

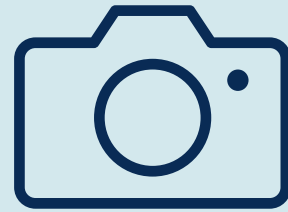
Community Engagement Initiative Report

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The Goal

The goal of this project was to highlight the experiences and learnings of young people and older people during the COVID-19 pandemic. The project aimed to provide a platform for SeeChange Initiative's partner communities to take part in an intergenerational dialogue, sharing their experiences and learning from the experiences of others by taking photos and sharing their reflections.

PHOTOVOICE PROJECT



PROYECTO FOTOVOZ

The Project

This bilingual PhotoVoice-style project was inspired by the work of the health promotion researchers Wang and Burris (1997), who first developed PhotoVoice as a visual participatory action research methodology. PhotoVoice is a process designed so that people can 'identify, represent, and enhance their community' through photography (Wang, 1999).

For the SeeChange PhotoVoice Project, community members were invited to share a photograph and caption, in English or Spanish, reflecting their answer to the

question: What have you learned over the past year of the pandemic?

Youth participants were asked to share one photo and a caption reflecting their own answer to the question, and one for an older relative or community member reflecting their answer to the question. In this way, intergenerational dialogue and knowledge-sharing was fostered.

After submissions had closed, participants were invited to discuss their images and their takeaways in an online group call.



The Results

This project ran for **6 weeks**, from the beginning of **July 2021**. In total, **16** photo submissions were made. SeeChange community members from **Guatemala, Peru, and Canada** participated. Several of these were showcased on the dedicated [Instagram page](#).

The overarching theme of responses was that living through the COVID-19 pandemic had reminded participants of the importance of human connection, particularly the importance of connecting with family members. Spending time physically with family and friends, talking online, and sharing in one's culture were shown to be important to respondents. Doing so helped many of the respondents to cope with the anxieties and loneliness they associated with isolation measures during the pandemic.



The Impact

This initiative helped SeeChange to further understand the experiences of their partner communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the impacts of social isolation were understood.

The results informed my research on community-based responses to COVID-19 by highlighting how important connecting with other people - both in person and online - was for participants during the pandemic.

As a participatory research method, PhotoVoice serves as a useful tool for communities to identify their needs and their assets. It is hoped that SeeChange and their partners can scale up similar participatory research projects in the future, to aid them in putting communities first in responses to health crises like COVID-19.

