

**Sfide e prospettive comunitarie da *La Red*.**  
**L'uso del PhotoVoice nel lavoro di John Vertovec**  
 a cura di Gaia Bacciola, Martina Belluto, Serena Olcuire

Nel suo lavoro di ricerca, presentato nel contributo «Collaborative problem-solving through PhotoVoice: helping community organizations move from network building to action in Havana, Cuba» in questo *Special Issue*, John Vertovec ci racconta di un'esperienza di collaborazione realizzata all'Avana nel 2019 con il coinvolgimento di un network di organizzazioni comunitarie, *La Red*, per indagare collettivamente le sfide che caratterizzano l'identità e il lavoro di ognuna. Con l'aiuto di Gilberto 'Papito' Valladares, imprenditore sociale esperto di comunità, e della fotoreporter Mitra Ghaffari, John Vertovec ha realizzato un progetto di PhotoVoice, terminato in una mostra collettiva nell'ottobre del 2019. Il PhotoVoice è una metodologia partecipativa consolidata nella ricerca sociale, pensata per stimolare il dialogo attraverso la riflessione di un gruppo di lavoro a partire dalla condivisione di fotografie scattate dai membri dello stesso gruppo: è dunque un utile strumento collaborativo che aiuta a far emergere le percezioni dei soggetti coinvolti, i punti di forza e i problemi condivisi. Nella sua immediatezza e tangibilità, l'immagine racconta quello che in alcuni casi è difficile esprimere con le sole parole e permette di far emergere descrizioni dense delle esperienze vissute. Per questi motivi, il PhotoVoice viene spesso utilizzato per rafforzare la partecipazione comunitaria e per stimolare trasformazioni sociali.

"Photovoice can be a tool to reach, inform and organize community members, enabling them to prioritize their concerns and discuss problems and solutions. Photovoice goes beyond the conventional role of needs assessment by inviting people to become advocates for their own and their community's well-being" (Wang e Burris, 1997: 373).

Nell'esperienza di *La Red*, l'obiettivo era quello di mettere in dialogo le associazioni presenti sul territorio e riflettere in modo comune sugli obiettivi, sulle sfide e sulle opportunità che ogni organizzazione ha incontrato durante il suo percorso. I partecipanti hanno scattato delle fotografie e proposto delle didascalie composte da un titolo e da una suggestione riflessiva, in seguito discusse collettivamente. Frasi evocative a cui ispirarsi, ma anche idee precise per innescare una trasformazione: il PhotoVoice ha incoraggiato i leader di ogni

organizzazione comunitaria ad analizzare criticamente sfide e opportunità comuni. Ne è nata una mostra dialogica, frutto del momento di confronto - generativo di risposte - che è all'apice del processo.

In his research, presented in the article of this Special Issue titled "Collaborative problem-solving through PhotoVoice: helping community organizations move from network building to action in Havana, Cuba", John Vertovec presents a collaborative research carried out in Havana in 2019 with *La Red*, a network of community organization. With the help of Gilberto 'Papito' Valladares, a social entrepreneur and community expert, and the photojournalist Mitra Ghaffari, *La Red* used PhotoVoice to explore three challenges faced by each member, ended within a group exhibition in October 2019. The PhotoVoice is a participatory methodology well-established in social research, designed to stimulate collective reflection and dialogue within a working group on the basis of photos taken by the members of the group. It is a collaborative tool aimed at bringing out subjects' perceptions, on shared strengths and weaknesses. It is based on the ability of images to express, in more tangible and immediate terms, what could be difficult to be express through words alone, allowing dense descriptions of lived experiences. For these reasons, PhotoVoice is often used to strengthen community participation and to stimulate social change.

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In *La Red's* experience, the aim was to bring local associations into dialogue to reflect, together, on the goals, challenges, and opportunities faced by each member organization. The participants took photos and proposed captions composed of a title and a reflective suggestion, which were then discussed collectively. These suggestions ended up being a source of not just vague inspiration but also of specific ideas for action: the PhotoVoice encouraged leaders from each community organization to critically analyze common challenges and opportunities. The result was a dialogic exhibition, during which confrontation has generated responses.



**Photo Title:** Perspective

**Analysis:** This is the starting point or vision towards the future, which is infinite.

**Suggestion:** Use art to search for and open the doors for each human being.



**Photo Title:** A tree that is born crooked...

**Theme:** Opportunities

**Analysis:** They say, "A tree that is born crooked will never straighten its trunk." But, when you want to improve you can and a change for good is always possible.

**Suggestion:** Change, yes you can!



**Photo Title:** Against the clock

**Theme:** Challenges

**Analysis:** The longer it takes to rescue traditions, they will lose their strength and with them our identity.

**Suggestion:** Hurry to rehabilitate popular traditions since these are the vehicles of identity formation. Work must be done to clean up all that was left over time and take advantage of the union of spiritual and material forces within the religious community to put it in function of the transformation of the community.



**Photo Title:** Grow

**Theme:** Primary Goal

**Analysis:** It is a building in poor condition with no roof to protect itself. However, there is a plant growing in the midst of difficulties.

**Suggestion:** Strengthen our project, looking for links with other projects in order to grow. The place does not matter if our roots do not grow firm.



**Photo Title:** Havana pieces

**Theme:** Primary Goal

**Analysis:** One recognizes the existence of social classes, the source of privileges, and the dichotomy in the official discourse. The two buildings represent the social inequalities that exist in contemporary Havana.

**Suggestion:** Promote neighborhood empowerment to achieve the power of self-management that allows us to design strategies for change within the nation's collective project.



**Photo Title:** Faith moves mountains

**Theme:** Opportunities

**Analysis:** Belief in the supernatural has the power to change religious settings.

**Suggestion:** Educate the religious community in order to transform the environment where it develops.





**Photo Title:** With a little love

**Theme:** Opportunities

**Analysis:** Two equal situations with different results. Effort and tenacity change life. An example of will and love can help regenerate abandonment and vice.

**Suggestion:** You must have a fighting spirit, fix everything around you, join forces. Show the world that everything is possible if you set your mind to it. It is worth putting a little love and sacrifice into it.



**Photo Title:** Mecamorfofis

**Theme:** Opportunities

**Analysis:** It is the transformation of the obsolete into a work of art. Despite the unrefined nature of the material, it can be changed.

**Suggestion:** Search for people who feel abandoned or forgotten and transform them into feeling useful and direct them.



**Photo description:** PhotoVoice photo with frame made from recycled cardboard. Photo taken by Mitra Ghaffari at the Havana PhotoVoice exhibition (October 21, 2019).



**Photo description:** Audience members at the Havana PhotoVoice exhibition (October 21, 2019).



**Photo description:** Local community member (right) and John Vertovec (left). Photo taken by Mitra Ghaffari at the Havana PhotoVoice exhibition (October 21, 2019).