

September 13, 2013

Center for Excellence in Interprofessional Education
University of New England

To the CEIPE Mini-grant Team:

Thank you for taking the time to consider funding our community project called *Photovoice: A Visual Narrative into the Lives of Maine Refugee Women*. Your contribution will allow a team of a Master of Social Work student, Lilia Bottino, and a Master of Public Health student with an academic background in art, Collyn Baeder, to implement Photovoice with a group of about 5-10 women identified as refugees at the Portland Community Health Center (PCHC), where they will receive cameras and take pictures that raise awareness regarding conditions of their community. This proposal has been submitted to the UNE Institutional Review Board.

Photovoice is a participatory action strategy that provides a group of people who do not have a voice the opportunity to teach their community and policy makers about health and social issues they face (Wang, 1999). A method that is grounded in critical consciousness and feminist theory, Photovoice can be used to empower individuals to come together and begin a dialogue regarding their shared experiences through group discussion of photographs. Out of this process come select images that can be then utilized to educate community members and shape policy.

Portland, Maine is a major resettlement area for refugees, who according to the US Censuses (2006-2010), account for approximately 11% of the city's population. This population, along with many having experienced torture and war trauma, face major barriers accessing health and social services. These include language, housing, transportation, and cultural barriers, along with a host of other problems. Through the Photovoice project, we wish to learn more about these barriers, and others that may not be as apparent or remain unaddressed for health professionals and policy makers. Furthermore, as this is such a prominent population in the Portland community, it is crucial for us as social workers and public health researchers to experience working with and learning about individuals who are refugees.

PCHC, is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit community health center whose mission is to provide accessible, affordable, and culturally sensitive care to the community. Approximately 55% of their patients speak a primary language other than English, and are new refugees, immigrants, or asylum seekers (Portland Community Health Center, n.d). With a staff that is culturally diverse to reflect and accommodate the community, and located in the Parkside neighborhood and serving low-income underserved residents throughout the Greater Portland area, PCHC is considered a safe and culturally competent environment for its clients. This makes the PCHC an ideal place to carry out our community project, as we will have access to the resources, diverse staff and clientele, and a centrally located meeting space. The MSW student is currently interning at PCHC, allowing us to be accessible and available to our participants, along with working alongside PCHC to fulfill their mission of meeting the physical and behavioral health needs of members of the refugee community.

This Photovoice project seeks alternative ways to open up communication between health professionals and marginalized community members. Taking images of perceived

health and social problems refugees face living in Maine will further health professionals' ability to identify and respond to the needs of their clients. As a participatory needs assessment, Photovoice carries the unique advantage of allowing health researchers and professionals to literally see the world from the viewpoint and values of people whose insight is often overlooked (Wang & Burris, 1997). This strategy is essential to assessing a community's and vulnerable population's needs because it does not assume what those needs are; instead, Photovoice recognizes that people are the experts of their own experience (Wang & Burris, 1997).

Images transcend language barriers, which is a prominent issue for refugees in accessing services and connecting with their community. Images can influence how we understand and give meaning to our environments, and in that way, they can have a great impact on community education and shaping policy. Further, Photovoice is an accessible means for communication and advocacy for anyone who can learn to use a disposable camera. For this reason, it has been used in many forms with diverse populations, such as homeless individuals, individuals with physical or mental health issues, members of racial or cultural minorities, and at risk youths (Walton et al., 2012).

This project will be centered on implementing Photovoice as an alternative and creative strategy to strengthen communication between health professionals and our community's refugee population in hopes to improve health and social services. Further, it will empower members of the refugee community to share their perceived health, cultural, and social conditions with the greater community. By creating and engaging in dialogue around images that reflect these experiences, Photovoice can foster individual and community action in shaping public health policy.

This project will promote the collaboration between Social Work and Public Health, as we will be identifying and assessing the social and health needs of a community, and how this can translate into better social services and shaping public health policy. Involved faculty members will include Cathy Plourde, Program Director of Add Verb Productions, and Denise Bisailon, Director of the Public Health Education Program, who will be available for educational support during the process. It will take a minimum of four weeks to carry out, which is contingent on recruiting participants and arranging a venue for the final presentation. Target dates along with descriptions of each stage of the project can be seen on the "Timeline Checklist" sheet. Ultimately, the final product will include a presentation where the participants' photographs are exhibited, and can be appreciated and discussed by both the Portland community and the UNE community. We would like to reserve a space that is accessible to UNE faculty, students, and community members, and will be collaborating with UNE and the community to achieve this. The students would present our findings on the Research & Scholarship Presentation Day, showing pictures and observations from the project process, as well as work from the participants. The presentation will also be submitted to the digital commons so that the presentation is accessible and can be used to inspire and inform others in the future.

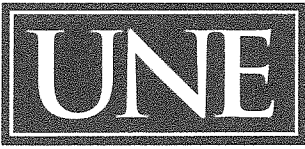
Thank you again for your time and consideration. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Lilia Bottino at Lbottino@une.edu, or (914) 260-9704.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Lilia Bottino & Collyn Baeder

References

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add**verb**
PRODUCTIONS

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September 11, 2013

Kris Hall
Center for Excellence in Interprofessional Education
326 Hersey Hall

Dear Kris,

This is a letter on behalf of Lilia Bottino and Collyn Baeder's proposed Photovoice project at the Portland Community Health Center. Both Denise and I have met with Lilia and consulted on the project and feel the team is more than capable to deliver, and will do so in a way that honors the clients/volunteers with whom they will work. We're also pleased that this is a project that Lilia proposed to her internship supervisor prior to beginning, and that it was met with great enthusiasm and support.

We hope that at the end of the project we can work with you to find an appropriate public presentation time both at PCHC and at UNE. This will be a fantastic Applied Arts example, and it will serve all participants, and most importantly, will be a tool for the women who have experience and insight to share.

If either Denise or I can be of further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Cathy Plourde'.

Cathy Plourde
Director, Add Verb

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Denise Bisailon'.

Denise Bisailon
Director, Public Health Education.



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Kris Hall
Center for Excellence in Interprofessional Education
326 Hersey Hall

Dear Kris,

Please accept this letter as my unreserved support of Lilia Bottino and Collyn Baeder's proposed photovoice project with the Portland Community Health Project. I have read the proposal and have discussed it with Lilia who is my academic advisee. Not only is the project well considered, researched and articulated, but the passion that Lilia brings to her work is exceptional and will most certainly be conveyed to those with whom she works.

This project is not only consistent with the values of social work but also consistent with the values of our University.

I look forward to the results of their work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Danielle F. Wozniak".

Danielle F. Wozniak, MSW, ACSW, PhD
Director, School of Social Work
University of New England

Timeline Checklist

This project will take a minimum of 4 weeks to carry out. This will be contingent on recruiting participants, and arranging a venue for the final presentation. We aim to begin this project the second week of November. Below are the project stages:

1. *Orientation Meeting*: 1-2 hours at the Portland Community Health Center (PCHC). This will include the two students and the 5-10 participants. Here we will discuss the purpose of Photovoice and decide upon questions/issues to frame our work based upon what the participants feel they want to communicate and achieve through the process. We will discuss the ethics and guidelines around taking pictures in the community, giving each participant the photo release form and a handout on Photovoice ethics. All participants will sign a consent form. Students will dispense disposable cameras labeled with each participant's name. Participants will be given a pre-paid envelopes to mail back cameras and paper materials. Throughout the meetings, students will be documenting the group process through our own photography and note taking.

2. *Photo-taking*: About 2 weeks in the Portland community. Participants will be conducting this on their own, but Social Work student, who is interning at PCHC, will be available if participants have questions or concerns. In this time period, participants will return the cameras and subject release forms. Students will print two sets of standard photos and one digital/CD copy per participant. They will mail back one set to each participant including photo reflection sheets with directions, and ask them to mail materials back once completed.

3. *Photovoice Workshop*: 3-5 hours at the Portland Community Health Center. This will fall on a date, most likely a weekend day, which fits the schedules of PCHC and the participants. Students will have put together displays of each participant's chosen pieces. The students and participants will be present, engaging in presenting each other's work, discussing and reflecting on the photography and experiences. Depending on group size, this process includes small group discussion, each group selecting 6 pictures they feel best reflects the original framing questions/issues. Each group then presents to the larger group, and then each participant takes time going around and marking (using colored stickers) pictures they feel most reflects the group's purpose in doing the work. More discussion, reflections, and time for questions will follow.

4. *Presentation*: 1-2 hours at location TBD, possibly UNE so that the school community can be involved, but also a place where the participants have the chance to show their work to the greater Portland community and engage people in discussion about the issues identified through the Photovoice process. Participants and research students will be present.

Photovoice Project Budget

Photovoice Project	Amount
Disposable Cameras	\$70.00
Photo Development	\$160.00
Poster Material	\$25.00
Mailing Materials	\$112.00
Translator Compensation	\$300.00
Presentation Fees	\$150.00
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$817.00

This budget is based upon recruiting 10 participants.

1. Photo development includes developing 2 sets of photos and 1 digital copy
2. Poster Material includes posters, thumb tacks, stickers, and scissors)
3. Mailing materials includes 30 prepaid envelopes
4. Translator compensation is based on standard rate of \$30.00/hour for roughly 10 hours of meetings.
5. Presentation Fees include refreshments for one pre-project meeting with PCHC's Community Health Outreach Workers to inform them of project further and exchange ideas on best method of outreach/recruitment. It also includes refreshments for later presentation with participants, UNE, and community members.