



## Using photovoice as part of UNA Rivers - Waste Management project in Lilongwe, Malawi

### Summary

Photovoice is a method that invites participants in a research project to take photographs as a way of telling their own stories through images that represent their perspective at a particular moment in time. SwedBio partner, the Africa secretariat of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI Africa), contracted a Malawian civil society organisation, Our World International (OWI) to implement and oversee a waste management project as part of a larger plan to restore the Lilongwe River. The site chosen for this project was the Tsoka and Lizulu markets which are social-economic hubs of the city. However, they are also the highest point sources of pollution for the Lilongwe River. A high percentage (approximately 70%) of the waste is organic. OWI trained a group of women to safely remove the organic waste and make compost from it. The compost will be sold to generate an income for the women and to fertilise locally grown food crops. SwedBio and ICLEI Africa suggested piloting a photovoice project as part of this urban sustainability initiative, both to document the changes in the area as waste was removed and as a participatory activity to engage local stakeholders. OWI welcomed the initiative and agreed to manage the photovoice project, with support from SwedBio and ICLEI Africa.

Eight participant photographers volunteered to take photographs each week during the first implementation phase of the project between November and December 2017. The photographers used disposable cameras and OWI printed the photographs. In February 2018, ICLEI Africa and SwedBio travelled to Lilongwe to visit the site. The photographers were invited to participate in interviews and all of them consented. All the interviews took place at the market, during one full day. The process involved going to the location each photographer had chosen as their spot and then using the photographs as the starting point for conversations about the project, changes they had observed over the course of the project and, their hopes for the future of the market and the Lilongwe River at large.

### Background

SwedBio is funding and contributing actively as a part-time member to the collaborative programme Urban Natural Assets for Africa (UNA Africa), led by ICLEI's Cities Biodiversity Centre hosted by ICLEI Africa. The project UNA Africa: Rivers for Life (UNA Rivers) (2016-2019) builds on UNA Africa (2014-2015).

The main aim of UNA Rivers is to contribute to improving urban human well-being, strengthening local sustainability and improving climate resilience, through mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into land-use planning and city decision-making processes pertaining to urban river systems in Africa through better coordination and community-based activation.

Embedding the project in local government structures and targeting key actors and local communities, the project aims to target the urban poor as the main beneficiaries of the

project, showing cognizance of gender and equality, providing tangible solutions to contribute to poverty alleviation. The five target cities are Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, Lilongwe in Malawi and Kampala and Entebbe in Uganda



### **Photovoice – brief introduction to the method**

Photovoice is an action-oriented, participatory method that was developed by Wang (University of Michigan) and Burris (Program Officer for Women's Health at the Ford Foundation) in the 1990s and draws on three strands of social theory (Wang Burris 1997).

#### **Health education**

Educator, Paulo Freire, addressed the relationship between the teacher and student and compared it to the colonizer and the colonized (Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 1968). Freire suggested co-creating knowledge and put forward the idea of using an image as one way of starting to examine a situation in order to identify problems. In photovoice, this translates as a first step which asks the participants to identify issues that are central and then conducting dialogues about them.

#### **Feminist theory**

Often women's stories or the stories of children, illiterate people or those speaking languages other than the dominant language are invisible. To address this power imbalance and invisibility, participants take control of the process as a way of confronting

power dynamics and biases of participatory research. In photovoice, the photographers are the guides and experts who represent themselves and tell their own stories.

### **Documentary photography**

The main difference between documentary photography and photovoice is that in photovoice, the participants are the photographers and it is their perspective that is captured, not the documentary photographer's point of view. However, documentary photography contributes via its interest in documenting realities and a diversity of truths, even if they are subjective.

### **Photovoice as a tool to support the aims of UNA Rivers in Lilongwe**

Photovoice has been used as an advocacy tool by civil society organisations, as well as in academic research (Berbés-Blazquez, 2012; Bosak, 2008; Baldwin and Chandler, 2010; Beh, 2011; Lemelin et al. 2011). As an activity-based practice, photovoice interconnects several concrete objectives:

- to invite the participation of marginalised or unheard members of a community to voice their views and represent themselves
- to shift the focus from what researchers highlight to what participants identify as important concerns
- to promote dialogue, critical reflections, raise awareness and pinpoint changes that participants want to make in their community
- to support participants in learning new skills
- to pave the way for informing better policy

SwedBio and ICLEI saw the value in exploring photovoice as an innovative methodology that could connect policy, practice and research in order to support some of the principal aims of UNA Rivers (mentioned in the background section above) including:

- working with the urban poor
- addressing gender and equality
- supporting community-based activation
- promoting better coordination between communities, civil society organisations and local government
- embedding the project in local government structures and targeting key actors and local communities

**Table summarising the links between the UNA Rivers for Life objectives, the photovoice method and the implementation of photovoice in Lilongwe**

<b>UNA Rivers aims</b>	<b>What photovoice can do</b>	<b>Lilongwe photovoice project</b>
Targeting urban poor	To invite the participation of marginalised or unheard members of a community to voice their views and represent themselves	A group of 6 women and 2 men volunteers in a waste management project at Lizulu market were invited to become participant photographers for 6 weeks. Their photographs became the starting point for conversations about the river and waste management
Addressing gender and equality	To shift the focus from what researchers focus on to what participants identify as important concerns	The majority of the volunteer participant photographers were women and their photos were the starting points for conversations about what they experienced during the project
Supporting community-based activation	To promote dialogue, critical reflections, raise awareness and pinpoint changes that participants want to make in their community	The photos were the starting points for conversations that highlighted some reflections including the sense of engagement in the waste management project, care for the environmental health of Lilongwe River and the social and economic benefits for people working in Lizulu market.
Promoting better coordination between communities, civil society organisations and local government	To support participants in learning new skills and to raise awareness and pinpoint changes that participants want to make in their community	In the photovoice interviews many participants talked about practical next steps and support needed to continue the waste management project
Embedding the project in local government structures and targeting key actors and local communities	To support informing better policy	During the photovoice project, participants engaged with each other, people in the market and in their communities. OWI documented the project and communicated with Lilongwe City Council (LCC) regularly, as well as with ICLEI Africa and SwedBio. Follow up meetings with LCC aim to support the integration of waste management and composting into future urban development plans

SwedBio and ICLEI Africa put forward the idea of using photovoice as a component within the waste management project run by Our World International (OWI) at Lizulu market in Lilongwe. OWI was receptive to the idea and agreed to implement the project with the support of SwedBio and ICLEI Africa who provided disposable cameras and guidelines on designing a photovoice project. (Appendix A shows the guidelines co-created by SwedBio, ICLEI Africa and OWI.)

OWI invited six to ten women who were composting food waste in Lizulu market, on a voluntary basis, to become photographers for the full duration of the project (6 weeks). Two men who work in Lizulu market also volunteered to be photographers. Each photographer chose a place to photograph at set intervals of time, for six weeks.

The idea was to produce a set of photos showing change in their chosen location. Each camera had twenty-four exposures, so taking two photographs per week would leave several exposures free for photographers to use as they wished. Photographers were invited to take pictures inspired by the following questions:

- Take a photograph that represents what role the market plays in your life
- Take a photograph that represents what development means to you
- Take a photograph that represents what Lilongwe River means to you
- Take a photograph that represents the future

### **Photovoice interviews – February 2018**

ICLEI Africa, SwedBio and OWI reviewed the photographs taken by the participants and selected images that sparked questions and curiosity. OWI set up interviews with photographers who were willing to take part in photovoice interviews. SwedBio and OWI discussed Free Prior Informed Consent and drafted a consent form which OWI translated into Chichewa. (see Appendix B).

OWI contacted the participant photographers and explained what the second part of the photo voice project would entail: meeting at the Lizulu Market, walking to the location where each photographer had taken their photos, doing interviews based on the photos, using the photographs, interviews and photos taken by SwedBio to report on the project and for communication purposes, including via social media. Their FPIC consent was sought following the explanation of the process and they signed a consent form to confirm they agreed to take part.

Two days after the first meeting with OWI, SwedBio and ICLEI Africa met the participant photographers at Lizulu Market. Stephen Chiunjira (CEO OWI) and Francisco Ngwira (Information Technology and Documentation Coordinator) translated from English to Chichewa and vice versa. The women composters had travelled over an hour from their homes to attend the meeting and ICLEI Africa and SwedBio offered some refreshments. The group gathered at the main compost site and surveyed the small compost mounds. During this time, other people from the market came and emptied baskets of waste at the site. Although there was still a large amount of waste, including plastic, when compared with images of the site several months ago, there was less waste.



**Compost site before the river clean up started**  
**Photo: OWI, 2017**

After the session with the whole group, the conversations with individuals began. Since the women had travelled a long way, they were first to be interviewed so that they could make their way home afterwards. The plan had been to schedule interviews throughout the day so that the photographers would not have to sit through each other's interviews. However, everyone stayed together the whole time. OWI explained that this was because there was nowhere suitable to wait in the market; the women tended to stick together as a group and everyone was curious about the process. Each photographer had picked a location in the market to take their photographs every week. We walked to each location, talked at the site and then returned to a spot where there was shade and benches to sit down so that we could look at the images closely and talk in depth. Some of these conversations were filmed. There were three in-depth interviews with women and two in-depth interviews with men.

**A selection of the participant photographers' photos and excerpts from the photovoice interviews.**



**Some of the volunteers from the team of composters who participated in the photovoice project, together with OWI and ICLEI Africa. The composting site in Lizulu Market is behind the group.**

**Photo: V Mellegård**

Eight volunteers from Lizulu market spent six weeks clearing organic waste from various locations. They volunteered to take photographs each week to document their experience of collecting waste and turning it into compost. Here they show some of their photos and tell their stories of participating in a project that aims to improve the life of the river that gives their city its name – Lilongwe River.

**Mrs Nkosi**  
**48 years old**  
**Sells second hand clothes**

Interviewer: Why did you choose this location?

Mrs Nkosi: Heavy rains can cover the bridge. (She was interested to see what would happen). Sometimes the bridge can wash away



Photo: Mrs Nkosi

Interviewer: What is the wheel barrow for?

Mrs Nkosi: It belongs to the person building the wall.

(Referring to the sand - The sand on the side made her think that someone was trying to build something and she wasn't happy because it's close to the river)



Photo: Mrs Nkosi

Interviewer: If you were to take a picture that represents what Lilongwe River means to you, what would you photograph?

Mrs Nkosi: (She would take a photo of the bridge and river – to be able to see them from a distance). The change is small but it is there – needs more time (referring to the waste management project)



Photo: Mrs Nkosi

Week 4



Week 6

Interviewer: What will it take to change people's mindset and behaviour?

Mrs Nkosi: Awareness and informing people what they should do – to collect all the waste from each section (of the market eg tomatoes). We are all humans. If we speak the right way and tell each other, there will be an impact.

**Memory Mathews**  
**31 years old**  
**House wife**

Interviewer: The contrast between the beginning and end of the project is big – first there's lots of waste and then it's clear

Memory Mathews: The person who owns the land was preparing it for growing cabbage



Photo: Memory Mathews

Interviewer: What did you think about the big change in the amount of waste?

Memory Mathews: If someone is able to make the change, the river is taken care of

Interviewer: Why are you concerned about the river?

Memory Mathews: The water should be clean and safe. It's important to take care of the environment



Photo: Memory Mathews

Interviewer: How do you feel about the future?

Memory Mathews: We need to have hope, courage and unity. Working together towards the same goal, working as a team. It's good to encourage each other and set goals and focus on them together. Seeing the change between beginning of project and after some weeks made her feel encouraged.



Photo: Memory Mathews



During rainy season the water level rises and flooding is frequent, often washing away bridges connecting Lizulu and Tsoka markets (compare water level with photograph above)

Photo: Memory Mathews

Interviewer: How did being a photographer make you feel?

Memory Mathews: It was fun to learn taking photos. (She liked learning new skills – like composting which she can do at home). “It’s a lifetime skill”. (She has benefited a lot from the project. She felt happy. She learned new things. Before, she was staying at home and now she is participating in something. She was expecting to learn a lot and has learned a lot. She feels passionate about the work).

Interviewer: What didn’t you like about the experience/project?

Memory Mathews: (She had been trying to find something to do and would like to continue to work and make compost. She wants to know where the project is heading to next and what the plans are for the city.) Is there funding to build a shelter (for the composting site)?

**Iness Phiri**  
**29 years old**  
**House wife**

Interviewer: Why did you choose this site?

Iness Phiri: Because you can clearly see the difference and change – piles of tyres and no piles of tyres

Interviewer: Can you tell me about the tyres?

Iness Phiri: (She says that people make shoes from them and then dump the remains here)



Photo: Iness Phiri



Photo: Iness Phiri

Week 1



Week 5

Interviewer: How do you hope Lilongwe will develop?

Iness Phiri: Conserving the environment and trees is important. Lilongwe River is the source of life and we have problems with the water

Interviewer: What has been good about the project?

Iness Phiri: (She has learned a lot of things and is composting at home). This is a new skill

Interviewer: How was it taking photos?

Iness Phiri: Yes, I liked it

**Alie McKenzie (male)**

**38 years old**  
**Business man selling Irish potatoes**

Interviewer: Can you tell us about the plastic bottles

Alie McKenzie: The plastic bottles are sold, rinsed out and filled up with porridge drink and then sold



Photo: Alie McKenzie



Photo: Alie McKenzie

(After McKenzie told us this we noticed someone nearby filling up plastic bottles with a white drink. In the middle of the conversation, a man approached us and was talking loudly and seemed angry. We asked OWI if it was time to leave but were advised that it was fine to stay. Alie McKenzie and OWI spoke to the man for a few minutes. He grew calmer and went away. A few minutes later, he returned and brought the head of that section of the market with him. There was another conversation and then the men shook hands.

Later, we were told the reason for the men coming up to us. The market had been divided and some people didn't want to be involved in the waste management project. Partly, they were suspicious about the volunteer status of the composters because at OWI's awareness-raising day, they saw t-shirts being handed out, posters, and the overalls, boots and gloves given to volunteers for their composting activities. To them, all of these items signalled that there was money in the project and they assumed that the volunteers were being paid. McKenzie's location for taking photographs was in the area of the market that was not participating in the project so the men who approached us were annoyed that McKenzie had been taking photographs. McKenzie calmly explained the background of the project and that there had been meetings about it, to which everyone had been invited. To say that there'd been no information was not correct, he reasoned.)

Interviewer: What are the structures on the other side of the river?

Alie McKenzie: The covered market at Tsoka market is legal. (Alie McKenzie has friends there but the cabins are like nightclubs and are illegal). There are also nightclubs on the Lizulu side.

The mention of Tsoka market led to further conversation:

Some of McKenzie's friends from Tsoka are interested in the waste management project but mainly they are concerned about the vegetation near the river because flooding is a big problem for them. Further down the river there are more structures like shops. Along the market there is little vegetation. He prefers having vegetation.

Interviewer: Why?

Alie McKenzie: Because the river can be more easily restored. Vegetation holds the soil. Further downstream the soil is washed away. The vegetation also includes reeds to make mats (for the floor).



Photo: Alie McKenzie

**January Chikondi (male)**  
**32 years old**  
**Business man selling electronic devices**



Photo: January Chikondi

Mr Chikondi is on the market committee for Lizulu Market

Interviewer: What is your favourite photo?

January Chikondi: When it's green and vibrant, soon after the rains

The conversation moved on to Tsoka Market

January Chikondi: There are committee meetings with Tsoka and Lizulu Market talks about the project but some Tsoka committee members are negative because they think that Lizulu has been given money or that they will sell the waste and Tsoka will not benefit. (January has invited them to meetings but many do not show up.)

Interviewer: Does the opinion of the people (from Tsoka market) who do come to the meetings change?

January Chikondi: It helps when they understand more about the project. They are hoping to involve the shops near the river. Francisco says that in the next phase they will involve the shopkeepers.

Interviewer: How effective is the project? What difference does it make?

January Chikondi: Most of the market leaders accept the project and people are willing to work with them. Most market users will take their waste to the recycling area. It's an idea they welcome. It's changed lives. Previously they dumped waste but now the market is cleaner and people share ideas. The market leaders want to see the project continue.

Interviewer: Why?

January Chikondi: Cleanliness – they are seeing some progress. It's healthier – it's preventing diseases from improper management of waste. Now people can see that waste can be useful.

Interviewer: How did it feel being a photographer for 6 weeks?

January Chikondi: (He enjoyed it because he interacted with people and told people about the advantages and disadvantages of the project).

### **Reflections on the photos and the photovoice interviews - SwedBio & ICLEI Africa**

At first glance, the photographs themselves are not visually remarkable. For someone who has not been to Lizulu market, they do not fully represent or visually describe what the area looks like. However, the photos provide a starting point for conversations with people whose voices are often unheard. What the participant photographers describe and talk about can reveal information about the place, the people and the natural environment that is a valuable complement to other sources of information. In this way, photovoice can facilitate a richer understanding of a place and the people and nature there. In some cases, what the photographers experience during the photovoice process can itself be transformative. The encounter described above involving one of the photographers, Alie McKenzie, gives a strong indication of the responsibility that he took for the project and his commitment to it.

Some general reflections and observations about the interviews include:

- Participants talked at length and seemed engaged and relaxed.
- Most chose to speak in Chichewa (Francisco Ngwira translated between English and Chichewa). Even allowing for some instances of “lost in translation”, the photos provided unambiguous conversation points between the participants and SwedBio and ICLEI Africa and made it easier to cross linguistic and cultural barriers
- The participants were expert guides sharing their knowledge with SwedBio and ICLEI and as such, the interviews were more like conversations than formal, researcher-led interviews

A further aim was to use the photographs and conversations arising out of the photovoice interviews to enrich and contribute to the UNA Rivers project as a whole and give some indications about the following underlying processes:

- Did participation as a photographer help to strengthen a sense of inclusion in and ownership of the project and the place?

Participants expressed enthusiasm for the project and wanted to continue composting and seeing change in the market. There are two reflections about the contribution of photovoice in connection with a sense of ownership and place attachment. One is that the photos and interviews could have helped to

articulate the participants' feelings about the waste management project. Secondly, photovoice may have complemented the ongoing composting activities because photographers chose a location to photograph and physically went there twice a week for six weeks. In this way, they all had a regular presence at their chosen site and formed a routine and familiarity with their spot.

- To what extent did the act of photographing the same place every two or three weeks bring about a closer observation and attention to the changes happening.

Participants recalled details about the location they'd chosen to photograph and commented on changes that they'd observed during their photography sessions and were clear about why they had chosen their locations

- Were there any participant photographers who felt a higher level of engagement with the market and river that might outlast the restoration project itself?

Many wanted to see continuing improvements in the market and to see Lilongwe River become less polluted – for health reasons and because they want a better environment.

- How did the project benefit participants?

Most of the women commented that they had learned new skills which were useful to them. They could now make compost out of waste at home and use the fertilizer to grow food or to sell and they had learned to take photos.

- To what extent did the photovoice project manifest in closer community connections? Connections with local government, youth engagement, greater awareness of the links between the market, the quality of the river water, and the ecosystem?

Most photographers reported that they had had conversations with people in the market and told them about the waste management project. Some of these conversations came about because people were curious to know what they were photographing. The regular presence of the photographers attracted attention and in this way, facilitated conversations about the waste management project that in turn, spread the news among more people.

SwedBio and ICLEI Africa witnessed an interaction between one of the photographers, Alie McKenzie, and other people in the market (see above p. 17) Despite the fact that the initial encounter between Alie McKenzie and a man

at the market was negative, the photographer decided to take the opportunity to describe the waste management project and in this way raised awareness about it. A further observation is that the photographer behaved calmly and took control of the situation in a way that showed commitment to the project and an eagerness to make the aims of the project clear and understood.

Several photographers took photos of the rising level of Lilongwe River and described the problems with flooding during the rainy season. This is not new information. However, the conversations themselves were emotive and led to further comments from the photographers about their feelings and concern for the water quality, ecology and safety for the citizens of Lilongwe, as well as some comments about the river symbolizing life.

- To what extent do the photographs and interviews enrich the knowledge and insights about the social ecological context?

On the whole, there the photographs showed some weeks when the waste in a particular area was less and some weeks when it was more. Over the six week duration of the project, there wasn't a linear reduction in the amount of waste – there were fluctuations. One explanation that emerged from the photovoice conversations was that there were reports of waste being dumped at Lizulu market at night. This led to further conversation about why and who was dumping the waste. It emerged that some people thought Tsoka market might have been dumping some waste. That conversation led to a more in depth description about the tensions and disagreements among some members of Tsoka market's committee about the waste management project as a whole (see above for January Chikondi's comments).

### **OWI Reflections on the photovoice project**

Overall, OWI saw a benefit in using a novel method like photovoice as a way of engaging participants. OWI also reported that it was an opportunity to learn about a new tool and about obtaining consent from participants - as part of the photovoice process it was necessary to obtain free prior informed consent (FPIC) from participant photographers.

OWI had regular contact with the participants and helped them with technical problems and questions that arose during the project. Although disposable cameras are straightforward and simple to use for someone who is familiar with them, some participants had never used any kind of camera before and needed additional help from OWI. Each disposable camera had 24 exposures and after taking at least 2 photos a week for 6 weeks, the photographers had some exposures left over. The following questions were suggested to inspire the photographers:

- Take a photograph that represents what role the market plays in your life

- Take a photograph that represents what development means to you
- Take a photograph that represents what Lilongwe River means to you
- Take a photograph that represents the future

OWI had the following reflections about how the participant photographers responded:

- Questions such as “take a photo that represents the future” are unusual for people “It stretches the mental horizon.” OWI described it as “an uphill challenge” to get people to imagine the future, possibly because they have limited ambition and expectations.
- The benefit of photovoice might not be financial but it could be good for the community and raising awareness
- If photovoice could be used again, it would be good to be freer with the brief and allow people to take photographs of whatever they like



Photo: Francisco Ngwira

**The first day women volunteers started working on the waste management site**



Photo: Francisco Ngwira

**The recycling centre after 30 days**

**Photographs that represent what role the market plays in life**



A Market can be identified a place where various products are sold to different individuals. The pictures above captured from Tsoka and Lizulu market.

**Picture representing what development means**



**Picture taken before market awareness was done**



**Picture taken after awareness**

Using the pictures above, developing can be explained as process of change.

### Picture representing what Lilongwe River means



Lilongwe River can be used for irrigation of crops during dry season, using the pictures some farmers will benefit from the agricultural produce that have been grown using water from the Lilongwe River. Lilongwe River can be used to generate income.

### Photograph representing the future





There is great coordination between the vendors, market leaders and market users. There is future in this waste management project looking at how people have welcomed the idea.

### **Building relationships between city officials and community members**

The Tsoka and Lizulu markets, despite their immense value for the city of Lilongwe, are viewed as unplanned parts of the city and therefore minimal engagement occurred. However, the market has become an economic hub of the city and is one of the central social hubs. 4500 people visit the market daily with over 300 people making a living from the site.

The UNA Rivers project has been challenging decision makers to strengthen engagements with the site; to view the area as unserved rather than unplanned and therefore work with what is on the ground to make the area sustainable and resilient. One way this has been achieved has been through engagement with the “informal” governance structures at the site. This has provided the ideal “entry point” for decision makers to engage with this area which was a challenge prior to the project. The UNA Rivers activities, which have been strengthened by the photovoice component, has helped with this process. The conversations and discussions that are emerging from the women and community members are being communicated, through OWI and ICLEI Africa, to the local governments.

In addition, the challenges emerging from discussions allow effective redesign of activities. On the ground implementation at the site has been designed to occur as a phased approach. At the end of each phase, the challenges and opportunities (and lessons) feed into and inform the design of the next phase. The photovoice activities have proved extremely useful in unlocking conversations around these points and therefore a more informed design can occur. As a result, phase 3 of the project will specifically aim to build a more sustainable process for waste collection (so that it is all dumped in one place,

so that revenue is created etc.); build a shelter to safely store equipment that the composting teams use and provide infrastructure such as bins and wheelbarrows.

### **Concluding reflections and next steps**

Participants reported enjoying taking photographs – for some, it was the first time they had taken photos. The disposable cameras were a low-cost way of introducing some participants to photography and were suitable for all skills, once everyone became familiar with the cameras. The photographs helped to articulate and communicate perspectives and as a tool, photovoice produces information that can complement other sources of knowledge. As a participatory method, photovoice helped to raise awareness of some social and ecological issues related to Lilongwe River and the Lizulu and Tsoka markets. The resulting photovoice interviews generated dialogue and discussion and could be described as empowering because participants were the experts and identified challenges in their place of work. Time constraints proved a significant limitation of the project design. All the photovoice interviews were held on one day which meant that conversations with each photographer lasted no longer than about 30 minutes. Nevertheless, several concrete, practical needs and challenges for the next phase of the waste management project were identified:

- The composting site is not the only dumping site for waste from the market. This means that there is still waste being dumped in other parts of the market. Cleaning up the market and the river could be speeded up if all waste was consolidated in one place
- Some participants and OWI suggested building a shelter for the composting site
- Bins to transport waste from market stalls and other parts of the market are needed. This requires funding and a lockable storage area.
- A regular buyer for the compost has to be found to generate an income stream. The women composters are worried that they can't sell their compost
- Although Tsoka market is beginning to show interest in the waste management project, further engagement is necessary to convince them to participate and to build a financial incentive
- More engagement with vendors in Lizulu market is also necessary, for similar reasons as with Tsoka market.

Ultimately, photovoice was developed as a participatory, inclusive, action-oriented research tool to change policy. Within the limited scope of the project, as it was carried out in Lilongwe, the photovoice component contributes as a potential catalyst for change within the larger UNA Rivers initiative.



## Appendix A

### UNA Rivers – Lilongwe River

#### Participatory photography project – to document change at the Tsoka and Lizulu markets

##### WHY participatory photography

- Can be effective in documenting change e.g. at the community level
- Can be used to start a conversation
- Invites participants to express themselves visually and verbally
- Invites participants to document from their perspective
- Invites active engagement
- Participants learn new skills
- The photographs can be a bridge to better understanding

##### OWI and the photographers' roles

###### OWI Team Responsibilities

- Invite one to two people on the team to take responsibility for the photography project.
- To choose 15 photographers and choose the locations that each of these photographers will take a photo from/of
  - *15 stakeholders to become participant photographers. If possible, at least 5 women (that work at the site and are involved in the composting) and as much diversity as possible (age range, gender, involvement in market project)*
  - *The spots chosen should adequately represent the site – the sites chosen should be noted on a map (or at least well recorded in the excel sheet)*
- Invite all participant photographers to a meeting. Welcome them to the project, brief them on the project and explain the project design (see below) Invite suggestions, questions, concerns.
- Explain to the 15 photographers why they are doing this as well as teach them how to a) use the cameras (see below); b) what to do each Mon and Wed (see below)
- Ask for their consent. This is important because they need to know that their photographs will be public and other people will see them. Apart from what the participants and OWI decide to do to display the photographs or other ideas that might arise, the photographs they take will most likely be used for communication purposes in print, online and in social media
- Visit the 15 photographers at their 15 different sites every Monday and Wednesday. This is to encourage the photographers to take the photographs and to listen to any concerns the photographers might have and offer help (with cameras) where they can. Where other OWI team members are not able to advise on concerns, Vivi Mellegård is happy to support the team in finding solutions.
- To keep a clear record of the cameras (number them) as well as keep a clear record of each participant and the number of the camera they are using i.e. keep a record that lists the unique identification of each photographer so that it is clear which

photographs are taken by each photographer and they are linked to that photographer's spot (see template)

- Choose 5 participant photographers to interview once a week. Photograph and film a short video clip once a week of the participant photographer – ask them what has been happening that day, for example (videos can be in the local language. See below for note about translation into English)
- At the end of 8 weeks, the volunteer collects all the cameras and keeps them safely with the record and video clips in the OWI office. Processing and printing of the photographs can be discussed with Stephen, Jess and Vivi (as well as how then to transcribe and translate the interviews into English)

### **Photographers Responsibilities**

- Each participant is given 1 disposable camera that is labelled with their unique participant identification. For example, participant 1 is given camera 1
- Each participant is given a specific spot on the site and this is recorded. OWI should select these spots (see above).
- Each photographer chooses what direction they will face to take the photograph on their spot and stick to this for the length of the project.
- Each participant takes a photo every Monday and Wednesday
- Each camera can take 27 photographs. During the 8 week project they will take 2 photos per week (1 on Monday and 1 on Friday). A total of 16 photos. This leaves 11 photos which the photographers can choose to take of other things. Please see below for suggestions for these additional photographs.
- Choose 5 participant photographers to interview once a week. Photograph and film a short video clip once a week of the participant photographer (on your mobile phone) – ask them what has been happening that day at their spot, for example. Think about other questions to ask.

### **More information**

#### **Suggestions on how to use the camera**

Attached are some tips for taking photographs. When introducing the cameras to the participants, show them how they work, following the instructions on the back of the wrapper that the cameras are in. Unlike digital cameras, it is not possible to see the photographs that have been taken until they are printed, at the end of the project. There is a counter that shows how many photographs have been taken and as long as the winder is turned until it stops and the button is pushed down firmly, the camera should work well.

#### **Suggestions for the 11 additional photos**

- Take a photograph that represents what role the market plays in your life
- Take a photograph that represents what *development* means to you
- Take a photograph that represents what Lilongwe River means to you
- Take a photograph that represents *the future*

### **Tips for taking photographs**

- Make sure your lens is clean
- Walk closer to the person or thing you want to photograph
- Keep your arm steady
- Avoid facing towards the sun when you take a photograph
- If you are photographing a person, the photo is nicer if there is light on their face and light in their eyes

### **Tips for the OWI volunteer when photographing/filming short interviews with the participant photographers (using a mobile phone)**

- Make sure your lens is clean
- By pointing your finger on the screen you can move the focus when photographing
- Use the cropping tool not the zoom
- Walk closer instead of zoom
- Keep your arm steady!
- Always take a lot of pictures and save the best
- When filming also take pictures
- Keep the movie short and key message first and for clearer sound, use the microphone on the headphones that come with your mobile phone (usually used for handsfree conversations)
- Ask questions to prompt the interview and to make the photographer feel comfortable