

Photo guidelines for beneficiaries

Bring your project to life with engaging images

Version 1: August 2019

Highlighting the progress and results of your project through images is fun, involving and easy. Whether you take photos with your mobile or hire a professional photographer, here are top tips from the Erasmus+ UK National Agency to bring your project to life.

Why should you take photographs?

It is important to understand the benefits of taking photographs throughout your project. Photos help by:

- keeping an accurate record of the project's activities and participants' involvement;
- contributing to the project assessment/final reporting stage;
- adding power to your project's dissemination of results by raising the profile of your organisation and awareness of your initiatives;
- stimulating on-going engagement on your organisation's social media pages; *and*
- providing valuable content for print and digital publications, such as your own brochures and leaflets, as well as local press.

In an interview for Erasmus+ UK, digital media expert Jennifer Jones highlighted the need to capture key moments:

“By capturing the planning, key moments, behind-the-scenes activities, etc. of our projects we are able to build up an ongoing picture of what is happening whilst it is happening, rather than waiting to produce a final report or video at the end of the project”.

Where to begin?

Planning when, where and what to photograph can save time and effort.

Good timing is critical when capturing a project activity, while the setting and people can really make an impact on portrait-type pictures. Try to reflect the diversity of your group on the photo. Capturing real-life situations rather than staged poses gives more authenticity to your photos.

Top Tip! *Sometimes pictures can be blurry or badly framed. Take extra pictures and use the best.*

Be considerate

Before taking pictures of your project participants or other people involved, ensure that you have their signed consent in order to comply with the latest General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Download our [consent form template](#) (284 KB) as an example.

If vulnerable groups, such as children and people with special needs, are involved in your projects, make sure you respect the sensitivity of their position. Never depict your participant as a victim or needy. Be equally careful with photo captions and use appropriate language to describe the subjects portrayed.

Make sure you own the copyright to the photos you use and avoid using outdated images. Where possible, use your organisation's photographs to ensure a high level of accuracy and relevance to your cause.

Get your camera ready

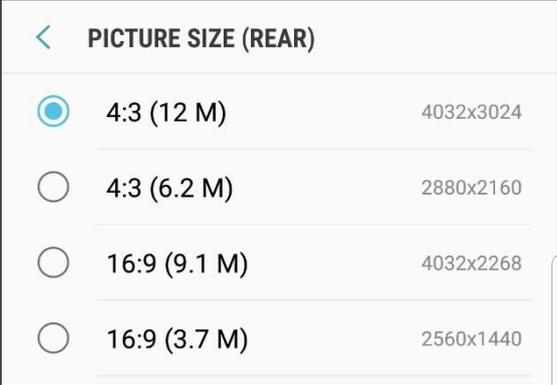
Once you have an idea of what you would like to achieve through your photographs, you need to pick your camera.

Nowadays, most mobile phones have cameras. Phone cameras are an accessible and user-friendly option to capture spontaneous moments in your project.

Adjusting some settings on your camera or mobile **before** shooting is essential for getting high-resolution images that are usable in a variety of formats. Low-resolution photos, whilst suitable for social media, look pixelated in print such as in brochures or exhibition panels.

Which photo file size is best? There isn't a simple answer, but generally, more pixels and larger file sizes will look better. Look at the settings and change the file size to the highest quality available.

It is also important to pick your aspect ratio. Traditionally, print images have been 4:3. This is almost square. This is good for portraits and is popular on social media. For some purposes, you may wish to use 16:9 ratio. This is the same shape as a flat screen TV or a mobile turned on its side. It is wider and useful for taking images of large groups or portraying the scene at a conference or event. Whichever option you pick, use the highest resolution with the most pixels.



PICTURE SIZE (REAR)		
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	4:3 (12 M)	4032x3024
<input type="radio"/>	4:3 (6.2 M)	2880x2160
<input type="radio"/>	16:9 (9.1 M)	4032x2268
<input type="radio"/>	16:9 (3.7 M)	2560x1440

In addition to the default features of your phone's camera, you can download special apps that would enhance its performance. Make sure you install the app that is compatible with the type of operating system of your phone, e.g. Android or iPhone.

Most mobile phone cameras can automatically adjust to the lighting conditions of your location.

Top Tip! Try to avoid having the light source from behind the subject as it overexposes the background and darkens the subject.

Editing at your fingertips

Today's technology has made it easier to edit pictures. Do not apply filters when you take photos. Edit the raw images later on.

If your organisation has social media accounts such as Instagram and Facebook, you can use their in-built features for editing. Many options are available on the Internet. The free GIMP tool for PC and Mac is a particularly powerful image-editing tool.

Compose and frame your photos

The different angles and methods to compose an image can change a photograph significantly, so choose the right approach for your purpose.

The rule of thirds is amongst the most commonly used methods to compose an image. Break your shot into thirds using two horizontal and two vertical lines. As in the example below, you should place the main subjects or the focus points in your scene at the intersection of those four parallel axes.



Sheffield College

Balance and symmetry

Balance in photography is all about arranging your visual elements according to their 'weight'. Weight depends on the size, intensity of colour or complexity of details shown by each element in the shot.

If you have full control over the things you want to capture, then a symmetrical arrangement would always be striking at the first sight. It could be two individuals or teams taking part in your projects opposing each other. You can also place the subject at the centre of your image and have an equal amount of background visibility on the sides.

Also, be aware of who is taking the photograph and the angles that are available to them. If you are sending volunteers abroad, for example, the hosting organisation will be best placed to take pictures of participants in action during project activities.



Bryson Charitable Group

Framing

Framing is the way you fit the subjects and objects within your image. Here are some example scenarios to help you identify which shot would be best to use for the scene you are capturing:

Long shot: is great for capturing moments from activities, events or when there is a lot happening. A long shot helps to reveal the scale of an event and establishes the context.



Grampus Heritage Ltd

Medium shot: is a very practical shot and is often used in interviews because it displays a good balance between the person, their body language and the setting.

Close-up shot: is a good choice when filming a participant who is sharing a personal story as it helps to establish a connection with the audience and to better capture emotive expressions. Close-ups can also be used to show details of an object related to the activities.



Doncaster College and University Centre

Selfie shot: This is something you can encourage your participants to use before, during or after an activity. While the usual format is portrait, selfies can also be taken horizontally, shot in the standard 16:9 widescreen landscape ratio, to capture a larger group of people.



Petroc



Momentum World

Share and promote your photos

Now that your pictures have been taken, sharing them to the world can really help increase the profile of your project.

Sharing is caring

While social media can be the quickest and most convenient way to share the pictures of your projects with your colleagues, participants and your network, you can also create a “thank you” pack for people involved in your activities.

We are happy to engage with participants’ pictures on our social media pages, so make sure you mention us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) and use the hashtag #MakeADifference.

Promotion, promotion, promotion...

If your organisation has its own website, why not write a short blog post or news item to describe participants’ experience in your project. These pictures might also help you showcase your organisation’s activities and initiatives in events when reaching out to new stakeholders and target groups.

***Share this document and best practices with your partners –
we look forward to seeing your project photos!***