Concept paper: Photovoice

In short, photovoice is a qualitative tool mainly used for participatory research to document and reflect reality.

The participants capture aspects of their environment and experiences via photos (they need to have a camera and some experience in using it) in order to share and discuss them with others in workshops, forums or internal meetings.The pictures can have an emotional as well as a documentary and/or aesthetic content, usually with captions composed by the photographers. The aim of this method is to get insight into the reality and needs of the participating people.

What techniques/methods/other tools can be used while implementing the tool?	Main aims while using the tool
It can be integrated to a workshop and combined with a site visit. It might be useful to combine photovoice with mapping techniques. Another option is to realize photovoice in the context of online participation (collecting and commenting the pictures online).	To capture significant information/emotions, which are relevant for the planning, development or evaluation of the process and the implementation of construction measures or other changes at mobility hot-spots of the project or current event.

How can the tool be used in each phase of the process (when developing age-friendlier and green mobility solutions)?
Planning stage: Can be used to map pain-points that need to be dealth with to support green mobility. E.g. making pictures of timetables that have too small font, high curbstones, etc.
Development stage: To document current problems or conflicts which need to be solved.
Implementation stage: Could be used to document implementation and to reflect on it.
Evaluation stage: To document good and bad impressions.
Feedback: To document good and bad impressions.

What is the aim of engagement with this tool?
Inform: Pictures collected can be used to show current situation, e.g. to point to problems or opportunities people in silver age experience.
Consult: By taking pictures with emotional/documentary content, people can point out urgent needs, ideas and reflections on their reality.
Collaborate: Easy way to exchange information and impressions between project partners.
Empower: Photovoice can reach the empowerment level in rare cases but in case of good planning, it is a good tool to get people involved and show that the messages captured in the photos can be used to collect ideas, improve some problems, etc.

For how many people and how is the tool suitable (for one-time use)?	How much effort is required from the partici-pant and what influences that?
More than 2; should be at least a small group for reflection/discussion and for collecting different views on one ore more items.	**Little to some effort required**: If the participants are aware of the task and trained to handle the equipment, it is about giving some insights into what worries them. Therefore, they have to think of their most important impressions and just take some photos with captions. If the caption is clear, the staff can organize and post-process even

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Time needed to <u>prepare</u> using the tool and what influences the time needed?	Time needed to <u>implement</u> the tool and what influences the time needed?
	without the participants but sometimes some explanations about the picture from participants are needed.
Little to some preparation required: It is necessary to define a task or goal (to not just take photos randomly) and ensure everyone has a (phone) camera and skills to use it. If not, training may be needed. Also, the data collection has to be organized.	**Little to no set-up required**: The method is mainly implemented by taking photos. The time needed is influenced by the familiarity with the technology and time you need to create captions.
Time needed to <u>summarize</u> using the tool and what influences the time needed?	**Price for the user of the tool and what influences the price**
Some up to considerable effort required: Post-processing includes sorting photos, eventually printing them, putting them into existing context and the combination of presentation, interpretation and discussion.	**Free up to medium cost**: Depends on the camera/phone one owns. Most people already own a phone, so the cost would be none. If there is a demand for better equipment, it can easily become more expensive. Eventually, a budget for printing pictures or webspace is needed.

SWOT on using the tool	
STRENGHTS Independent participants, insight into impressions, opinions, worries or preferences; strong creative aspect which may appeal to participants.	**WEAKNESSES** Pictures might not be meaningful without further explanation; not everyone might not be interested in/like taking photos.
OPPORTUNITIES Expression besides language, new skills, surprising insights.	**THREATS** The photos might not come out good due to lack of skills/bad lighting etc., there might be technical problems with the photos.

How to use the tool?

Before (incl. how to prepare the tool, evaluate the usefulness of the tool later):

- Define a task/question/topic
- If needed, train participants and staff (organize camera equipment if needed)
- Define a time slot and the "Do's & Dont's"
- Decide how to evaluate results and impact of using the tool

During (incl. how to implement the tool, collect data for later evaluation):

- Taking photos and adding captions. If possible, a geotag as well.
- Hand them over to the organizer or facilitator of the process (print, mail, etc.)

After (incl. making conclusions, using the gathered information, evaluating the tool and its usefulness):

- (Sort pictures by categories, e.g. district or priority)
- Group discussion and analysis

- Presentation of results and utilization
- Evaluate the whole process

Tips and hints for using the tool with people in silver age

- **Ensure everyone knows how to use their cameras** – because of the possible lack of affinity to technology and unfamiliarity with new phones, additional training may be needed.

- **Use the emotional impact to your adventage** – the tool helps to spur change by reaching public and policy makers through its significant impact on a cognitive and emotional level. Another advantage is the sharing of information, impressions and emotions indipendently from language skills, which makes them more impactful.

- **Empower your participants** – the tool supports people's confidence in their ability to express their opinions and ideas, be creative and develop new skills.

Photovoice. *Photo credits: Tiago Muraro (Unsplash, left), Institute of Baltic Studies (right)*