



Documenting Social Impact

A Visual Storytelling Guide for CSOs

Presented by Seun Asala | FEF-OSC Capacity Building

Introduction: The Power of Visual Documentation

Why visual documentation matters for CSOs:

- Communicates impact more effectively than text alone
- Builds emotional connection with stakeholders
- Enhances reports, social media, and fundraising materials
- Provides evidence of your work and its outcomes
- Tells your organization's story authentically

Session objectives:

- By the end of this session, you'll be able to capture compelling "speaking images" that effectively document your projects and impact.



What to Document: Identifying Key Moments

Focus on these key elements:

1. **Before & After:** Document the transformation your work creates
2. **People in Action:** Show your team and beneficiaries engaged in activities
3. **Emotional Moments:** Capture authentic reactions and celebrations
4. **Environmental Context:** Show the setting and surroundings
5. **Details Matter:** Document tools, materials, and specific elements



Key Takeaway:

- Focus on documenting impact, not just activities.
- Show the change your work creates.

Composition Basics: Creating Impactful Images

Five key composition techniques:

Rule of Thirds

Place key elements along imaginary grid lines or at their intersections

Framing

Use elements in the scene to create a natural frame

Leading Lines

Use natural lines to guide the viewer's eye to your subject

Perspective

Try different angles to change the story and impact



Remember: **Simplify your frame** to focus attention on what matters most.

Example of rule of thirds in mobile photography

Composition

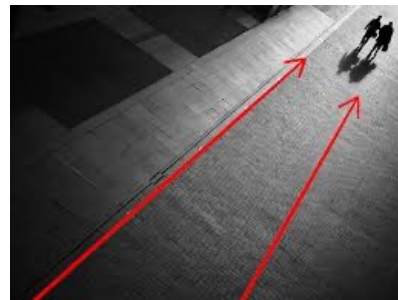
Rule of Thirds



Leading Lines



Leading Lines



Framing

Perspective



Perspective

Mobile Photography Tips

Make the most of your smartphone camera:



- **Clean your lens regularly** - a simple wipe can dramatically improve quality



- **Use natural light when possible** - position subjects facing light sources



- **Move closer** instead of using digital zoom, which reduces quality



- **Steady your shot** - use both hands or brace against a surface



- **Tap to focus** on the most important element in your frame



- **Shoot horizontally** for videos and landscape photos. Take alternate orientations



- Take **multiple shots** to select the best one later

Visual Storytelling: Beyond Single Images

Creating a narrative through images:

Context

Wide shots showing environment and situation

Action

Medium shots of people engaged in activities

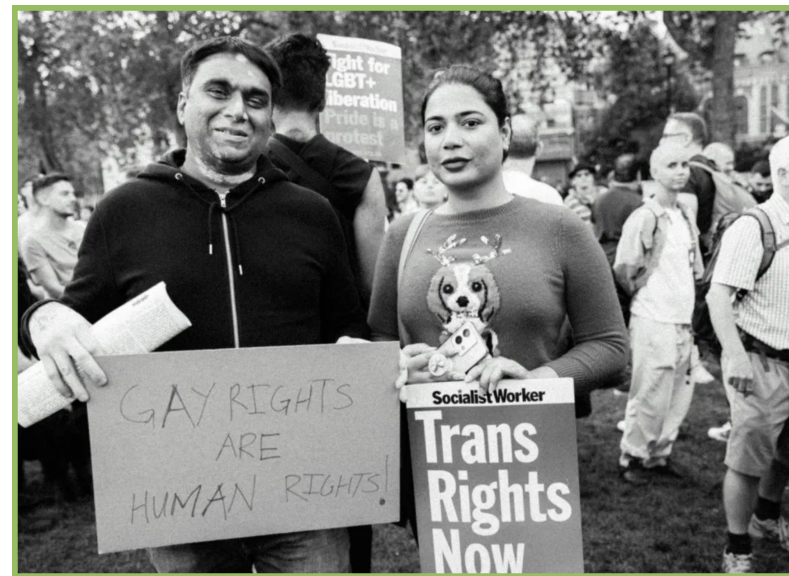
Details

Close-ups highlighting specific elements

Document **the sequence** of your work from beginning to end to show the complete story.

Remember:

Always include **captions** with your images - who, what, where, when, and why.



Example of an image that tells a story of protection and care

Ethical Considerations

Guidelines for respectful documentation:

- ✓ **Obtain Consent** - Always ask permission before photographing individuals, especially children
- ✓ **Respect Dignity** - Portray subjects as active participants, not passive recipients
- ✓ **Authentic Representation** - Avoid staging photos that misrepresent reality
- ✓ **Cultural Sensitivity** - Be aware of local customs regarding photography

Remember:

The people in your photos are **partners** in your work, not just subjects.

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A young boy drinks dirty water in Kakamega, Kenya. Frederick Dharshie Wissah/2019 CIWEM Environmental Photographer of the Year

Photography can be a powerful advocacy tool when used ethically

Examples of Impactful Documentation

What makes images powerful:

Emotional Connection

- Images that evoke emotion create lasting impressions and inspire action

Clear Narrative

- Photos that tell a complete story without requiring extensive explanation

Authenticity

- Genuine moments that capture real experiences and challenges

Visual Quality

- Well-composed, properly lit images that focus attention on the subject

Tools and Resources

Popular apps for editing and enhancing your visual documentation

Photo Editing Apps

Snapseed

Adobe Lightroom Mobile

Canva

VSCO

Video Editing Apps

InShot

CapCut

KineMaster

Organization & Storage

Google Photos

Adobe Bridge

Dropbox

Let's Discuss

One Thing You'll Try Next

- Commit to one idea from today's session
- In the next two weeks, try one idea from today – and share your experience on our forum.

Thank You!

