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Title

The voices of young people living with speech and hearing impairment in Sierra Leone: a participatory photo project

Abstract

This article offers a reflection on a participatory photography research project that was conducted as part of a wider research study in Sierra Leone. Young people with speech and hearing impairments were given a camera to elicit photos of their daily lives, their enjoyments and challenges and were then asked to discuss them. The photographs offered a striking, personal insight into the living realities of these young people, drawing attention to what it means to have a disability in Sierra Leone. The project itself had a wider impact on the young people, who felt valued in being asked to take part, and on the organisation that supports them, who have since come to greater appreciate their potential for contributing. The method is a valuable emancipatory tool for undertaking research, especially in cases that involve marginalised groups whose voices tend to be ignored or people who do not use speech as their primary mode of communication.

Table of contents:

1. Introduction
2. Participatory photography
3. The photographers
4. Methodology
5. Objectives
6. The photographs
Sawaneh Kamara, Age 18
Ramatu Kamara, Age 18
Foday Mattia, Age 26
Mariama Jalloh, Age 27
7. Findings and Conclusions
8. Advice for students
9. References