times for breaks can be set according to each group.</p>	
<p><b>Greeting and word of welcome</b></p>	
<p><b>Anchoring activity or icebreaker</b>            To allow everyone to introduce themselves and get to know all the people in the group, invite each participant to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-say their name</li> <li>-answer a question related to the context of the approach</li> </ul>	<p>The idea is to ask a simple question, related to the approach, which participants can answer in a few words or with a short narrative. Here are two examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<i>How long have you known about the organization?</i></li> <li>-<i>Do you remember the very first camera you held in your hands?</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Presentation of the approach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Present the theme and the outline, as well as the role of the people involved.</li> <li>□ Indicate that the goal is to be able to develop, with the participants, narratives based on their perspectives and words.</li> <li>□ Specify the intended audience for the photos and write-ups that will be produced by the participants (if the audience has already been identified).</li> <li>□ Indicate which note-taking method you plan to use to keep a record of the discussions and the overall experience.</li> </ul>	<p>If a reference sheet describing the approach has been produced, distribute it to participants.</p>

OUTLINE	TO GUIDE FACILITATION
<p><b>Exploration of the theme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Invite each participant to share why they accepted the invitation to participate in this photo-taking experience.</li> <li>□ Invite participants to answer one or two questions to further explore some aspects of their experiences related to the theme.</li> <li>□ Summarize the various experiences and perspectives expressed. For keywords, use what participants said.</li> <li>□ Emphasize that these experiences and perspectives are all possibilities for photo subjects.</li> </ul>	<p>This part of the meeting allows participants to clarify and take ownership of the theme.</p> <p>Questions to further explore some aspects of the participants' experience related to the theme (and, if relevant, related to the organization in charge) might focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-what they do, feel, and observe</li> <li>-what is important for them</li> <li>-etc.</li> </ul> <p>The use of participants' words in the summary stresses how important their views and perspectives are. It also demonstrates the facilitators' commitment to ensure that their photos and write-ups are seen and read.</p>
<p><b>Invitation to become a photographer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Tell participants that they are invited to act as a photographer and that you suggest they approach this activity spontaneously without putting themselves under pressure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Remind them that we have all already had photo-taking experiences and encourage participants to share examples spontaneously.</li> <li>-Point out that the majority of participants already have a high-quality camera on their cell phone (and mention the resources that can be made available to them if the photo sensor of their cell phone or camera has less than eight megapixels).</li> </ul> </li> <li>□ Share some tips and tricks on taking photos (basic camera settings, angles, composition, lighting, etc.) and mention that these are support points and not instructions to be followed to the letter. If you have one, hand out and review a reference sheet with photography tips and tricks.</li> <li>□ Discuss the situations (places, moments, presence of certain people, etc.) where each person would like to take photos to create a testimonial of their experiences related to the theme.</li> <li>□ Mention that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-they are encouraged to take photos based on what has meaning for them</li> <li>-it is not about taking perfect photos</li> <li>-the important thing is to take new photos and not use photos they've already taken</li> </ul> </li> <li>□ Tell the participants about the help available to them during the photography component.</li> </ul>	<p>In particular, this part of the meeting is an opportunity to check what participants know about photography and to offer them some basics.</p> <p>The approach used by the facilitators highlights that everyone has some experience with taking photos and that you don't have to be a professional to take meaningful photos. The facilitators must make sure that participants don't feel they are in a contest for the best photo.</p> <p>Numerous books and websites offer basic photography tips, including examples of various styles and contexts for taking photos.</p> <p>If not done beforehand, the facilitators should check that the participants' cell phones are set to the maximum megapixels allowed by their photo sensor (on most phones, this information is visible when opening the settings window from the "Camera" application). See also <i>Photography equipment for participants</i> on page 16 of this guide.</p>

OUTLINE	TO GUIDE FACILITATION
<p><b>Discussion on photography ethics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Using the suggested questions below, draw on the experiences and knowledge of the participants to discuss the ethical principles that must be followed when taking photos: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What should we be careful about when we want to approach someone and take a picture of them?</li> <li>-What kinds of situations or images are sensitive?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Summarize by reminding participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ to ask permission from people before photographing them</li> <li>□ to put themselves in the place of the person they want to photograph (<i>Would I be comfortable being photographed in this situation?</i>)</li> <li>□ that there may be more sensitive situations that the participants want to photograph and that, in such cases, it is important to establish a relationship of trust and a dialogue to help people understand your intention and feel that you will respect their decision to agree to being photographed or not</li> <li>□ to accept being told “no, I do not want to be photographed,” whatever the reason</li> <li>□ that the people who appear in the photos that will be shared publicly will be contacted to obtain their consent (because it is not legal to publicly share a person’s image without their consent)</li> </ul>	<p>A document in the appendix explains the legal and ethical guidelines for taking and releasing photos.</p> <p>So that participants can explain to other people why they are taking photos, suggest they use the reference sheet describing the process, if you have prepared one.</p>
<p><b>Presentation of the other steps in the process and instructions for the coming weeks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Present what they need to do before the second meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-take photos on the theme over the next two weeks (or longer, depending on the schedule)</li> <li>-select two of their photos to present at the next meeting and decide on a title for each</li> <li>-send the two photos to the facilitators (in electronic format)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>By taking several photos of the same subject, participants are more likely to end up with a photo that best matches what they want to express. Remind the participants that the point of this tip is to give them confidence and to present the exercise again as a game, as an experience to be mastered.</p> <p>To limit the risks of a drop in quality when the photos are shared, we’ve put together some advice in a box at the end of the meeting framework.</p>

OUTLINE	TO GUIDE FACILITATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Explain briefly to the participants that at the second meeting:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-their two photos will have been printed by the facilitators (or put on another chosen medium)</li> <li>-they will present their two photos themselves to the group and participate in a discussion about the insights sparked by the photos as a whole</li> </ul> </li> <li>□ Explain to the participants that at the third meeting, they will be asked to write a short piece on one of their two photos and that they will have two weeks to do so (or longer, depending on the schedule).</li> <li>□ Tell the participants that at the third meeting, they will be asked to read what they wrote about one of their two photos and that there will be a discussion on the insights sparked by all the pieces collectively.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Other questions</b></p> <p>Check with participants to see if they still have any questions or concerns.</p>	
<p><b>Meeting recap, evaluation, and wrap-up</b></p>	
<p><b>Follow-up in anticipation of the second meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Support participants in taking and sharing photos:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-be available to answer their questions, to reassure them</li> <li>-give reminders to make sure everything goes well</li> <li>-if appropriate, suggest going with them at certain times and to certain places</li> <li>-contact them to agree on a way to share the photos</li> <li>-group the photo files in folders with the names of each participant</li> <li>-print the photos</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Support needs will likely be different from one participant to another. Some will be comfortable in the photo-taking exercise, but may need support with sharing their photos. Others might be worried about being a nuisance in the places and at the times when they want to take the photos. Some might describe their photos as insignificant or downplay what they took. In each case, it's important to acknowledge the participant's efforts, to support them in their attempts to find the right kind of photo to take, and to remind them that it's not a photo contest.</p> <p>We suggest you print the photos (enlarged to 8.5 × 11 inches) to facilitate discussion and theme building during the second and third meetings. The print quality on a home printer is quite sufficient.</p>

**To limit the risks of a loss of quality when photos are shared**

It is likely that participants who use a cell phone will want to share their photos through Facebook. Although Facebook makes it easy to share photo files, it greatly reduces their size. There is a significant loss of quality, and the enlargement potential is therefore much more limited.

The best way is to ask participants to transfer the photos to a computer and then send them by email or in a USB drive. If a participant doesn't have an email address or easy access to a computer, they can submit their photos through Facebook, but they must then make sure they select the option that keeps the original file size.



## SECOND GROUP MEETING WITH PARTICIPANTS

### General objective

- Help [term identifying the group of people who are participating] speak up individually and collectively on [your subject] in order to have an effect [on... or in... or with... ].

### Specific objectives of the meeting

- Share participants' observations on what they learned when they took a close look at a subject, a situation.
- Support the participants in expressing what they want to convey through their photos.
- Guide a collective and thoughtful discussion on each person's observations about what they are experiencing and discovering in connection with the general theme.
- Explore the effect of the approach on the participants following the discussions about the photos.
- To the extent possible, provide the conditions to support participants in writing a short piece about one of their two photos for the next meeting.

### Meeting-specific materials

See also the list of general materials on page 18.

- Photos taken by the participants (materials needed depending on the chosen medium)
- Copies of the *Table for participants' comments on the photos* (an example is provided in the appendix)
- Examples of consent forms for sharing photos (a template is provided in the appendix)
- Blank sheets for theme building
- Copies of the suggested meeting outline (optional)



OUTLINE	TO GUIDE FACILITATION
<p>The time for each activity and the times for breaks can be set according to each group.</p>	
<p><b>Specific preparations</b></p> <p>Plan a strategy for the presentation of photos adapted to the context, the facilitation preferences, and the chosen medium for displaying the photos.</p>	<p>We suggest you keep what's shown in the photos out of view of the participants when they arrive. Then you can plan a special reveal later on. If the photos are printed on paper, for example, you can put them face down on the table somewhere in the room.</p>
<p><b>Greeting and word of welcome</b></p>	<p>In this case, you can tell the participants that the photos will be revealed later during the meeting.</p>

OUTLINE	TO GUIDE FACILITATION
<p><b>Feedback on the photography experience</b></p> <p>Invite participants to take turns sharing their experiences based on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What has it been like for you to take photos in the past few weeks?</li> <li>-What was your experience like as a photographer?</li> <li>-Was it what you expected?</li> </ul>	<p>These questions allow you to explore what effect this part of a <i>Photovoice</i> experience has on the participants.</p>
<p><b>First collective discussion on the photos</b></p> <p>This part of the framework suggests a facilitation approach in which the photos have been printed on paper and will be displayed to the participants all at once.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Invite the participants to gather around the area where the photos have been placed and reveal them all at the same time.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask the participants to take a moment to look, in silence, at each of the photos. This moment of silence should last about five minutes.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Invite the participants to share their first impressions of what these photos evoke in them, overall.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask the participants to pick up their own photos and take a seat, so each person can present their work.</li> </ul>	<p>After the period of silence, you might also suggest that participants casually share their observations with the people nearby. In this case, you should still plan for a group discussion, but it will be shorter.</p>
<p><b>Presentation of each photo</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask a first participant to present one of their two photos and state the title (if they don't have a title yet, let them know that they can add it later).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>What is your photo about? Of all the photos you took, why did you decide to present this one? What does this represent for you? Did this photography exercise encourage you to take a look at something specific related to the subject of the project?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Drawing on the questions below, invite the other participants to share their observations on the photo presented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>What do you see in this photo? What do you think about when you look at it? What is happening in this image?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Repeat the same presentation and discussion sequence for each participant's first and second photos.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conclude this part of the meeting by asking each participant to write (on the print of their photo or elsewhere) the title they have chosen for each of their two photos.</li> </ul>	<p>A tool to help you take notes on the participants' comments about the photos can be found in the appendix.</p> <p>After all the participants have presented their first photo, it might be a good time to take a break.</p> <p>The titles may change over time. The important thing for participants is that they embark on a process to put into words what they experience and observe in relation to the theme.</p>

OUTLINE	TO GUIDE FACILITATION
<p><b>Theme building</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Invite participants to place all their photos on the same table.</li> <li>□ Ask the participants to group together the photos that they feel have common elements. Tell them that if they like, they can move them around to illustrate other common elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-ask the participants which word, theme, or expression best describes what the grouped photos have in common</li> <li>-for each group of photos, write on a sheet the keywords (themes) the participants come up with and place it near these photos</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>As a form of collective conceptualization, a theme-building exercise allows everyone involved to describe the shared experiences and observations, identify how they are connected, and highlight their meaning and significance.</p> <p>To help create a record of this discussion, photograph the photo sets with the keywords.</p>
<p><b>Reminder of the upcoming steps in the process and instructions for the next few weeks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Invite each participant to write a short piece over the next two weeks (or longer, depending on your schedule) to describe what one of their two photos represents.</li> <li>□ Reassure the participants that they are encouraged to write in their own way (they can use a poetic style or an oral style, etc.) and that they do not have to have perfect spelling or grammar.</li> <li>□ Mutually agree on how the participants will send you their write-up.</li> <li>□ Briefly explain that at the third meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-the participants will read their piece to the group and that there will be a discussion on what insights the write-ups spark, individually and as a whole</li> <li>-you will share information to clarify what happens next (obtaining consent to share their photos, the networks where their work will be showcased, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Many people who are not comfortable with a writing activity can still be understood when they express themselves in writing. The important thing is that they feel their right to express themselves in writing in their own way has been recognized (for example, they might find this exercise more enjoyable if poetic writing is an option). You can also explain that their writing will be lightly edited later, but only for spelling and grammar. The point of all these details is to allow participants to engage positively in the writing exercise and to limit the anxiety it might cause them.</p> <p>With a multicultural group, it might be interesting to give people the opportunity to write both in their native language and in the language in which the project is being conducted.</p> <p>It is likely that participants will ask to take their printed photos home. They will have to bring them back at the next meeting, when they present their write-up.</p>
<p><b>Other questions</b></p> <p>Check with participants to see if they still have any questions or concerns.</p>	
<p><b>Meeting recap, evaluation, and wrap-up</b></p>	

## OUTLINE

### Follow-up in anticipation of the third meeting

- Help the participants draft and send in their write-ups:
  - be available to answer their questions, to reassure them
  - give reminders to make sure everything goes well
  - if necessary, offer to help them compose (or translate, where applicable) their piece
  - contact them to agree on how they will send in their piece in electronic format
  - place the files in separate folders with the name of each participant
  - print out their work (if necessary)
  - prepare the consent forms for the publication of photos (ready for participants to sign at the third meeting and ready to be signed by the people who are recognizable in the photos)

## TO GUIDE FACILITATION

The support needs will likely differ from one participant to another depending on whether they are familiar with written language and how confident they are about their abilities. Sometimes, people who are excellent writers might downplay their work and its significance. The important thing is to recognize the efforts made by each participant, help them find the right words to express themselves, and remind them that it's not a language arts exam or a literary competition.

A sample consent form is available in the appendix (adaptable for permission from the photographer and permission from the people in the photo). The photo in question must be added to the consent form. Be sure to allow time to do that.

As for the write-ups, when an author sends in their piece, it is understood that they are giving permission for it to be released by the organization in charge. But if the piece will be used to generate a profit, more formal authorization must be obtained from the author.



## THIRD GROUP MEETING WITH PARTICIPANTS

### General objective

- Help [term identifying the group of people who are participating] speak up individually and collectively on [your subject] in order to have an effect [on... or in... or with... ].

### Specific objectives of the meeting

- Support the participants as they talk about the experience of writing a summary about their photo.
- Build confidence among participants when they read their piece and encourage the group to listen attentively.
- Guide a discussion on the different experiences and observations that the write-ups highlight.
- Continue the theme-building exercise and collective conceptualization based on these experiences and observations.
- Continue to explore the effects of the initiative on participants individually and collectively.

### Meeting-specific materials

See also the list of general materials on page 18.

- Photos taken by the participants (on the chosen medium)
- Paper printouts of the participants' write-ups
- Copies of the *Table for participants' comments on the photos*, on which the comments expressed at the previous meeting were noted
- Copies of the consent forms for the release of each photo
- Post-it sticky notes (plan on three sticky notes per participant)
- A surface to display the sticky notes
- Copies of the suggested meeting outline (optional)

OUTLINE	TO GUIDE FACILITATION
<p>The time for each activity and the times for breaks can be set according to each group.</p>	
<p><b>Specific preparations</b></p> <p>Schedule a time during the meeting for participants to sign their consent forms (for the photos) and to give them the forms to have signed by the people they photographed.</p>	
<p><b>Greeting and word of welcome</b></p>	
<p><b>Feedback on the writing experience</b></p> <p>Invite the participants to take turns talking about their experience, drawing on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What was your experience like, writing something about your photo?</li> <li>-Was it what you expected?</li> </ul>	<p>These questions allow you to explore what effect this part of a <i>Photovoice</i> experience has on the participants.</p>

OUTLINE	TO GUIDE FACILITATION
<p><b>Presentation of the write-ups and discussion</b></p> <p>Ask a first participant to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> show the group the photo they wrote about</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> read aloud the title of their photo and their write-up</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> say a few words about what comes to mind once they have read their piece: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-add their comments to the <i>Table for participants' comments on the photos</i> used for their photo at the second meeting.</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Invite the other participants to share their observations on the piece and the photo, drawing on this question: <i>Does what they wrote about their photo resonate with your own experiences or observations?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Add the comments to the <i>Table for participants' comments on the photos</i> used for each photo at the second meeting.</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Repeat the same presentation and discussion sequence for each participant's piece.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conclude this part of the meeting by asking each participant to state the title of their second photo (unless they already did so at the previous meeting).</li> </ul>	<p>This is the part of the meeting when you spend time listening to what participants wrote. To help everyone listen attentively, we suggest not handing out copies to the other participants when one person is reading.</p> <p>Unless the pieces are long, we also suggest that participants read them aloud twice. This helps the others better understand and retain the information.</p> <p>For a long piece, you might ask the reader to take a short break between each paragraph or to reread a passage that might have been harder to grasp.</p> <p>If anyone feels intimidated by reading out loud, you can remind them that it's not a public speaking contest and that it really doesn't matter if they stumble over certain words.</p>
<p><b>Theme building</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Distribute sticky notes (three per participant).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask each participant to write three words (one per sticky note) that, in their opinion, sum up the key takeaways from their own write-up and photos.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Invite the participants to read out their three words and come and add them to the display.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-to group words that are the same or similar, to connect groups of words to each other, etc.</li> <li>-whether any important words related to what they heard about the photos and write-ups are missing and, if so, ask them to add these words</li> <li>-to share their thoughts as they look at the word clusters, drawing on the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<i>What do all these words tell us?</i></li> <li>-<i>What collective messages are emerging?</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take a picture of the clusters of sticky notes.</li> </ul>	<p>The goal of this theme-building exercise is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-foster continued discussion on the different "experiences" of the participants</li> <li>-produce a collective conceptualization of the experiences and observations shared by the participants</li> </ul> <p>The thematic keywords and the links that participants establish between them can also be used to create group write-ups.</p>

OUTLINE	TO GUIDE FACILITATION
<p><b>Brainstorming on sharing the photos and write-ups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Present what you have in mind for sharing photos and write-ups, adding that the project leaders will take good care of their creative works.</li> <li>□ Ask the participants if they have other ideas and wishes regarding how they want to share their work, drawing inspiration from these questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Who do you want to send these messages to (decision-makers, people in your community, etc.)?</li> <li>-In what other places could they be displayed?</li> <li>-In what other ways could your photos and write-ups be displayed and shared?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>This is a good time to remind participants that the only alterations that will be made to their write-ups are spelling and grammar corrections. Reassure them that the meaning and energy behind their writing will not be altered in any way.</p>
<p><b>Discussion on the overall experience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Invite the participants to share their observations and reflections on how the <i>Photovoice</i> experience has affected them personally and as a group, drawing on these questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-How have you benefited from being involved in the project?</li> <li>-In what ways did taking photos help you express yourself more?</li> <li>-Did this lead you to take a look at something more specific related to the project subject?</li> <li>-How do you think these photos and meetings could benefit your group of participants (or the organization in charge, if applicable)?</li> <li>-What would you say to someone else who is invited to participate in an experience like this one?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>This discussion allows participants to reflect back, summarize their thoughts, and tie it all in with the project's objectives. This is an exercise in building meaning.</p>
<p><b>Reminder of the upcoming steps in the process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Briefly explain that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-the process of collecting consents for the photos to be shown in public will continue until you have them all</li> <li>-graphic design work will begin in anticipation of the photos and write-ups being released</li> <li>-the participants will be kept informed of the progress as well as the dates and locations where their work will be displayed</li> </ul> </li> <li>□ Invite the participants to share things they haven't already mentioned about how they (or their group) want the project to proceed from here, as well as any other questions or concerns they may have.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Meeting recap, evaluation, and wrap-up</b></p>	

## HIGHLIGHTING THE COLLECTIVE MESSAGES



As mentioned in the previous steps, there are several opportunities and tools you can use during the meetings to identify common threads among what participants want to express through their photos and write-ups. This type of theme building supports reflections that help everyone involved observe these common threads, connect them with each other, and highlight their meaning and importance.

### Feedback on theme-building exercises

In the meeting framework options offered on pages 18 to 31, two theme-building exercises are suggested to participants:

- an exercise at the end of the second meeting invites participants to formulate keywords as they group together the photos they feel have something in common
- an exercise at the end of the third meeting asks each participant to summarize in three keywords what they want people to remember about their specific photos and write-up (exercise supplemented by the development of group keywords that reflect the individual keywords)

Then all the keywords are compiled, and the most common ones are identified. Keywords that have a similar meaning can, of course, be counted together (e.g., the total associated with the keyword *joy* could include the keywords *happiness*, *laughing*, etc.).

Because participants are actively involved, these theme-building exercises will often be the main sources of the most impactful collective messages produced using the *Photovoice* method.

### Summary of the other discussions among participants

There are several other ways to supplement the identification of the main collective messages expressed by the participants, for example:

- review of the notes taken during the first meeting, when participants discussed the theme
- summary of the notes taken when participants were presenting their photos and reading their write-ups
- summarization meetings between the facilitators and support staff after each meeting
- review of the content of logbooks (or other types of tracking tools) kept by facilitators and support staff

### Identifying the audiences for the collective messages

During the theme-building exercises and summarization work, participants and other people involved will also be able to specify who they want to address with these collective messages.



### A LOOK AT THE *OPTIQUE FAMILLES* EXPERIENCE

The *Optique Familles* initiative was carried out as part of an action-research strategy and a participatory evaluation. The CEIDF researchers guided a debriefing meeting at each organization with the facilitators and the support staff who were helping the parents. A debriefing meeting with all of these people was also held. These meetings made it possible to continue with the identification of the collective messages expressed by the parents and, at the same time, to give feedback on the facilitation experience.

## AMPLIFYING PARTICIPANTS' VOICES TO DRIVE ACTION



Once the collective messages are formulated, the work of highlighting these messages and all the photos and write-ups produced by the participants begins. This exercise may also include the dissemination of people's experience with the project and the new knowledge that has emerged. As the available means and target audiences will vary from one *Photovoice* project to another, the suggestions presented in this section are to be adapted to each context.

Given that a *Photovoice* project is an initiative that supports both individual and collective expression, the recommendations here aim to highlight all the photos and write-ups produced by the participants. However, each group of participants is free to select certain photos to be more prominent. These photos can sometimes help people better explore all the photos and write-ups.

### Collecting the legal authorizations for displaying and sharing photos

As mentioned on page 22, participants own their photography work and their write-ups (unless they voluntarily assign the rights). Similarly, a person in a photo is the owner of their image. The task of collecting authorizations for public display can begin as soon as the authorization forms for the photos are ready.<sup>1</sup> Since not all the people who appear in the photos are involved in the project, you need to allow a good amount of time after the meetings to ensure that consent signatures are obtained for each photo.

1. A consent form template is provided in the appendix. It is designed so that the photo in question can be placed on it. The template can be adapted depending on whether it is for permission from the photographer or from the people appearing in the photo (including permission from the parent or guardian in the case of a child).

As for the write-ups, by handing their written piece over to the organization in charge and signing it, authors implicitly give authorization for the organization to publish it. But if the piece will be used to generate a profit or in the case of a project with particular legal characteristics, more formal authorization must be obtained from the author.



### A LOOK AT THE *OPTIQUE FAMILLES* EXPERIENCE

In *Optique Familles*, upon signing the consent form the participants granted authorization for publication without time limits and for any type of medium (the photographer participants remain the owner of their photographic works). The participants (with the help of the staff of the six FRCs) also diligently collected formal consent from all the people recognizable in their photos. There were two photographs that depicted a work of art. In each case, consent was obtained from the artists for the dissemination of the image of their work.

### Developing and implementing a dissemination plan

When you launched your *Photovoice* project, you probably already had a few ideas about when, where, and to what type of audience you could display the participants' photos and write-ups. During the meetings, participants were able to improve on aspects of this plan, and communication tasks were also carried out.

At the end of the meetings with the participants, the plan enters a phase of intense activity. You'll need to:

- formulate a main collective message that will be used as a title or slogan in the dissemination tools (a collective message that emerged during the meetings could prove more effective than the actual project title)
- continue to identify the various physical and virtual locations where photos and write-ups will be displayed, and draw up dissemination agreements with the people in charge

- come up with a schedule for dissemination
- specify the types of media that will be used for display purposes and for the dissemination of photos, write-ups, and other work resulting from the project. These media will vary according to the budget, the target audiences, and the selected locations. The work could simply be shared on a website, displayed on self-supporting structures, or shared using a combination of different methods
- edit the participants' writing:
  - regardless of the participants' writing skills, the only alterations will be spelling and grammar corrections (anything else would risk changing the meaning and energy behind their work)
  - in the case of texts that are too long for the format of certain dissemination tools, you'll need to select passages containing the main messages that each author wishes to express
- write the presentation pieces according to the needs of the various selected media
- do graphic editing on the selected media: graphic processing of photos and write-ups, etc.
- display and disseminate the work produced: preparation, electronic or physical transportation, setup and takedown, etc.
- carry out advocacy and engagement activities based on the action objectives of the participants and leaders
- implement tracking tools to measure the visibility and impact of the content

As authors of their photos and write-ups, the participants are also artisans who should be included in the development and implementation of plans for dissemination, action, and engagement. They know their community and where people come together and are influenced. They worked hard to make sure the project has positive effects on their lives and those of other people with whom they share the same realities. The process will make more sense for them if it can serve as a driver for action on an individual and collective scale.



### A LOOK AT THE *OPTIQUE FAMILLES* EXPERIENCE

While the plan for disseminating photos and write-ups from parents was being developed, it appeared that the title *Optique Familles* would not be meaningful enough for a wide audience. As the parents had regularly praised how their FRC made them feel welcome and expressed their wish that other parents could also discover the benefits, "Bienvenue chez vous!" [Welcome home!] emerged as a more suitable choice (it had also been chosen by a parent for the title of one of her photos). It was selected as the title of the exhibition and the promotional materials. When they arrive, visitors to the exhibition see a panel displaying a very large reproduction of a photo taken by a parent and by the following words: "Bienvenue chez vous! Des parents vous invitent à pousser la porte d'un organisme communautaire Famille" [Welcome home! Parents invite you to step inside a family resource centre].

Five main themes emerged from the contents of the parents' photos and write-ups and from an in-depth look at the discussions between the parents: "Welcomed with open arms," "Where you are listened to and supported," "A place of sharing," "Growing with our treasures," and "Moving forward together."

The participating FRCs, parents, and family members were able to see a sneak peek of "their" exhibition on November 12, 2017, in Québec City, the day before its official inauguration as part of a national day bringing together FRCs and their partners.

### About the physical media for displaying photos and write-ups

Several types of physical media are available for your displays. Books and exhibitions are among the most common. Both bring a great sense of pride to the participants both individually and collectively.



Because a book can have a large number of pages, it's a great way to display the collective messages as well as all the photos and the full versions of the participants' write-ups. You can choose from several different types of layout software, printing methods, and types of bindings. Some of these do-it-yourself tools provide excellent quality at low cost. A book is an effective way to share the participants' messages because it can be easily transported and distributed.

An exhibition offers an opportunity to present the photos in large format, and to make a forceful impact. You can use a wide variety of physical media. The simplest method is to use prints on cardstock or even paper, which are then grouped together on oversized boards. The services offered nowadays by photocopying centres make high-quality large-sized prints very affordable. You could also produce very large prints on self-supporting structures. Since an exhibition provides a specific context for reading the write-ups, you may sometimes need to select only excerpts from certain pieces (you can then publish the full versions in a book or notebook as a supplement to the exhibition).

For an exhibition, you can use spaces already available to the organization in charge (its own premises or premises belonging to partners). But for more exposure, the exhibition should be easily transportable and set up in places frequented by the people we are trying to reach, in order to raise awareness, inform, and educate:

- Which places do they frequent?
- What are the physical characteristics of these places (dimensions, on-site availability of display surfaces, lighting equipment, etc.)?

- What resources are available for the transportation, installation, and storage of an exhibition?

There are several tools that will help the people running a *Photovoice* project to identify physical media that are in line with their objectives and budgets, notably the practical guide *Les expositions itinérantes: guide à l'usage des gestionnaires de tournée* produced by Société des musées du Québec in 2015 and available free of charge on its website ([www.musees.qc.ca](http://www.musees.qc.ca)).

Regardless of the media chosen, it will be important to pay close attention to how the photos are processed. Even though, as recommended on page 16, the people in charge of the project have ensured that each participant had access to a device with a photo sensor of at least eight megapixels, the magnification potential of the photos could vary (for the same number of pixels, the quality of the sensors may be different from one device to another, a participant might have heavily cropped their original photo, etc.). A graphic designer can assess the enlargement potential of each photo. This will be useful both for the graphic editing work and for the selection of certain photos during strategic communication operations.

Other tools and actions can be used in conjunction with the exhibition: a reference sheet presenting the project objectives and all the people involved, a suggested route through the exhibition, facilitation activities, etc. Some of these actions can be developed over time; the experience of visitors can foster creativity among the organizers.



### A LOOK AT THE *OPTIQUE FAMILLES* EXPERIENCE

To display the parents' photos and write-ups, the FQOCF opted for prints on fabric attached to self-supporting and foldable structures. As a national organization, the FQOCF wanted the exhibition to be easy to transport and showcase at any type of venue. The FQOCF also wanted its members to be able to borrow the exhibition. The chosen type of media is part of the product range designed for promotional booths.

Each panel displays several photos and write-ups (one photo and one write-up from each parent). The eye-pleasing result was a source of pride for the participating families and FRCs, as well as all members of the FQOCF.

At the same time, the two photos and the full written piece provided by each parent were collected in a book. Copies were made to serve as a companion to the exhibition. A reference sheet for visitors was also created. To spur dialogue among visitors, questions for discussion were printed on paper and made available throughout the exhibition space.

In a second phase, a standalone version of the book was produced, and 200 copies were printed (added to this version was a short presentation of the five areas of the exhibition). It will serve as an advocacy tool for engaging targeted decision-makers.

### **Pooling and disseminating the other knowledge produced during the process**

In addition to the individual and collective messages conveyed by the participants' photos and write-ups, *Photovoice* projects generate a high volume of knowledge. This knowledge might be about the realities experienced by the participants or even stem from the experience of running the project (knowledge developed on facilitating meetings, on implementing individual and collective actions resulting from the messages formulated by the participants, etc.). Whether or not it stems from a formal action-research or participatory evaluation process, this knowledge has great value and may be of interest to audiences in various networks: reports for association liaison bulletins, articles for periodicals and

websites specializing in social action, presentations at conferences, etc.



### A LOOK AT THE *OPTIQUE FAMILLES* EXPERIENCE

Various effects and repercussions of the approach on the parents and on the FRCs themselves, individually and through the family resource centre movement, emerged from the discussions between the project team and the FRC staff who supported the parents. Different types of publications and communications, presented in the bibliography at the end of this document, were produced for the purpose of sharing these outcomes. Work on the analysis and dissemination of this new knowledge will continue in the coming years.



## Conclusion



In the *Optique Familles* initiative, the care and attention that each parent, mother, father, and grandfather brought to their own parental reality, to their experiences in a family resource centre, and to the experiences of others has created a welcoming environment where new knowledge on family support is created.

This care and attention was of course encouraged in each group by the presentation of photos taken by the participants themselves, which aroused the genuine interest of each parent. It was further strengthened by the fact that the project brought people with similar experiences together and gave them a space to talk about these experiences and what they wanted to say collectively. The benefits of this *Photovoice* approach have reaffirmed the power, depth, and wisdom generated when parents come together. Companionship will always be one of the main drivers of a *Photovoice* project.

Since the inauguration of the exhibition in November 2017, the *Optique Familles* initiative has continued its mission, and the effects are ongoing. Many parents have become more involved in their FRC and in their community. Similarly, the FRCs have been able to use the material produced to boost their exposure locally.

The exhibition has been presented in several locations in Québec and in various contexts (Sommet de la famille in 2018, conferences in health and research communities, FRC annual general meetings, etc.). The exhibition is still touring.<sup>1</sup> Along with other initiatives to share the results of this research-action, it continues to support FRCs, the FQOCF, and the CEIDEF in their advocacy efforts with local, regional, and national decision-makers to raise awareness of the FRCs' unique knowledge and to give parents a voice in the decision-making spaces that shape the services intended for them.

The *Optique Familles* initiative used simple ways of sharing photos and write-ups so it could be carried out with the resources available and clearly communicate the aspirations of the parents and the FRCs. We hope that the support points presented in this guide will be useful as you work on your own *Photovoice* project. The bibliography lists other resources that may also inspire you.

We are confident that your experience will also generate important new knowledge and will further enrich the wealth of knowledge that gives the people you support a voice and the power to act.

We wish you all the best on this adventure and hope you'll let us know how it goes!

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1. The exhibition can be loaned out. Contact us to learn more about the specifications and costs and transportation details.

# Bibliography

In addition to the documents mentioned below, the content of this guide is based on the tools that make up the *Reference and Facilitation Toolkit on Autonomous Community Action for and with Families* published by the FQOCF, in particular on the facilitation tool *Basics on Reflective Facilitation in Communities of Practice on Autonomous Community Action for and with Families* (2023).

## The Photovoice method

Blackman, A. and Tiffany, F. (2014). *The PhotoVoice Manual: A Guide to Designing and Running Participatory Photography Projects*. London, England: PhotoVoice.

Carlson, E. D., Engebretson, J. and Chamberlain, R. M. (2006). Photovoice as a social process of critical consciousness, *Qualitative Health Research*, 16(6), pp. 836-852.

Goo Kuratani, D. L. and Lai, E. (2011). *TEAM Lab: Photovoice Literature Review*.

Wang, C.C. and Burris, M. (1997). *Photovoice: concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment*. *Health Education and Behavior*, 24, 369-387.

Wang, C.C. (1999). *Photovoice: A participatory action research strategy applied to women's health*. *Journal of Women's Health*, 8(2), 185-192.

## Basic principles in photography

Beilhe, F. Le blog pour apprendre la photo [Blog articles: [www.astuces-photo.com](http://www.astuces-photo.com)].

Breillat, L. *Apprendre la photo, ensemble et pas à pas* [Blog articles: [apprendre-la-photo.fr/best-of/](http://apprendre-la-photo.fr/best-of/)].

Jacquart, A.-L. (2011). *Vivez, déclenchez, partagez! La photo au quotidien*. Paris, France: Editions Eyrolles.

Jutras, A. *Mes articles de blog* [Blog article: <https://www.annejutras.com/?s=d%C3%A9butant>].

## Responsibilities and ethics principles for taking and sharing photos

Vachon, F. (2018). *La face cachée de la photo: prendre et diffuser des images en toute légalité*. Québec City, Québec: Septembre Éditeur.

## Designing travelling exhibitions

Société des musées du Québec (2015). *Les expositions itinérantes: guide à l'usage des gestionnaires de tournée*. Montréal, Québec: Société des musées du Québec.

## Optique Familles initiative

Fédération québécoise des organismes communautaires Famille (2019). *Bienvenue chez vous! Des parents vous invitent à pousser la porte d'un organisme communautaire Famille* [Book-catalogue from the exhibition of the same name produced in 2017]. Saint-Lambert, Québec: Fédération québécoise des organismes communautaires Famille.

Lacharité, C., Gagnier, J.-P., Mailloux, D., Baker, M., La fantaisie, V., Gervais, C., Côté, L., Déziel, N., Poirier, J., and Rasmussen, H. (2019). *Faire communauté autour et avec les familles au Québec: les organismes communautaires Famille, un réseau innovant et mobilisant* [Evaluation report on Phase 2 of the AGORA Project]. Saint-Lambert, Québec: Fédération québécoise des organismes communautaires Famille.

Lacharité, C., Lafantaisie, V., Poirier, J., Déziel, N., Gervais, C., and Baker, M. (2019). *Vulnérabilité, familles et action communautaire au Québec*. *Le Furet*, 91 [special issue on precariousness], 40-42.

## Other examples of implementation of the Photovoice method

Douville, L., Dubé, A., Émery, M., and Normand, A. (2017). La démarche *Photovoice* à titre d'outil de changement social auprès des jeunes de la rue. *Intervention*, 145, 43-51.

Goodman, A., Snyder, M., and Wilson, K. (2018). Exploring Indigenous youth perspectives of mobility and social relationships: A *Photovoice* approach. *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien*, 62(3), 314-325.

Vandette, M. P., Gosselin, J., and Valiquette-Tessier, S.C. (2014). « Vers la réussite »: utilisation de *Photovoice* pour témoigner de l'expérience des mères monoparentales vivant dans un contexte défavorisé. *New social practices*, 27(1), 168-188.

**For news and updates about *Optique Familles* projects: [fqocf.org](http://fqocf.org)**

# Appendices

## Legal and ethical guidelines related to taking and publishing photos

Laws and ethical principles come into play when you take and publish photos. The well-known 1989 Supreme Court of Canada judgment in *Aubry v. Éditions Vice-Versa inc.* states that:

“The right to one’s image is an element of the right to privacy under s. 5 of the Québec *Charter*. If the purpose of the right to privacy is to protect a sphere of individual autonomy, it must include the ability to control the use made of one’s image. There is an infringement of a person’s right to his or her image and, therefore, fault as soon as the image is published without consent and enables the person to be identified.”

### Rights and responsibilities

#### Photographer

- when a person wants to take photos in a private place (a residence, a community organization, an office, etc.), they must first obtain the authorization of the owner or tenant. Unless photography is for commercial purposes, verbal authorization is often sufficient
- the photographic work of a person belongs to that person, unless they have voluntarily transferred ownership to someone else
- to be able to publish a photo or authorize its publication, the photographer or the person who wishes to publish the photo must obtain the authorization of the persons appearing in it (see below: “People seen in a photo”)

#### People seen in a photo

- the people photographed are the owners of their image, thus of the part where they are visible in a photo, if they are recognizable and if they are the main subject of the photo:

- this right does not apply if the photo was taken during a “matter of public interest” (for example, the person was present at the scene of a traffic accident, they were taking part in a demonstration, etc.), or if it is a photo of a public figure carrying out their public duties
- the publication of a person’s image is prohibited without their consent
- in the case of a minor, authorization for publication must be obtained from a parent or legal guardian

#### Publisher of the photo

- It is the responsibility of the person or organization that wishes to publish a photo to ensure that the people who appear in it authorize its publication.

#### Ethical principles for photography

Here are some ethical considerations to follow:

- ask permission, verbally, before you photograph someone
- put yourself in the place of the person you want to photograph: *Would I be comfortable being photographed in this situation?*
  - establish a dialogue and a relationship of trust with the people you wish to photograph so they can understand your intention
  - accept being told “no, I don’t want to be photographed,” regardless of the reason for refusal
  - tell the people who appear in the photos you want to share publicly that they will be contacted to obtain their consent

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This document is for information purposes only. It cannot be used as a formal legal opinion. To learn more about rights, responsibilities, and ethical principles: Francis Vachon (2018). *La face cachée de la photo: prendre et diffuser des images en toute légalité*. Québec City, Québec: Septembre Éditeur.

## Table for participants' comments on the photos

Participant's name:	Date:
Is this the photo the participant chose for their write-up?	
Title given to the photo by the participant:	
General description of the photo	
What the photographer says about it	
What the other participants say about it	
To which theme(s) do the participants link this photo?	
What is the interest sparked by this photo? And other general reactions of the participants.	
Comments collected by:	

## Example of a consent form for the publication of photos

The types of forms used in a *Photovoice* project will vary by situation. To help keep the forms organized, it might be useful to put in the header a letter indicating the capacity of the person who signs the consent. In *Optique Familles*, we used the following letters:

**P:** photographer who took the photo

**A:** adult subject of the photo

**C:** parent or guardian whose minor child appears in the photo (minor child subject of the photo)

**CR:** creator of a work of art photographed (the art is the subject of the photo)

<b>Project name</b>	<b>Consent for the publication of photos</b>	<b>P</b>
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### To be adapted according to the types of situations:

I certify that I am the author of the photograph depicted below and I authorize [name of organization(s) in charge of the project] to make alterations to this photo (cropping, brightness, colour, etc.) and to publish it..

**Or**

I authorize [name of the organization(s) in charge of the project] to publish the photograph depicted below...

**Or**

I certify that I have parental authority over the child(ren) named below and I authorize [name of the organization(s) in charge of the project] to publish the photograph depicted below...

**Or**

I certify that I am the author of the work represented below and I authorize [name of the organization(s) in charge of the project] to photograph and publish it...

**... in any medium, for purposes of promotion, teaching, training, publication, or research.**

Attach the photo here

In the event that more than one person appears in the photo, circle the adult or child for whom the signatory gives their consent for publication.

### **Name of the child(ren) who is/are the subject(s) of the photo:**

In the case of a photo showing several children, a single "Minor child subject of the photo" form may be sufficient if they are children from the same family.

**Title of the work:**

In the case of a photographed work that is not in the public domain.

**Name of the person:**

Name of the person authorized to sign.

**Signed in:**

**Date:**

**Signature:**

**Contact details of the signatory:**

**AGORA Project coordination (2011-2019):** Nicole Déziel

**Writing:** Judith Poirier

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**Other photos:** The photos that appear on the inside pages of this guide were taken by parents who participated in the *Optique Familles* initiative, by photographer Frédéric Côté (pages 33, 35, and 37), and by members of the production team.

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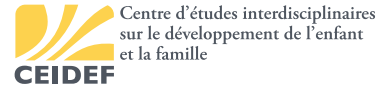
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projet AGORA



UQTR



Université du Québec  
à Trois-Rivières

Since 1961, the Fédération québécoise des organismes communautaires Famille (FQOCF) has represented, supported, and sought to increase the outreach and professional development of almost 270 member organizations in addition to promoting their unique expertise in supporting parents. In its nationwide activities of addressing public decision-makers and the media on the issues families face, the FQOCF is driven by the experience of its members and by their privileged perspective on family life.

The Federation is a proud ambassador for families, drawing on the daily social impact of its members and their model of parent support. It is a leader that brings people together to help all generations thrive in a more just and inclusive society.

The FQOCF is an agent of social transformation and an inspirational and innovative organization. It has positioned itself as an essential partner in the family ecosystem through its ability to develop and maintain relationships with strategic partners. In that capacity, the FQOCF exercises strong leadership to protect the interests of all Québec families and contribute to their well-being.

Initiated by the FQOCF in 2011 and in place until 2019, the AGORA Project actively promoted the vital role that FRCs play with families. The unique nature of FRC practices is reflected in the communities of practice held across Québec and abroad. Rooted in the mission and realities of FRCs, these reflective workshops are supported by a specific reference framework and seek to enrich autonomous community action practices for and with families. The project's first phase was designed to reach every stakeholder within FRCs: management, employees, board and committee members, parent-facilitators, and volunteers. For the second phase, the AGORA Project also targeted families who visited the FRCs, national and international partners, and public decision-makers.

The AGORA Project received financial support from



A research unit at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, the Centre d'études interdisciplinaires sur le développement de l'enfant et la famille is internationally recognized for its expertise and responds to an ever-increasing number of knowledge transfer requests on children, parenthood, conjugal relationships, and family life. Its primary objective is to closely link theory, research, and practice in these fields. Researchers work on issues that include developing and evaluating intervention programs that support the well-being of children and their families.

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