



Postcards from Home: Community Development through Participatory Photography

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The Concept

- A simple tool to involve youth and adults in community development
 - Pictures are worth a 1,000 words about what a community looks like
 - Photos reflect what the photographer feels and sees
 - Photos are compelling and a catalyst for community dialogue
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How It Can Be Used

- To begin a planning process to identify important issues and assets
 - To engage those who don't have a voice or have not been involved
 - As part of a community visioning process
 - As a monitoring tool to record the impact of a service, project, or development effort
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How It Works

- Bring together a community team
 - Have the group decide on a topic or community issue
 - Housing
 - Parks and open space
 - Where people work
 - What people do for work or recreation
 - The best and the worst of the community
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How It Works

- Give each member of the group a disposable, single-use camera
 - Ask them to take pictures of the good things and bad things about the issue
 - The pictures should be able to explain the issue to an outsider
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How It Works

- Develop the film
 - Display the photos on a poster
 - Have participants write a short description for each picture and a narrative about the issue
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What next?

- Display the posters
 - Do a presentation to local officials and/or community groups
 - Hold a press conference
 - Work with the group to select a community development project based on the photo exercise
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The Challenges

- Choosing your context
 - Making it interesting and meaningful
 - Choosing a do-able follow-up project
 - Empowering people with the knowledge that they can make a difference in the community
 - Making leaders out of those that are rarely engaged
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The Benefits

- Builds civic capacity by increasing participation in community development
 - Builds confidence
 - Builds on and formalizes community knowledge and information
 - Provides service to the community
 - Develops leadership skills
 - Promotes grassroots action and assessment
 - Builds diversity into community development efforts
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Opportunities for Youth

- Youth can be a powerful catalyst for change
 - Easy way to get youth actively engaged in community development
 - Gives youth a sense of belonging and attachment to the community
 - Gives youth a sense of achievement through working as partners and contributors to positively influence their communities
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