

VOICE Trainings | Report

C1-C2 Photovoice Trainings in Vienna, 4-6 July 2022

Summary

On 4-6 July, a new group of students in youth & social work as well as young social workers met in Vienna to **learn about the participatory research method Photovoice**. They were brought together by the VOICE partners, coming from Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands

Creative partners from the media sector also joined the event, in order to film the Trainings activities, which will lead to the **creation of a video-tutorial on Photovoice using lively and authentic video-footage**.

Activities – Learning “How to Photovoice”

Through a mix of presentations and interactive activities, participants learned the ropes of the Photovoice method, a **participatory research method** facilitating self- and collective expression by combining a creative and accessible tool, photography, with a ready-to-use step-by-step process backed by robust theory.

On the first day, they focused on **exploring the theoretical background** of this method originally born in social sciences. They discovered the **state of the art on Photovoice in the academic field**, reflecting on their own about the **benefits of such a qualitative, participatory, visually-based empowerment tool in the youth & social field**. They also went through the step-by-step method in order to highlight the role of the facilitator and the tips they can apply to implement an efficient Photovoice process up to scientific standards.



On the second and third days, the Trainings applied a **practical “learning-by-doing” approach**. Hands-in sessions invited **participants to experience a Photovoice exercise themselves** to learn about its concrete implementation through non-formal methods, while stepping into the shoes of Photovoice “co-researchers” to make them aware of what they can do as future facilitators to improve their own participants’ experience.

This all led to the VOICE project’s second half of all expected Photovoice results! The full overview answering the question *“How would you describe the life of a young person in Europe to an alien?”* is [available here](#), and here is a sample:

	<p><i>Lights Will Guide You Home</i></p> <p><i>In this picture, we can see a traffic light symbol in the form of a same-sex couple walking (...) We chose this picture because we wanted to highlight how Vienna's inclusive environment is beneficial for young people's quality of life (...) We imagine that putting up these lights can nurture a more tolerant mindset in the wider population.</i></p>		<p><i>Privileged Freedom in Space</i></p> <p><i>In this picture, you can see people are sitting by a river (...) the vast tolerant space available to an individual living in Europe gives them the freedom to do whatever they want and be whoever they want (...) The divided line was interpreted as a border that separates Europe (...) excluding people living across the border.</i></p>
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The **participants’ work in Vienna was already a success**: the manager of the student hotel where the Trainings were organised spontaneously asked to keep the Photovoice Exhibit, showcasing the participants’ own results to promote the method as well as their messages, and even to pass it to other students hotels in the city!

Results – Participants’ contribution to the Project Results

Participants learned about Photovoice first and foremost, but also contributed to the future project results in many ways!

They will indeed **star in the future “VOICE movie”, a video-tutorial which will present the Photovoice method** through a catchy, short and lively format. This video will be all the more authentic thanks to video-footage filmed during the Trainings, recording an actual, live Photovoice exercise with young, active participants.



The participants’ own Photovoice results will be useful beyond the Trainings themselves: they will be **turned into a VOICE Photo Exhibit**, online first and foremost but also on-site through local events organized in a few months by the partners themselves. The aim of the exhibit will be to catch the attention of more and more youth & social workers by showcasing the kind of results Photovoice can lead to.

Brainstorming sessions were also held to make the most out of the participants’ own expertise. Together, they **gathered ideas for themes, topics and sample research questions which can be easily transferred** from one local context to another, and therefore fit into international youth projects in the future. The outcome will be incorporated into the future “VOICE Handbook”, providing ready-to-use material to newcomers into the world of Photovoice.

Finally, the participants also **started reflecting on their own future use of Photovoice in their local context**. As part of their learning experience, as well as to make them ambassadors of the Photovoice method in their local environment, participants will indeed implement a Photovoice exercise themselves with the support of their local VOICE partner. They discussed how to do it in a meaningful way, starting with the opportunities they will have to use Photovoice in a relevant context, such as with refugees they are already in contact with in the context of academic research, or children in a middle-school with which participatory activities are already planned.

Next Steps

Even though all Trainings planned in the framework of the VOICE project are completed, **participants and partners are not done learning about and promoting the Photovoice method!**

On the one hand, **participants & partners will implement a small-scale Photovoice project in their local context**, both to complete their learning experience by becoming facilitators themselves, and to promote Photovoice at the local level in a meaningful way.

On the other hand, the youth and creative organisations involved in the partnership will use the vast wealth of results & material collected through these trainings to take the next steps towards the creation of the planned project results. A lot of video-making, writing and graphic-design will be involved in order to create visually attractive products, fit to catch the attention of the European youth & social field. **So ... stay tuned!**

Annex 1 – Programme

Arrival Day – Sunday 3 July

(...) **Arrivals** (Check in after 15:00)

Day 1 – Monday 4 July

Welcome & Introductions

- Overview of the Training: Objectives, Programme, Partners
- Ice-breaker
- Team-building

9:00 – 12:30

Photovoice Intro – The Photovoice method #1

Presentation of the VOICE project as a whole, progressive introduction to the Photovoice method with a focus on its history, underlying theoretical concepts and main purposes.

Photovoice Intro – Art & Technics

A “Beginner intro to Photography” to train participants’ “photographer’s eye” and share basic tips & tricks on how to take impactful pictures with a simple smartphone.

14:00 – 18:00

Photovoice Intro – The Photovoice method #2

A deeper dive into the conceptual framework of the Photovoice method, its detailed step-by-step process with an attention to the facilitator’s role, as well as its “Pros & Cons”.

Evening

Intercultural get-together

Light & chill activities for some intercultural exchanges, as well as getting tips on the “Must see” in the city!

Day 2 – Tuesday 5 July

Brainstorming on Research Topics

Some explanations on what makes a good research question, introducing a participative workshop to gather ideas on research topics easily transferable to diverse contexts.

8:30 – 12:30

Photovoice Exercise – Step 1, Reflections

Introducing the Photovoice exercise as a “learning by doing” experiment, the research question, and starting discussing it in small groups.

City Tour

A stroll in the city for some sight-seeing ... as well as showcasing local social work.

14:00 – 18:00

Photovoice Exercise – Step 2, Fieldwork

Some time for everybody to roam the city freely for their own enjoyment ... and to take pictures for the Photovoice exercise!

Evening

Free time!

Day 3 – Wednesday 6 July

Photovoice Exercise – Step 3, Selection process

Going through the Photovoice selection process in each small group, with progressive discussions to turn individual pictures into a collective selection.

8:30 – 12:30

Photovoice Exercise – Step 4, Exhibition (Preparation)

Time to print results and arrange our own Photovoice exhibit!

Photovoice Exercise – Step 4, Exhibition

Concluding the Photovoice process, let’s enjoy our on Photovoice exhibition, to share results with each other ... and more!

14:00 – 18:00

Reflections, Conclusions, Celebrations!

Conclusions on Photovoice, reminders of the role of the training in the whole project, brainstorming on the “Follow-up Local Photovoice Experiments” ... and celebrations!

Evening

Free time!

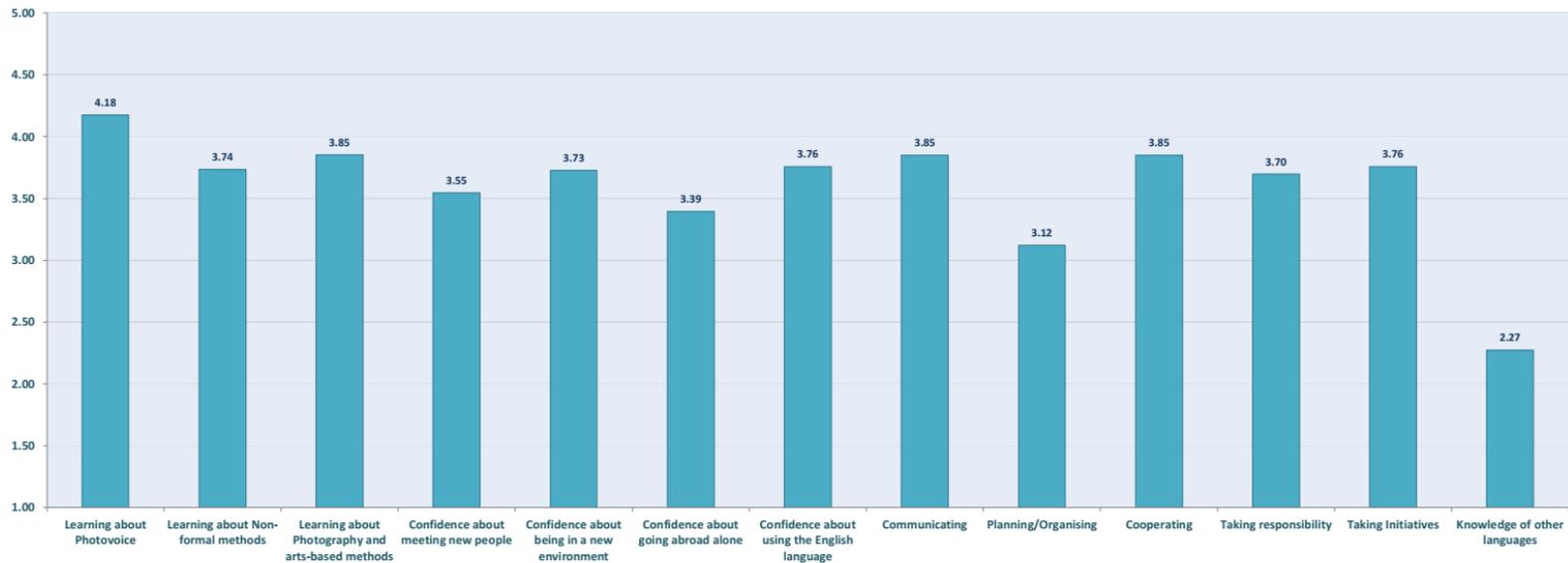
Departure Day – Thursday 7 July

(...) **Departures** (Check-out after 11:00)

Annex 2 – Evaluation by participants

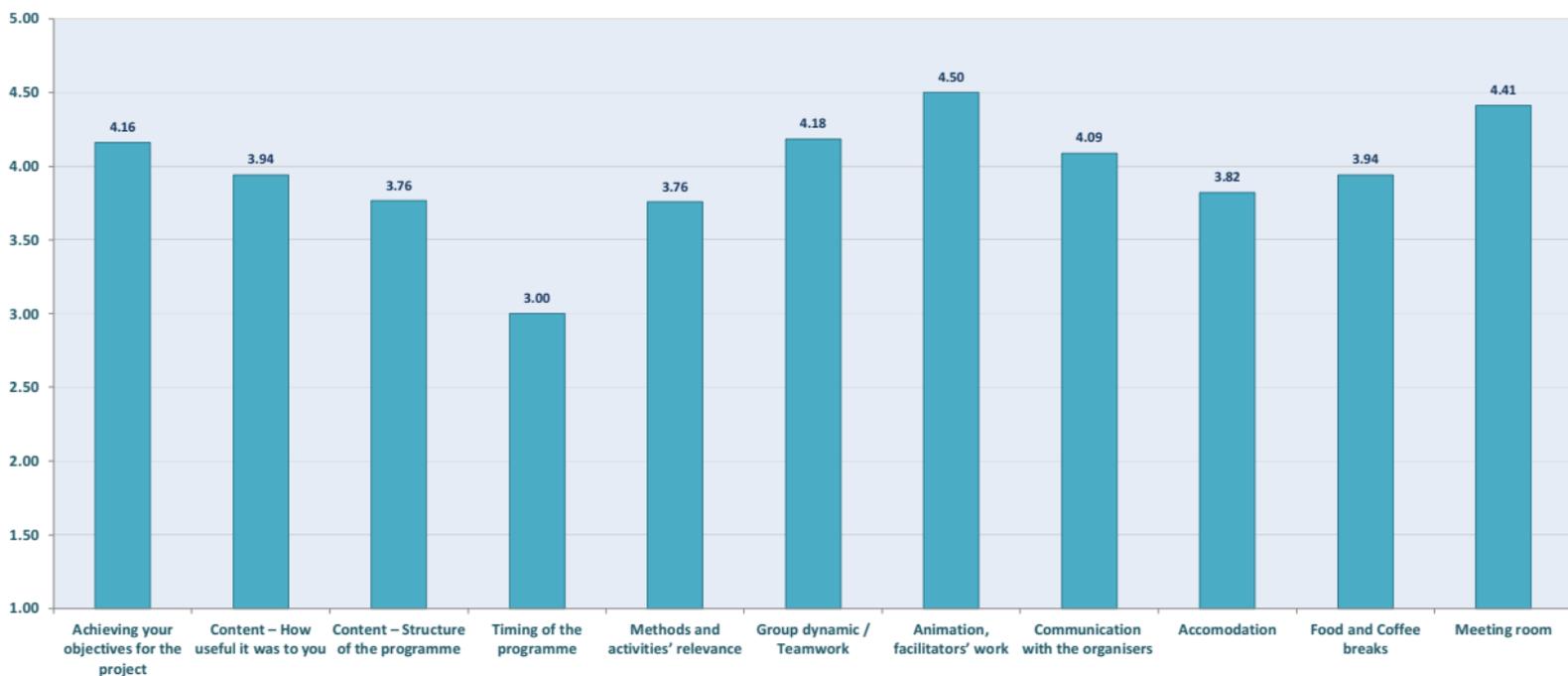
As shown by the summary of participants' feedback below, the VOICE Trainings in Vienna officially **achieved their objectives!**

Two questions highlight this success. On the one hand, participants reported an average **4.18 out of 5 for “Since the project start, how much have you learned about Photovoice?”**. On the other hand, they also reported an average of **4.16 out of 5 for “Achieving your objectives”**.



Participants Knowledge and Skills Self-evaluation

(5 – Very good | 1 – Not good at all)



Average answers to the Evaluation - "Project Organisation"

(5 – Very good | 1 – Not good at all)