



ACTIVISTS TRAINING

mini toolkits



ACTIVISTS TRAINING MINI-TOOLKITS

These mini-toolkits are meant to be used as a cross-cutting and versatile toolbox to develop **communication skills oriented to social change** in young activists. Communication languages selected (video making, photography, web radio, audio-visual street actions) can be the core alphabets for activists to develop **awareness raising, campaigning and mobilization actions**, acting as catalysts for change. Each chapter deals with the basics of one communication language, so to invite activists to experiment, test and explore its potential.

This is a **training kit** designed for **coordinators, facilitators, tutors, educators** in charge of developing learning modules for young activists. However, it has also been created to be further disseminated to have a multiplier effect, being available to motivated activists willing to transfer skills, expertise and competences to other peers, in their communities, organizations, networks.

Digital communication skills are particularly relevant in pandemic times, as physical distancing has enhanced the importance of audio-visual tools in awareness raising, campaigning and engagement. Contents, methodologies and tools suggested in these mini-toolkits have been designed to be easily used in online trainings and distance learning.

Target

- 15-35 years-old young climate activists involved in training courses;
- facilitators, tutors, educators engaged in activists training and their organizations.

Objectives

1. Increase knowledge and understanding of communication for social change of trainers, facilitators, educators;
2. provide an introductory overview and tools on selected communication languages, to better frame, plan, organize training for young activists;

3. foster critical understanding and conscious use of selected key audio-visual languages and tools among activists;
4. enable young activists to use selected communication tools for awareness raising and campaigning.

Structure

The mini-toolkit series is composed by 4 chapters, which can be used complementarily or separately:

1. **Videomaking**
2. **Photography**
3. **Web radio**
4. **Audio-visual street actions**

Each chapter includes:

- An introduction on the relevant communication language;
- a selection of suggested formats;
- technical tips, indications and recommendations for effective output, including free and open-source tools;
- technical references to effective, meaningful and inspiring case studies and best practices in English;
- suggested exercises and activities that can be used during training, both in person and online.

For coordinators/facilitators/trainers of young activists

Mini-toolkits can be used as background materials for well-informed planning of training courses, but could also strengthen communication skills of junior staff members and collaborators. They can also be distributed as additional materials to activists, inviting them to replicate training modules in their own organizations.

For young activists

Mini-toolkits should support training in which they are used, enhancing knowledge and understanding of communication for social change, but also developing technical skills for campaigning aimed at changing behaviours and raising awareness. They can be disseminated and used in youth organizations, movements, platforms, networks, in a peer-learning process.

For educators

Developing communication skills in youngsters is an effective empowerment strategy, which on the one hand provides them with critical lenses to analyse and tell about their local context, and on the other enables them to take action through tools having wide outreach potential. Moreover, working with digital communication languages is crucial to comply with COVID containment measures.

How to use these communication languages to campaign for alternative/sustainable food systems

Below you may find some ideas and suggestions on how to use audio-visual communication tools to campaign for sustainable food systems.

Before selecting your campaigning tactics, the relevant **objectives** should be clarified by choosing or combining the following options:

- Inform, raise awareness, develop critical understanding of food systems challenges and solutions;
- foster individual behavioural change towards sustainable food consumption;
- motivate citizens to engage their families, their peers, their communities in the transition towards sustainable food systems;
- encourage citizens who are aware of sustainable food consumption to take a step forward e.g. ask for changes in local policy-making, push for transition in collective consumption settings (e.g. HORECA sector, public procurement and canteens, etc.);
- develop a sense of belonging to a global community in transition towards alternative food systems, by strengthening trust and optimism in social change and overcoming the sense of isolation among responsible consumers.

Video making, photography and web radio can therefore be used to:

- tell about local best practices, e.g. using interviews/reportages/documentaries involving urban farmers, ethical purchasing groups, officials dealing with sustainable public canteens, volunteers engaged in food waste reduction schemes, etc.;
- report, research, explore drawbacks in local food systems, e.g. using interviews/reportages/documentaries/newsletters on different topics, including: the loss of agrobiodiversity in peri-urban farming, widespread consumption of packaged, out-of-season, highly-processed food, food waste at household and collective catering level, etc.;
- foster behavioural changes towards sustainable consumption, by suggesting feasible practices through video tutorials, video recipes, short advertising on different topics, including: decreasing the carbon footprint of one's diet, making cities greener using balcony and guerrilla gardening, shopping planning tips to reduce food waste, etc.

Products could be more effective - in terms of citizens engagement and mobilization - if developed by embedding a participatory and bottom-up process:

- A **call** can be launched to identify best practices to narrate, collect sustainable recipes, gather creative ideas for advertisement, map sustainable food actors in the city;
- a **contest** can be promoted in which participants take pictures of the least common vegetable or grain variety, the greenest balcony garden, the smartest recipe for climate;
- a **challenge** can be launched on social media, in which participants portray for example: how they shop local products, how they grow their city, how they reduce food waste when eating out, etc.

All these products could be further **disseminated** using digital and online exhibitions/catalogues, public screening at community level and/or within larger festivals, audio-visual street actions including projections on buildings, strategic partnerships with local media such as community radio stations or local newspapers/websites.

CONCORD Code of Conduct on Images and Messages

When working on communication and campaigning through pictures and visual languages, on top of compliance with privacy and data protection regulations in force, a useful reference is the Code of Conduct on Images and Messages issued by the European NGO platform CONCORD. Here are its key principles:

- Choose images and related messages based on values of respect, equality, solidarity and justice;
- Truthfully represent any image or depicted situation both in its immediate and in its wider context so as to improve public understanding of the realities and complexities of development;
- Avoid images and messages that potentially stereotype, sensationalise or discriminate against people, situations or places;
- Use images, messages and case studies with the full understanding, participation and permission of the subjects (or subjects' parents/guardian);
- Ensure those whose situation is being represented have the opportunity to communicate their stories themselves;
- Establish and record whether the subjects wish to be named or identifiable and always act accordingly;
- Conform to the highest standards in relation to human rights and protection of the vulnerable people.

<https://concordeurope.org/2012/09/27/code-of-conduct-on-images-and-messages/>

To implement these principles, Dóchas, The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organizations, developed an effective "Illustrative Guide to the Concord Europe Code of Conduct on Images and Messages".

https://www.dochas.ie/assets/Files/Illustrative_Guide_to_the_Dochas_Code_of_Conduct_on_Images_and_Messages.pdf

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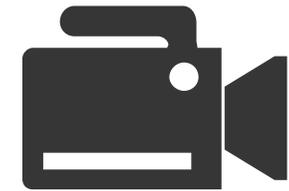


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ACTIVISTS TOOLS

mini
toolkit



VIDEO MAKING



Video is one of the most used tools in social communication and can be used to inform / report or raise awareness / fundraising, or all these goals together. However, it must always be considered that video language is complex, includes several aspects and, although it may appear very free, it must still respect some basic rules of visual language. In this toolkit we will address some of the most important aspects in building a video: the choice of point of view, the type of narration, the style and the format. In addition, in the last section, we will give you some practical and technological advice for its implementation. All the following sections are therefore to be considered preparatory to the creation of any video product that wants to be useful, effective and engaging.

1 - THE GAZE ON REALITY



Let's start immediately with a small exercise:

Exercise 1 - both face to face and online: the point of view on the world.

Since we deal with videos, let's start with the act of watching: is there a unique and incontrovertible reality? Let's try to look at the world, literally, with other eyes through a small test with three images in which we will ask the participants to identify whose vision they are looking at and why they think the subject sees the world in that way.

The author: Luca Cusani

Luca Cusani is an author and film director from Milan, Italy.

He has made several winning documentaries at national and international festivals and his fictional short film "La Macchia" won the award for best communication at the 2017 Venice Film Festival. Since 2003 he has been conducting video workshops in schools in the belief that the video tool can involve students actively and that proper image education is essential for the new generations.



Picture 1

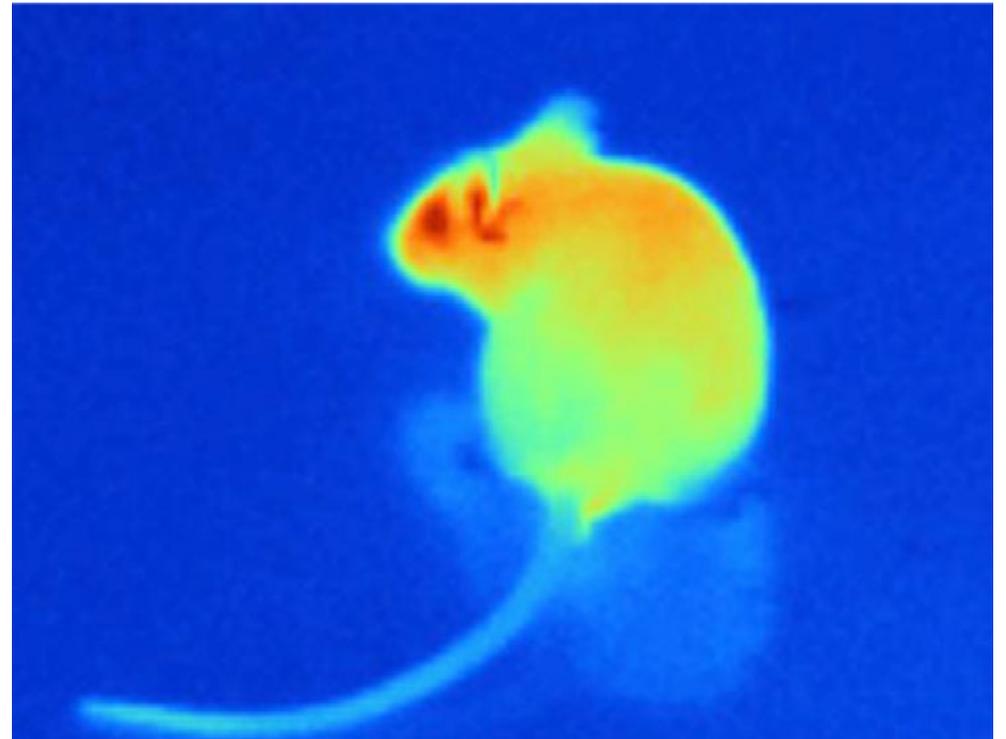
If Power Point will be used, it is advisable to put this first image and the explanation on the next screen. In the case of PDFs, it is advisable, as in the quizzes, to flip the explanation under the image.

Explanation: this is the vision of a bee: the bee has a visual spectrum centered only on some colors that makes the source of its nourishment, the flowers, to emerge strongly from the context.



Picture 2

Explanation: This is the look of a snake using thermal vision. For two reasons: the first is that it feeds only on live prey so the body must be warm, the second is that, while hunting at night, it has an evolutionary advantage.





Picture 3

Explanation: The view above is that of a hawk. The area where it is possible that there are prey is highlighted thanks to a natural zoom in its eye, the surrounding context is blurred because it is not useful for predation. The vision below is instead a human vision: everything is in focus because it is important to determine all the resources of the territory and all possible threats.

We understood that the perception of the world depends on the eyes of the beholder. But given that our gaze, as a species, is biologically the same among all human beings in the world, what is the variable to consider in our case? We will therefore have to focus not on “how” we look but on “what” we look at, on our point of view. Let’s take this old Guardian commercial for example:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_SccRkLLzU





The commercial, aimed at reaffirming the impartiality, independence and completeness of information of the newspaper, was shot simultaneously from three angles and definitively clarifies that the reality we access depends on the point of view we choose, on the portion of space that we resume.

With this example we are not saying that in our story there must always use an omniscient vision, on the contrary **choosing a specific point of view** will make more effective our video product. However even if we do not show the whole context, we must nevertheless be aware of it, so as not to give false information or force reality to get our message across. Let's keep this in mind when we make our video: what point of view are we adopting? Are we giving voice to all the protagonists? Are we omitting valuable information?

Now suppose we have chosen our point of view: what further elements do we need to consider? We will probably talk about a certain topic by filming the **context** in which it occurs, with **characters** who tell us about it and the **actions** that are performed. All these aspects must be planned in advance:

- Where will I do the filming? If possible I will carry out inspections, take some photos and decide what my privileged point of view will be.
- Who will I interview? I will select some characters useful to communicate the subject of my video, if possible I will speak with them first in order to familiarize without the camera.
- What actions will be performed? On the basis of the information collected, I will evaluate which are the most significant actions to be filmed or requested to be performed by the protagonists of my story or I will collect existing footage of these actions.



When we get ready to do our shooting we should take care to make it clear what environment we are in, where our character is and finally what emotions he/she feels. In general we should always start with filming the environment to give the essential information about the context, then we should film the character while doing some actions into the environment and finally we can hear the voice of our protagonists.



In fact there are some rare cases in which you do not need to hear that voice because the images are so strong that you do not, literally, need words. This is the case of a wonderful documentary film on land grabbing and forest destruction without any dialogue, any single word. But do we really need any?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WNgoqBGw4Y>

But, as we said, this is a really rare case. Normally our protagonists are human beings, or if they are animals or plants, some human being will tell you something about them. And they will tell you all this through an interview. So let's focus on the **interview**: the direct voice of the protagonists is often essential to give credibility to our product and to create empathy in the viewer.

We can now proceed in several ways. We can carry out a "classic" interview with our seated protagonist who talks to us, or carry it out on the go while he does a specific action. In general, to safeguard the sound quality and take more time to deepen, the advice is to do a "classic" interview anyway, the content of which can then be assembled on an action to create more rhythm. In any case, it is important to guide the interview by asking short questions and asking short answers and not forcing the protagonist to do things he would not do or to say things he would not say: the sense of reality or unreality always shines through in the video and makes it more or less credible.

Example of classic and moving interview in documentary on overfishing (from 22.25 to 29.24). In the second part we asked the fisherman to show us the harbor, so it was a specific request from the film maker, but still you can see that the emotions engaged in this request are not fake:

https://youtu.be/D_z4Pp56Zl4

Exercise 2 - to be carried out face to face

Now to familiarize yourself with this technique we will carry out a series of small live interviews replicating the format "50 people 1 question" ():

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0tEcxLDDd4>



In our case we will invite the participants to interview each other asking themselves the following question: "What kind of world would you like to find tomorrow morning when you wake up?"

Here's how to proceed:

The interview set is decided (the place, the background, the type of shot, the horizontal or vertical format of the shot), the question is asked and the answer is resumed (possibly even with a mobile phone). The respondent switches to the role of interviewer and in turn will resume the next trainee until everyone has answered. You can then edit all the answers in a row and get a smooth video.

It is advisable to do the interview in a separate place so that the participants do not hear the previous answers and thus create a surprise effect compared to the final editing.



2 - THE NARRATIVE

Having settled some questions of language, we must now ask ourselves how to make our narrative effective. It's not enough to choose the right place, the right people, the right topics and ask the right questions. You also need to tie all of these elements into a compelling narrative. Furthermore, since we are dealing with a communication that wants to create a change in society, it must be clear that this change is possible. Which narrative formula is best suited to achieve this goal?

Exercise 3 - both live and online: Story of self, us, now

With this exercise we intend to let the students experience an effective narrative method starting from self-narration.



How to proceed

We will divide the students into small groups of 4/5 people. We will ask each of the students to think about a fact that actually happened, an injustice actually suffered (it can be something that happened long before, even in childhood, or a few hours before the request).

The student will therefore have to prepare an exposition of this fact to be reported to the group in a maximum of 3 minutes according to this scheme:

the narration will have to begin with the exposure of the injustice suffered as a personal fact, which seems to affect only the narrator (story of self - about 1'), and then move on to the awareness that it does not concern only himself but more people or even a group (story of us - about 1') and ending with the strategy of overcoming the problem that the narrator of the story has found (story of now - about 1').

An example of this narrative mechanism can be found in the opening scenes of the film Forrest Gump in which the protagonist is bullied - story of self - then he discovers that his new friend is also a victim - story of us - to end up with the solution of the problem that, in this case, is "running like the wind" - story of now:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ViyWS8GbRI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3ZS3yWk55g>

Once all the stories have been listened to, each group will choose the most emblematic and best narrated story within it, which will then be exposed in plenary to all the students by the narrator. This narrative mechanism can be applied to awareness campaigns through the telling of significant testimonials in which the last step, story of now, coincides with a specific call to action (donate, subscribe, manifest).



3 - THE FORMAT

Last but not least, there is the decision on the format of our video, its tone of voice and how to best convey it. All this should be decided in advance but we put it at this point because now the participants have more tools to make these decisions. In particular, the choice of format depends on the communication strategy and the media used: very short videos for Instagram, longer for Facebook, multi-level and protracted communication campaign, short campaign on a specific theme etc.

In general, however, it is never recommended to produce videos longer than 3 - 4 minutes, if the duration is longer, it is better to choose a serial format. The choice of **tone of voice** for our video will also depend on the communication strategy. We can use irony or the reversal of prejudices, or we can rely on an empathic and warm narrative.

In this section we will limit ourselves to giving some significant examples as each communication strategy must be adapted to the context, the target audience, the media used, the available budget etc. Variations that will have to be examined by each individual activist / organization based on their needs and abilities.

Awareness campaign / fund raising, one off:

This very famous example aims to emphasize with the victim and chooses the unique point of view on reality corresponding to the viewer's gaze:

Most shocking second a day – Save The Children UK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBQ-loHfimQ>

Still the most shocking second a day – Save The Children UK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKDgFCojiT8>

Serial format:

Investigation into the supply chain that leads to the creation of a T-shirt from the cultivation of the raw material to the final product.

In this case, the seriality of the story constructs a complex story that unfolds over several continents and is functional to address various issues, including that of sustainability. The series finale contains some of the tools reported in this toolkit (interviews and storytelling):

<https://apps.npr.org/tshirt/#/title>

Tone of voice:

This video example aims to overcome stereotypes through the tool of irony in a very effective way:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLix4QPL3tY>

Further references from SAIH Norway¹:

Africa for Norway

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJLqyuxm96k>

Who wants to be a volunteer?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ymcflrj_rRc&t=91s

Let's save Africa

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbqA6o8_WC0

The Radi-Aid app

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBrNa-VoJfc>

This is an example of awareness raising through a cross - media campaign based on empathy from PLAN Norway:

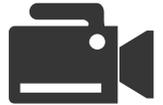
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcxUVNmldx4>

Finally an example played on the overturning of common sense by NAGA (*"Enough immigrants! - We meet, welcome and cure People"*):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtslVM2C-R8>

The Corona Diaries, an example of collective and participatory youth-led storytelling by Action Aid Global Platforms

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnVllbNuW-Y&list=PLD_slW13cy2srD7yMp9hQppqF38WHxxYQ

**Further inspiring references:**

The following case studies have been selected for the Food Wave project by Riccardo Catagnano, NABA professor and Connexia creative director:

Metro “dumb ways to die” campaign (care)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLsUk_VGCbY

The tampon book Scholz&Friends Berlin - The Female Company - GP PR

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=la9_7orA3pM

Born in quarantine (reassurance)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OW4AFbjGk>

The Swedish number case study (transparency)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BkyaqWYS_MM

Lions progress through creativity

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vB6khHQzisA>

Here are some examples of effective advertisement elaborated through a participatory process by young students in the framework of the Eathink DEAR project co-ordinated by ACRA (2015-2017)

Animation on virtual water (URGENCEI, France)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-kGT7dsV54>

Stop-motion ads on fighting food waste (KOPIN, Malta)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwMRHkQw1PU>

Participatory video-making ads on stopping food waste (CARDET, Cyprus)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNmJMS4VfxM>

Animation ads against food waste:

Polish Green Network, Poland

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lj_3i2dtX80

Zmergo, Croatia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbupNFzy62E>

Sustainability tips from young changemakers (Anthropolis, Hungary)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlqUu31eGqU>

Sustainable food superheros (Euskal Fondoa, Basque Country, Spain)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=393ucG40Xfw>

Distopic ads comparing conventional and sustainable farming (Institute for Sustainable Development, Slovenia)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cyWzP1eJ5s>

See below some further inspiring professional examples related to sustainable food systems:

ACRA on agrobiodiversity

<https://youtu.be/CjVPiRHgOPQ>

Slow Food - Food for change campaign

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAfh0fdH5H8&t=19s>

WWF International - Our Planet - How does the food we eat impact our climate?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExNpnukxB2Q>

Love Food Hate Waste campaign

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_XuXgEfg7do&t=7s

And here is an example of storytelling of local initiatives (14') related to inclusive food systems:

ACRA - Not just food - EU project Food Relations

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hyX3TaYFX4s&t=22s>



4 - TECH TIPS

So now we are ready to make our video. Making a good quality video is not as easy as it could seem. We have the preparation, the shooting, the editing and postproduction phase. It is a very complex journey from the first idea to the final product.

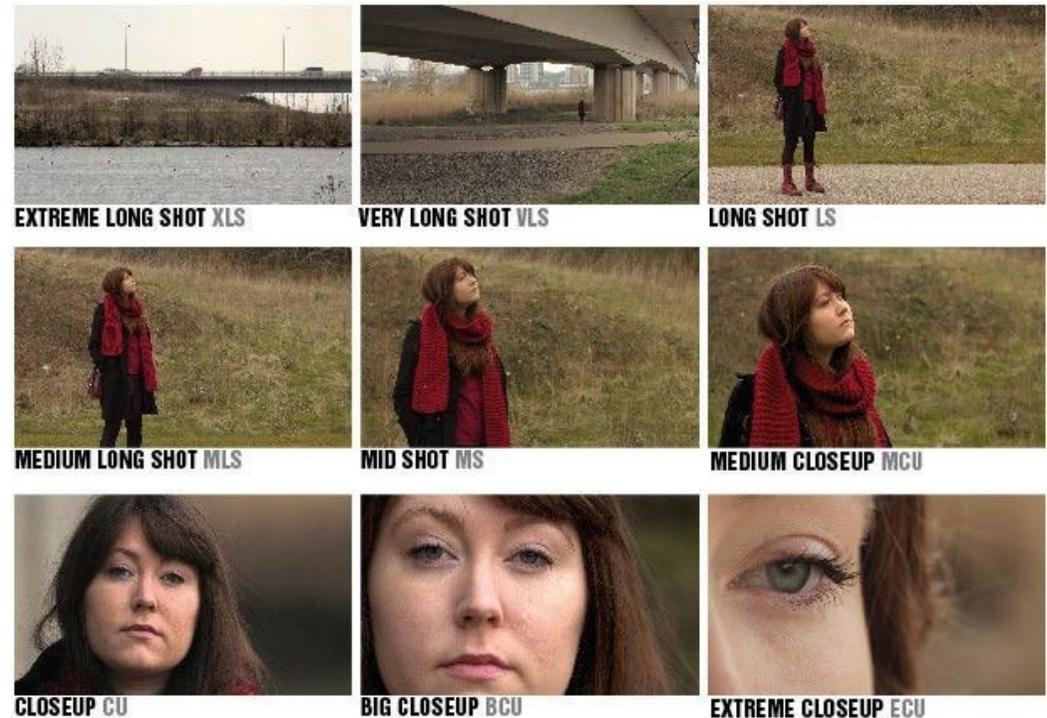
Before starting a new project, it is mandatory to clarify immediately which **theme** will be addressed, in what **context**, with what **testimony** and with what **narrative style**. Whenever possible, it is advisable to write a **rough outline** or even a detailed **storyboard** considering all these elements and consequently a **production plan** for its realization. However, it is also good to keep an open mind to the unexpected: probably not everything will go as planned and we will have to be flexible enough to adapt or even to accommodate possible innovations.

Once we have done the preparatory part, we are ready to go on the field. Here are some basic tips: you should have a camera capable of making at least HD videos or alternatively a latest generation smartphone. It is recommended to use a tripod or to rent a stabilizer, a Gimbal, and a directional microphone in order to obtain a stable image and a clean sound.

During the **shooting** always make some images of the context, some interviews and film some actions. Regarding the interviews, it is very important to always have an **image release** signed by the people we interviewed, as per GDPR EU 2016/679. In the case of minors, the prior consent of the **parents or legal guardians** is mandatory.

Choose if you want your character to look directly in the camera (this could be mandatory if you are alone) or if you want he/she to look at the interviewer. Take care of where the source of light comes from (sun or artificial light) so that your subject is properly illuminated. Do not shoot only what you need, shoot more, probably you will use your extra shooting!

Furthermore you must consider that videos are usually composed of different shots and each of them has a meaning. The wider shots are usually used to describe an environment or a character (how he/she is dressed, where he/she is, what he/she is doing) while the closer shots are used to describe the emotions of that character (happy, afraid, surprised etc.) or a significant detail (a sight, a hand, a ring etc ..).





So depending on what you need to communicate, you will have to shoot the correct images. Furthermore: very often when we are not used to shoot, we stay too distant from our subject. Try to get as close as you can to your character when you are making an interview, this will also be a plus for the sound.

Now the **editing** part: make a selection of the shooting you made, starting from the interviews. Make a narrative flow about the subject you are talking about and only when it is all clear, go to the next step selecting the right images to better tell your story, and the right music to underline it. Consider that it's a probably better choice to use an instrumental music so that you do not mess with words and consider also that this music must stress some topic moments not all the narrative.

See this example of documentary: the beginning of the film has a recorded soundtrack (a woman voice mixed with instruments) and after comes the live music of the band for the title and to underline the athletes training scene and after that returns the soundtrack (from beginning to 14.00):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nlr5woYuWIE>

For editing there are some free basic programs to use: Imovie for Mac and Windows Movie Maker. You can also use KineMaster both for IOS, Linux and Windows or Splice only for IOS, to edit directly in your **smartphone**. Otherwise, if possible, we recommend using Final Cut for Mac and Premiere for Windows.

For music it is possible to download a large number of copyright free tracks from these libraries that you will be able to use in your editing depending on the mood of your video:

with creative commons license non commercial - attribution

https://freemusicarchive.org/music/Podington_Bear

Facebook

https://business.facebook.com/creatorstudio/?tab=ct_sound_collection&collection_id=all_pages&sound_collection_tab=sound_tracks

To soundtrack a video you can also use this free sound site:

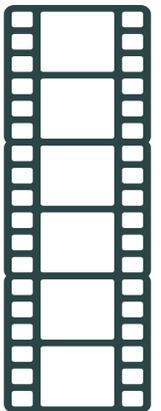
<https://freesound.org>

And finally, to make some basic graphics you can use this free tool:

www.canva.com

So to summarize:

- *Choose the topic*
- *Choose the context*
- *Choose your characters*
- *Choose your point of view*
- *Choose the format*
- *Choose your tone of voice*



Project with care, shoot with passion!



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PHOTOGRAPHY



The Mini Toolkit leads you through all the aspects that come into play when creating a photo reportage with journalistic content, which can be published in print publications, online, used on social media for awareness campaigns or even showcased as an exhibition.

The Mini Toolkit includes a series of lessons on how to find a story and bring it to life, from storyboard to work in the field, to finally presenting the project itself in a way that can be appealing for publishers and their audiences.

Many of the suggested examples originate from the author's firsthand experiences, and are therefore reported in the first person.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A REPORTAGE?

A reportage is a JOURNALISTIC REPORT THAT HIGHLIGHTS DIRECT TESTIMONY. A photo reportage therefore uses images to tell the story of a country, an event, a person or group of people, a journey, an experience or an adventure.

Photography, and photojournalism in particular, is research in constant balance between objectivity and subjectivity. Between US - the eyes, mind, history and past of the photographer - and the SUBJECT we are portraying - a house, room, person, landscape, city or anything around us in that moment, or any objective reality we need to know as well as possible. The camera is there to mediate: it is a technical tool we must get to know perfectly, in order to get exactly what we want out of it.

How can we move around the territory, find the most interesting locations, tell a story through images?

HOW A REPORTAGE IS BORN - HOW TO FIND A STORY AND DEVELOP IT

The first source can be a newspaper, book or foreign website, an in-depth dive into a piece of news that was just mentioned in passing in an existing article or a chat we had, a random meeting with someone who told us about an event, or our own online research following leads to find out more about something we care about.

In general, always be curious and look for inspiration in the least expected places. Everyone reads major daily newspapers from their own country, but you may be the only one checking the online updates from a niche foreign publication...

The author: Bruno Zanzottera

Born in Monza on 11/12/1957. Photographer, videoreporter, journalist.

In 1979, he made his first African journey on an old Peugeot 404 across the Sahara to the Atlantic Ocean. In this way started his adventure as a reporter committed to telling stories of people from all over the world. Professional photographer for over 30 years. He specializes in social, cultural, ethnographic and geographic reportage, mostly in Africa.

In his career he published countless photographic reportage on magazines around the world. Among these: National Geographic Magazine, GEO France, GEO International, GEO Italia, Airone, Le Figaro Magazine, VSD, Internazionale, D-La Repubblica, Sette, Corriere della Sera, Meridiani, Panorama, Panorama Travel, Focus, Focus History.

In 2007 he created the Parallelozero photographic agency with the colleagues Alessandro Gandolfi, Sergio Ramazzotti and Davide Scagliola.

Since 2017 he has been working on the project on the life of the last nomads on the planet with the anthropologist Elena Dak. The first job took place in India among the Rabari ethnic group.



The “five Ws”. When defining a story, it is always useful to try to answer the classic five questions of journalism: who, what, where, when, and why.

It is not easy to find stories that answer all of these questions, but try to get as close as possible.

You can start from a single individual’s story to then approach a wider and more general issue. I once worked with a journalist who decided to write about maternity while she was pregnant. We ended up creating the first photo essay on surrogate mothers in India, encompassing the ethical and social issues this choice entails.

Once the job was done, we decided to start a series of photo essays about motherhood in the world. It was the beginning of the *Mothers* project, for which we also collaborated with another photographer and his partner - who was also a journalist, and pregnant at the time. Each story in the project had its own meaning, but also fit in with an overarching theme.

Pdf Mothers:

https://parallelozero.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/World_Mothers.pdf

EXERCISE 1 (in person or online):

The group decides on one theme, together. Then participants split into groups of 4-5 people and define how they would create a photo essay, highlighting the 5Ws. Time: 1 hour.

Back in the plenary session, each group has one person present their work in 3 minutes or less.

PREPARING A STORYBOARD



Once we have found an idea that meets the requirements we just described, we have to start developing it by preparing a storyboard.

A storyboard is a visual document including a series of sketches with captions, or sometimes simple explanations, which represents the frames or scenes we want to achieve in the final A/V or multimedia product we are working on.

Making a list of the most relevant topics to develop and photograph in the reportage is always useful. Places, subjects, situations.

It is crucial to study, but also to look at things with fresh new eyes. It is important to know what we are looking for, but just as important to allow the unexpected to surprise us. As they say in Sudan, “You know what you are looking for, not what you will find”.

A typical example of this is ethnologist Marcel Griaule’s study of the Dogon people. In his book *Conversations with Ogotemmeli: An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas* (originally published in 1948 as *Dieu d’Eau*), Griaule revealed to the world the complex cosmogony of the Dogon universe, as he learned it from the old sage Ogotemmeli. The book was very successful and the general takeaway was that the Dogon were a people of wise men, devoted to exoteric research. Anyone who traveled to their region started frantically looking for the myths Griaule had written about. This actually created a cultural short circuit, because many Dogon knew nothing about the world he had described: so much traditional knowledge had either been lost over time or had been invented, that they studied the book in order to start behaving just as visitors expected them to.

Therefore, it is important to study all the elements that will come together in the reportage – but if you find the situation is different from what you expected, once you are on location, let go of your beliefs and allow the



new circumstances to lead you. Your work will probably turn out to be more original and interesting.

An interesting story can often start from a hot topic in the current news and then develop around more hidden and less obvious aspects of the situation.

A good example of this is provided by Covid – certainly the most outstanding event in our daily news this year. We can still find parallel stories to dive into, within this situation.

Pdf Covid - artisti: https://parallelozero.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Italy_Rediscovering-time.pdf

When you embark on any type of reportage – geographical, anthropological, social or naturalistic – it is crucial that you know how to relate to places and people who are very distant from our way of living and thinking. You must turn your camera into a tool for mediation.

When we travel far away from our own culture, we might encounter situations that we find hard to understand.

An example of this is the concept of time in Africa. As the great Polish reporter Ryszard Kapuscinski wrote, the idea of time in places like Africa is very different from the idea we have in different worlds. In Africa, it is useless to ask at what time the party starts: the answer is, obviously, when everybody has arrived!

Once, while I was working on a reportage on Rimbaud's Africa, I spent a whole day in a village in the Afar Triangle waiting for people to agree on who would be my guide, who would provide the camels or who the provisions so I could get to the Erta Ale volcano. The solution seemed easy at first, but there were a series of delicate balances to respect so that nobody would feel offended or forgotten. In these cases, it is important to be patient and try not to push the situation.

While preparing the storyboard, it is important to decide how to tackle a topic.

Photo reportages often merge different genres – such as portrait, aerial, architectural, wildlife and breaking news photography. Together, they all should form a complex and complete story of the reality being captured.

We will focus here on 3 different types of reportage:

The project on the Zambezi is a classic geographical and cultural reportage, in which all the elements listed above come into play.

Pdf Zambesi:
https://parallelozero.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Africa_Zambesi.pdf

The project about immigrants in Baranzate, having a social focus, was carried out exclusively with a series of portraits.

Pdf Baranzate:
https://parallelozero.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Baranzate_The-world-at-home.pdf

In another social reportage project, dedicated to volunteers' efforts and homeless people, posed pictures were instead completely avoided.

Pdf volunteers and homeless:
https://parallelozero.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Italy_Sos-Volunteers.pdf

Sometimes, you can imagine tackling the same project from two different angles: portraits and action photography, for example, like in this reportage on the patients in a Muslim village in Niger, who travel 700 km to be treated in the clinic run by a Catholic friar. The project was split into two parts: a series of portraits - of the people who had been to the hospital and came back to their village healed - and a reportage that followed two patients in their journey from the village to the facility.

Pdf Niger Benin:

https://parallelozero.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Niger-Benin_The-healing-faiths.pdf

https://parallelozero.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Niger-Benin_Portraits-The-monk-and-the-caliph.pdf

EXERCISE 2 ONLINE

Participants split into the same groups as the first exercise and, together, prepare a storyboard for the selected topic. Time: 1 hour.

The storyboard is then presented in plenary in no more than 5 minutes.

The following tools can be used to create your storyboard²:

<https://www.canva.com/storyboards/templates/>

<https://www.storyboardthat.com/>

PHOTOGRAPHIC STYLE

Once the storyboard is ready, you must think about how your ideas can be conveyed by images.

A photographer's STYLE must be easy to recognize, but also able to evolve. Accept the inputs you receive from other people, but remember you are not there to sell.

Following trends can work for a while, but not in the long run. Your style should always be personal.

Look for original shots in the most popular places. Nothing is harder than taking photos in beautiful places like Venice, because everything seems like it is already been captured or seen.

Look for aesthetics and harmony in your images, always following your

2. Suggested by Action Aid Italy

CURIOSITY and HARD WORK.

Even if you are tackling dramatic topics - like wars, poverty, diseases, etc. - never forget aesthetics. The image must convey how dramatic the situation is, but will be even more effective if it has a strong aesthetic quality. The best compliment I ever got from an editor-in-chief was "You are able to find beauty even in the most dramatic situations".

https://parallelozero.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Western-Sahara_Saharawi.pdf

HOW TO TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS

For this chapter, we have come up with ten rules to follow before, during and after you take a photo. In the final exercise, students will have to create a series of images by following these rules.

BEFORE YOU TAKE THE PHOTO



Photo by Bruno Zanzottera



STUDY. Look at great photographers' images, trying to understand how they created them. For example: did they wait a long time or was it a stroke of luck? Also study the works of great painters like Caravaggio, who was a master at using light.

PLAN. Decide on a topic, a goal to achieve, a project. It can be for the medium or long term, and develop in one or more locations. Follow it, so it becomes your target. Flesh it out at the drawing board, pinpointing where you want to shoot, the subjects, or the calendar you want to follow. Also make a list of the objects you want to photograph.

Here we have 5 images on the subject of volunteering during the lockdown due to COVID. First I selected the interventions that I found interesting for

my work, 5 different types of volunteering. 1 volunteers on the ambulances, 2 helping the homeless, 3 preparing food packages for families in economic difficulties, 4 buying and delivering medicines for those who were stuck in quarantine, 5 bringing the dogs to the park of those people who lived alone and were in quarantine.

Later I alternated portraits with action photos in order to give further variety to the whole reportage.



Photo by *Bruno Zanzottera*





WHILE YOU TAKE THE PHOTO



PRACTICE. Some images are lost forever, just because we were not fast enough to stop them, capture the moment – and often due to technicalities, because we are not aware of certain basic principles. Knowing your camera well, how it works, what potential it has, the lenses you have at hand, means you won't waste time setting everything up when you need to shoot.



WANDER. Walk around the city, the theater, the parties you are invited to (or not). Loiter, enter closed rooms, peak behind the surface of things. Make time to wander aimlessly: the best photos often come at unexpected times.



Photo by Bruno Zanzottera



GET OUT. Do not stay still. Leave the house before dawn in the morning, or while the sun is setting. That is when natural light is the warmest, because the sun's rays have to cut through more atmosphere – which filters out white light, but not orange. A famous photographer once said, *"There are no great photographers, just photographers who wake up early in the morning"*.



GET CLOSER. Do not be shy. You have to get closer to the subjects you want to photograph – without invading their space. Exchange a few words, engage with them, tell them about yourself and your passion for photography. You need to create a certain intimacy. Sometimes the difference between a formal photograph and a beautiful one is all in how close you can get. Even Capa said, *"If your pictures aren't good enough, you aren't close enough"*.



Photo by Bruno Zanzottera



DISAPPEAR.

Ideally, you should be invisible: walk around the people you want to photograph without them seeing you, so they do not pose or stiffen, to capture their most spontaneous and authentic expressions. You cannot make yourself truly invisible, but you certainly can immerse yourself in their reality, camouflage, hide, or on the contrary create such harmony with the subject that they are so used to seeing you they do not really notice your presence anymore. It is just another way to disappear.



WAIT.

Be stubborn and patient: if you can not get a photo, you will get it at some point. Just constantly look for it, without rushing. Sit on a bench and wait for the elements of your picture to come together on their own, always ready to shoot.



Photo by Bruno Zanzottera



SAY SOMETHING. If you can, make sure your image has something to say: it can symbolize a story, a feeling, a passion. Or even just a moment of boredom.



DRAW. Imagine your photograph like a canvas on which you can paint shapes and colors. Look for colors, shapes and patterns that you are curious about in the world, and try to capture them on your "canvas". Modern cameras can do everything on their own, except compose an image, removing or adding elements until the right balance is achieved. For example, if you like the color of a wall but feel like something is missing, wait for someone to walk by and photograph them exactly where you want them. You create the balance in your images.



Photo by Bruno Zanzottera



EXPERIMENT. Study the basic rules of photography, but do not be afraid to break them: there are no absolute principles. Experiment with anything: new angles, new lights and backlights, new shadows, new details, new weather. Do not settle for the first photograph, try others.



DARE. Try different techniques, such as *fill-in* (using a small flash to lighten shady areas, often during the day to soften the shadows cast on a person's face by strong sunlight), *open flash* (which is usually used at night or in the evening, with longer exposure while the subject is illuminated with flashes), or *panning* (capturing a moving subject, so they clearly appear on a background that is blurred according to the direction of the movement). Or try using Lastolite reflective backgrounds.



Photo by Bruno Zanzottera



USE A TRIPOD. A tripod is necessary for digital photography too. Choose any “model” you want, including mini tripods, monopods, windowsills, furniture or even sand bags.



AFTER YOU TAKE THE PHOTO

GO BACK. If you are not happy with the photo you took, go back to the location – perhaps at a different time of day when the light is different, when a particular monument is lit up in a special way, or when a festival adds dynamism to a square that is usually bland.



Photo by *Bruno Zanzottera*



EDIT. At the end of the day or of the project, you will have taken many photographs. Keep the ones you like the most and finally present only a selection of the images that best tell the story you want to represent. People who are watching your photos like your audience for a social media campaign have never much time, so it is crucial to grab their attention by giving them an idea of your work from the very first images. Your editing must present a variety of situations in sequence, with each image having different features so that you are giving a general presentation of your work within the first dozen photographs or so.

IMPROVE. Be hard on yourself: discard anything you are not truly satisfied with, and learn from your mistakes. Observe the photographs you do not like and ask yourself why. What's wrong with them? Did you miscalculate the light? Or is the composition off?

PRESENT. Your job is not over after your rigorous selection. If you want someone to really appreciate your image, you need to process it: lighten the shadows, add a slight contrast, put it in a thin black frame on a white or light gray background. Show it to good photographers, who will be able to give you good advice.

Here are some open source programs for the post-productions of the photos:

<https://www.gimp.org>

<https://www.dotpdn.com/downloads/pdn.html>

http://photofiltre.free.fr/frames_en.htm

<https://paintbrush.sourceforge.io> (for MAC)

Programme to elaborate RAW pictures:

<https://www.xnview.com/en/xnviewmp>

EXERCISE 3 ONLINE



The last exercise you can conduct online will be a presentation of the work, after completing it. During the exercise, gather all the photographs taken and start selecting. Then decide in which order you want to present them.

WRITING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Are journalist and photojournalist compatible roles that can be played by the same person? Budget and production constraints often lead them to merge.

Journalism and photography move on very different timelines. However, thorough preparation for a photoshoot often overlaps with the preparation you would need as a journalist.

MULTIMEDIA

All modern cameras also allow us to record videos. Thus, a photographer can also create multimedia products that bring video and photography together. These products – and the fact they can now be made without an entire film crew – are particularly effective in the world of social media communication as well as in TV documentaries.

Refugee Republic, a multimedia reportage on the refugee camps in Syria, is a very interesting example of how video graphics and photography can be used together.

<https://refugeerepublic.submarinechannel.com/>



A further example of using social media in a creative way, involving the public in photography is the one used by the Getty Museum.

When museums and art galleries closed due to the pandemic, they moved online. Virtual tours and live streams became the new way of visit them, but the Getty Museum found a creative way to engage its audience by inviting them to look at their online collection, choose their favorite work and recreate it using three objects they had at home.

Then the public could share the photos made of the works online at the hashtag #GettyMuseumChallenge; the museum published them with a comment.

Users on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram responded enthusiastically; grabbing everything they had at home, they reproduced a large number of works of art.

https://twitter.com/hashtag/gettymuseumchallenge?src=hashtag_click



COPYRIGHT, PRIVACY

COPYRIGHT.

In Italy there is a copyright law (also in photography) which guarantees the right to manage one's "creative" images (those images where there is an interpretative trace by the photographer) and protects them up to 70 years from the death of the author (while simple "non-creative" photographs are protected for 20 years from the date of creation). Always check country specific regulations.

RIGHT TO PRIVACY

The same law states that the face of a person who is not famous cannot be published if he is not consenting (in theory you need his authorization, even oral). It is also not possible to publish images that are harmful to the dignity of the person.

Particularly stringent are the rules relating to the disclosure of images concerning minors who must not be identifiable.

Check GDPR and country specific regulations for further reference.



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WEB RADIO



TELLING STORIES IN THE RADIO

The radio can be many different things: a news bulletin, a commentary, a conversation or a sound card.

A good podcast is like a story: there must be protagonists, extras, places. A narrative thread must accompany the listener to the finished work while maintaining a good rhythm. The boring radio can hardly communicate what it would like. A story has rhythm when it manages to mix voices, music, ambient sounds, obtaining a balanced listening result. There is no rule but training, which passes from both producing and listening to other people's works, which is very useful for developing greater sensitivity.

It may sound strange, but radio is a very visual means of communication. You have to give the listeners something to "look at" with their imagination instead of with their eyes. There are some tricks for showing things on the radio. You can use the descriptive method: "over there on the sidewalk there is an ostrich running". Even if the listener cannot see the ostrich, a space has been created in his imagination in which to insert it. You can use the microphone as if it were a camera by panning, cropping and zooming for a close-up. Just like with a camera, keeping the microphone close to an



interviewed guest creates greater intimacy (close-up) while the farthest microphone will also let in background sounds or other voices further away, obtaining a more panoramic effect. The creative and conscious use of the microphone and audio editing helps to create images in the listening mind.

Great recordings can be made both in the studio and in other environments. If you have a mixer, microphones and a computer, you can set up a small studio.

You can do radio even without a studio: recording sounds, voices, music, environments with an mp3 recorder (all smartphones have one integrated) and then experimenting with audio editing, one of the areas of great creativity in audio production for radio.

Exercise 1 (online/offline):

Write a narrative text, imagine sounds and music to make it richer, record your voice and mix it with a voice, sounds, music background with an editing program
Little dragons example by Johan Gabrielsson

http://mpegmedia.abc.net.au/rn/podcast/2015/08/ric_20150828_1105.mp3



RECORDING WITHOUT A STUDIO



It is not always necessary to have a radio studio to make radio shows and podcasts. The production of journalistic reports, audio documentaries, sound cards, audio diaries is based on the collection of voices and sounds to be cut and mixed during the editing phase. The only limit is creativity.

Having an mp3 recorder available, or even just a smartphone, allows you to record the sounds that characterize the places we want to tell, or that are the backdrop to our story. Not only that: in addition to being able to tell what we see, we can immortalize it as it happens: recording what happens often is more effective than telling it later.

If it is true that a smartphone can be enough to record sounds and interviews, on the other hand, modern mp3 recorders offer a series of additional tools that can be very useful for recording good quality clips: listening with headphones while recording, graphic representation of the intensity of the sound being recorded.

When recording outdoors with sensitive microphones it is always advisable to apply a protective sponge, this has an anti-pop function in the voice recording (which prevents the P's being pronounced in front of the microphone, which have a strong sound intensity, from ruining the recording) and a windproof function (even a slight breeze with a sensitive microphone can become a rustle that renders recording unusable).

Some mp3 recorders offer the possibility to increase or decrease the microphone recording range obtaining a more directional effect, preferred for recording a voice excluding background noise, or panoramic to collect the sounds of an environment.

To record a voice, it is good to keep the microphone quite close to the speaker's mouth, in the case of an interview the microphone must alternately point towards the guest and towards the journalist. Never leave the microphone in the hands of the guest, it is important to keep control of what and how it is recorded.

Once the registration is finished, it is important to immediately archive the file or files obtained, noting the name of the person interviewed, place of registration, date. A messy archive can make the editing phase very tiring.

Do not throw anything away: even if only a few clips are used to make the final edit, it is always advisable to keep a copy of everything you record, filing it carefully. One day the same material could be useful for another project.

Works are not left in the drawer: the radio is made to be listened to and it is important to collect impressions and opinions on one's work. You can use an online platform and share the link or, if the podcast is not too long, send it directly with an email or a message.

Exercise 2 (online/offline):

Record a sound card of your neighborhood using voices, sounds, music recorded on the street.

Example Les traqueurs de bruits by Abdellah M. Hassak

<https://radiopapesse.org/it/archive/sonora/les-traqueurs-de-bruits>



CARRY OUT AN INTERVIEW



To make a good interview, you have to step into the shoes of the reporter. It is essential to be curious, even by interviewing people you know well you can discover things that would never have been talked about without a microphone. Having a good interview is more than just writing down a list of questions.

The first rule for a good interview, whether in the studio, on the street, at home or in an office, is to make your guest feel comfortable. It is important to share with her / him why we are making the recording, what will happen to it, if it will be published in full form or if it will be edited, if in addition to her voice we will hear other opinions or points of view on the same topic. We need to have a lot of respect for our guests, just as if we had invited them to dinner, we must do everything possible to make the interview a good experience for them too, without betraying their trust and trying to honestly orient expectations.

Ambient sounds and noises are important if they are part of the story you want to tell, but you must be careful that the figure / background relationship is not reversed. If you are recording in a noisy place it may be useful to do some recording tests to check the result before starting. It is always a good habit to record a few minutes of sounds of the environment in which the interview is carried out separately, which may be useful during the editing phase to create a sound image of the places we are describing.

Preparing a list of questions is always very useful, also because it forces us to think about what are the important things we want to be told. Questions that are simply answered with a “yes” or “no” are to be avoided, preferring questions that force the guest to argue their point of view.

It is important to maintain eye contact with whoever you are interviewing: it is an important form of respect, otherwise it may seem that what they are telling us does not interest us. If you conceive the interview as a conversation, you must be willing to share something about yourself, actively participate and not just mechanically read a sequence of questions.

You can let our guest continue his activities during the interview, an opportunity that allows us to record his voice in her environment. Furthermore, doing things during registration will put the guest more at ease.

While conducting an interview, you can also take brief notes to store the important information collected. Modern mp3 recorders allow you to mark the file during recording to find important points in the final file more quickly.

The real big secret to making a good interview is still curiosity, making a reportage is a journey of discovery of the world around us and of oneself.

Exercise 3 (online/offline):

Record an interview with someone you would like to know better, cut your questions and try to build a fluid narrative with only the answers

Example The living room by Briana Breen (narration resulting from an interview, without sounds but with accompanying music)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3CUH7V_l6w&feature=youtu.be

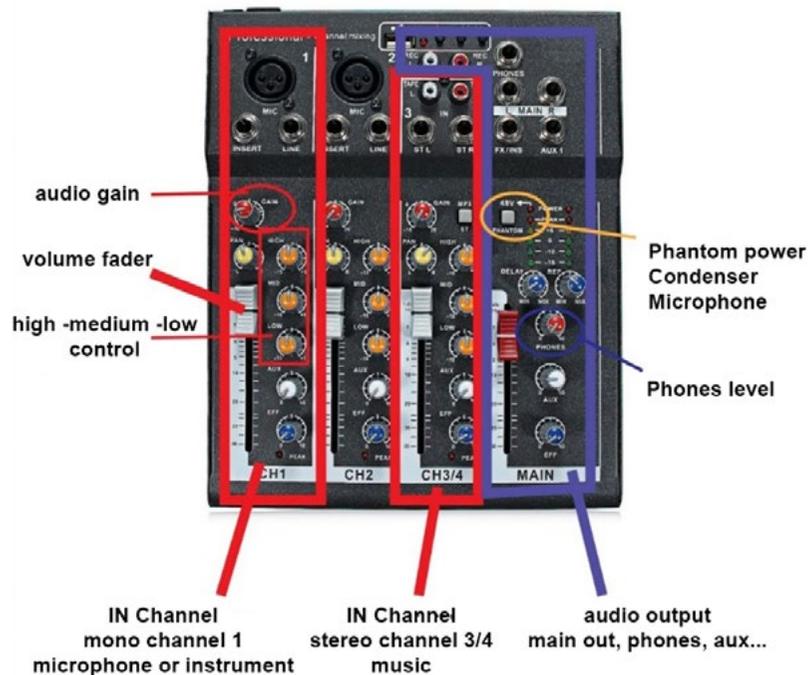


USE OF THE MIXER

The basic function of the mixer is to mix the sounds coming from different sources (microphone, musical instrument, digital audio track player, smartphone, etc.) by controlling their volume and equalization to obtain a single output sound stream.

There are many different models, with prices ranging from a few tens to thousands of euros. Each has its own characteristics, in case you have to make a purchase it is important to carefully evaluate what you expect and what budget you have available. To make radio it takes very little: two microphone inputs and a stereo track (music) are enough to record a radio talk show.

In this guide we will examine only analog mixers, trying to offer useful working tools regardless of the mixer model with which you are preparing to work.



In channels - microphone and stereo inputs

The input channels, often abbreviated as in, allow you to connect mono inputs (which reproduce the same sound to the right and left) to the mixer such as microphones and musical instruments (for example keyboard and guitar) and stereo inputs (which therefore provide different sounds on right channel and left channel, as in music) such as computers, portable players, smartphones, tablets.

Mono channels have a number that identifies them, the connector can be jack or xlr. Only one cable can be connected to each mono channel, which will transmit a signal equal to the left and right output channels.

Stereo channels are identified by a pair of numbers, the connector can be a pair of jack or rca inputs. To connect the mixer to an audio playback device (computer, tablet, smartphone ...) A y cable is used: at one end there will be a mini-jack (suitable for connecting to playback devices that usually have a headphone output) and at the other end two jacks or two rcas. The output signal will be stereo, preserving the balance of the original track. With this input we can also record phone calls, which can be useful for carrying out remote interviews or interacting with listeners during a live broadcast.

The input channels usually offer the following controls on the mixer:

- volume often this is a fader (slider), in smaller mixers it is a wheel
- high mid low equalization: management, usually with three wheels, of the high, medium and low frequencies at the input
- gain: additional gain on the volume, to be used with care in order not to distort the signal
- aux: volume of the single channel in the aux output mix (little used in radio)
- pan: controls the stereo balance of the output channel: offers the possibility to "shift" the sound to the right or left (r or l on the mixer)
- low cut button (cuts some low frequencies, giving better recording / broadcast quality)



Out channels - Speakers, registration, headphones

The mixer output channels, often abbreviated to out, allow you to record, amplify, stream, listen to the final mix (the result of the sum of all the tracks) through headphones.

The output channels on most mixers are:

- main out: main output, controlled by one or two faders on the right of the mixer
- phones: stereo output to connect headphones and listen to the main out
- monitor out: often has the volume control with the same wheel as the headphones, it can be useful to have different volumes in the room and in streaming during live broadcasts.
- aux: usually controlled by a wheel on each single incoming channel, it is usually used for stage management with a band to offer spies to musicians.

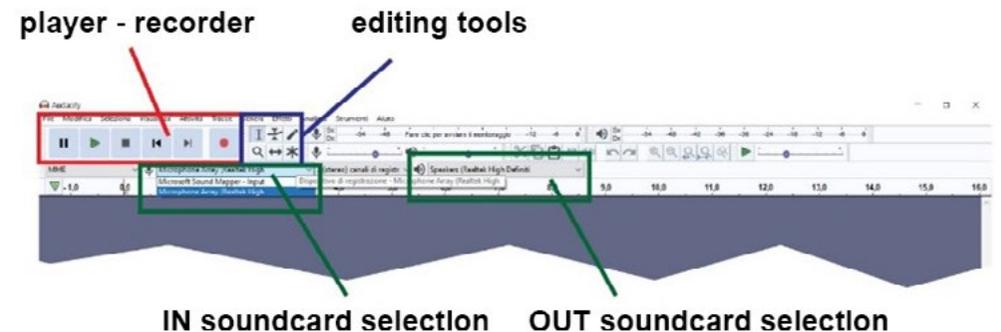
When recording in the studio all participants must wear headphones, preferably a snug model, to hear what is actually being recorded. The mixer usually offers only one headphone output, to this you can connect a headphone amplifier, usually with a stereo jack / jack cable. There are very cheap models that allow you to connect 4 headphones, like the one in the image.

RECORDING AND POST PRODUCTION

Once the mixer is connected to the PC, we can do some recording tests with any recording software, in this guide we suggest to beginners the use of Audacity: a free software (free and with open source code) that offers all the necessary tools to record and edit audio. It is a multi-platform software, so it can be installed on Windows, IOS and GNU / Linux distributions such as Ubuntu.

AUDACITY - recording

The first thing to do once Audacity is started is to choose which sound card to record from, the list of cards is accessible on the left, under the player. At the icon with the microphone you can select a sound card for recording, at the speaker icon you can select the output card. With a USB sound card or mixer connected the configuration could be: IN -> mixer / sound card OUT -> computer speakers (to be able to listen to the recording).





Warning: Audacity chooses the default sound card at startup, the risk is to record a transmission made with microphones and mixers from the microphone built into the computer.

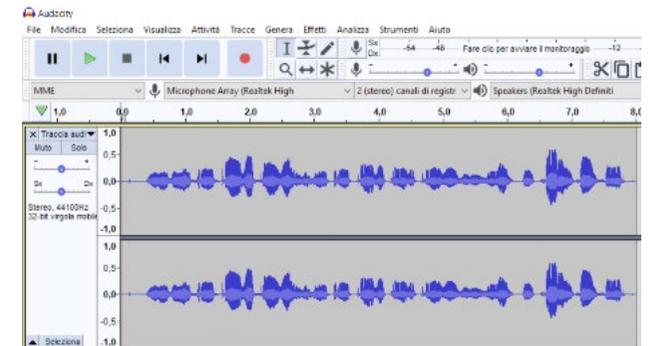
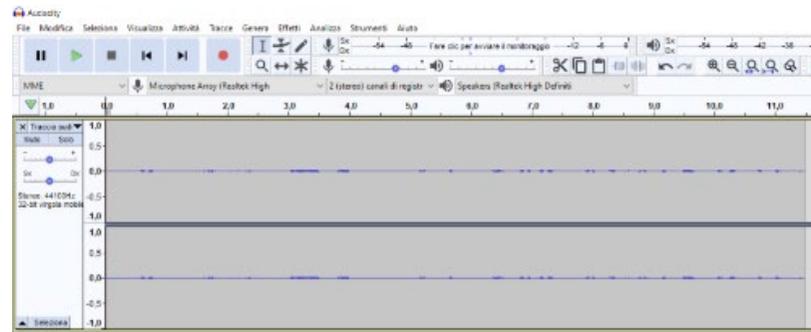
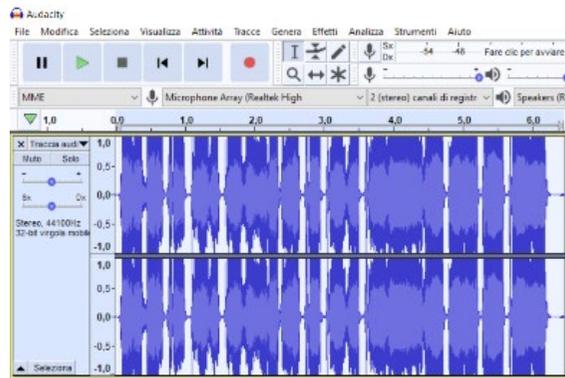
Before starting to record it is a good habit to test the volumes of all the input channels (voices and music), if the overlapping of voice and music is foreseen it is advisable to check that the volume of the music is not too high after, the recorded mix does not keep the input channels separate).

A good indicator of the track's recording volume is the graphical representation it offers audacity.

The blue band representing the sound wave must not exceed the limits of the track and must not be too flat (see images: the first track is too saturated, the second too low, the third is recorded correctly).

A track that is too saturated cannot be recovered and the audio will be distorted, a track recorded at low volume can be amplified but an excess of amplification highlights hiss and noise otherwise imperceptible, making the track equally unusable.

Audacity offers a series of effects to correct and transform the sound (effects menu), it is preferable to work to record at best rather than trying the recovery, often impossible, of corrupted audio.





AUDACITY: EDITING AND POST PRODUCTION

Audio editing for a radio broadcast or documentary consists of selecting, cutting and sorting the recorded material with the possibility of adding and / or overlapping additional audio tracks (music, sounds, environments).

Depending on the format you are working on, the editing work can be more or less complicated, in some cases it assumes a fundamental value also from an authorial point of view. Editing an interview also poses a series of ethical problems forcing you to choose between completeness and synthesis. Beyond the necessary technical skills, it is necessary to make a linguistic effort to learn the “grammar” of audio editing and radio communication. Also in this case, listening to the works of others can be illuminating on the great value of editing.

CUT, PASTE, MOVE

To select a part of the track use the selection tool (to the right of the player, with cursor icon), using a mouse to be more precise just “pull” the cursor along its length while holding down the left mouse button, exactly as you do with video writing programs. At this point you can delete (with the DEL key), cut (CTRL + X), copy (CTRL + C), paste (CTRL + V) positioning yourself at the chosen point along the timeline (literally “timeline”, graphically represents all the length of the assembly).

You can split a sound clip by placing the cursor and pressing CTRL and I simultaneously, or apple key and I on IOS

The button located in the same toolbar represented by the double arrow allows you to move trimmed clips along the timeline, allowing you to sort the single clips resulting from the previous work.



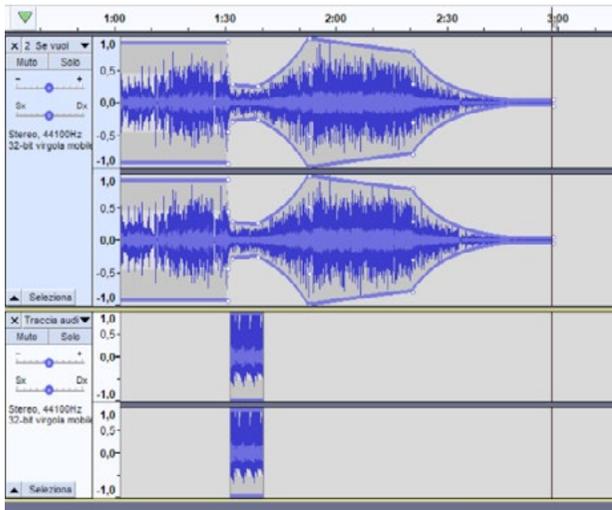
MULTI TRACKS: MUSIC, SOUNDS, AMBIENT

Audacity allows you to work with two or more overlapping audio tracks, this makes it possible to add a backing track under a speaker, add songs to a radio broadcast, overlap sounds and recorded environments to create a more immersive work. Warning: Audacity works with both stereo and mono tracks, while you can copy from a mono track to a stereo it is impossible to do the opposite (a solution can be to convert the stereo track to mono, or keep two tracks separate). When recording, you can choose whether to get a mono or stereo track from the drop-down menu next to the sound card selection.

To add a new track, you can import an audio file (menu file / import / audio or “drag and drop” directly drag the file into the program), or add one or more tracks to new tracks on which to place music, sounds, interviews (menu tracks / add new / mono or stereo audio track).



VOLUME ADJUSTMENT



There are different ways to intervene on volumes. If you want to raise or lower the volume of an entire track, you can do it from the controls on the left of the graphic representation of the sound wave. In addition to the volume, you can put the track in SOLO mode (excluding all the others), MUTE or manage the left / right balance. If you want to raise only a part of the recording, you can select it with the cursor and by opening the EFFECTS drop-down menu you access the AMPLIFY function. In addition to the ability to amplify Audacity, it offers a great variety of effects that offer many possibilities for experimenting with the digital transformation of sound.

Using the envelope tool instead (represented by a broken line between two triangles in the toolbar) allows you to raise and lower the volume following its graphic representation. In the image on the side, a musical track (track above), abruptly lowered to let the voice in (track below) then gradually raised and finally faded. Once the envelope tool has been selected, clicking on the track adds a node to build the curve.

SAVING AND SHARING

Once the recording session is over, you need to save your work so as not to lose it. At this point we can make different choices depending on the uses we will have to make of the recording.

If we plan to pick up the track again for post production, we can save the audacity project, the result will be a file with the file.aup format and a folder with the same name. Audacity can handle different tracks and effects that will be preserved by the saved project. Warning: the.aup file can only be opened from a computer on which audacity is installed and must always be accompanied by the folder with the same name as the file.

If we want to share the recorded track with others, publish it online, use it for the production of a video we will have to export a file choosing between the formats WAV, mp3, OGG

- WAV (or WAVE), a contraction of WAVEform audio file format (audio format for the waveform) is a digitally encoded audio format developed by Microsoft and IBM for IBM compatible personal computers.
- MP3 (in full Moving Picture Expert Group-1/2 Audio Layer 3, also known as MPEG-1 Audio Layer III or MPEG-2 Audio Layer III) is an audio compression algorithm capable of drastically reducing the amount of data required to store a sound, while still maintaining an acceptably faithful reproduction of the original uncompressed file.
- Ogg (also sometimes referred to as Ogg Media) is a free container format for transporting bitstream designed with the intent of allowing both streaming and archiving efficiently.

By exporting the file we can also apply a label (TAG) that contains the name of the author, the date of creation, the genre, etc.



Free podcast hosting websites³:

<https://www.spreaker.com>

<https://www.mixcloud.com>

<https://www.podbean.com>

<https://anchor.fm>



GLOSSARY

Webradio - web radio: radio station that broadcasts in streaming on the web, via website or application

Streaming: in the telecommunications field, it identifies a stream of audio / video data transmitted from a source to one or more destinations via a telematic network. This data is reproduced as it arrives at its destination.

Podcast: indicates an audio / video resource usable at any time, automatically downloaded in mp3 (or other) format from the broadcaster's site and saved in the memory of a device for playback.

Fader: slider on the mixer, usually linked to the volume control of the individual tracks and the output volume

Gain: audio gain on the mixer

PAN: left / right audio balance on the mixer

XLR or CANNON: balanced audio cable

JACK or MINI JACK: mono or stereo audio cable

Y cable: cable with two connectors at one end and a single connector at the other end, allows you to transmit a stereo signal from two mono connectors to a stereo input.

Larsen effect: The effect is triggered when the microphone is too close to the speaker it is connected to or the system gain is too high. The result is a sum of constantly and rapidly increasing frequencies that generates a whistle that can jeopardize the amplification system, as well as your ears.

Pop filter: filter that protects the microphone from sounds with excessive loudness.

Shock-mount: Condenser microphone holder.

Drag and drop: ability to open a file with a specific software by simply dragging the file icon into the software workspace.

Audacity: Multi-track, multi-platform digital audio editing software, distributed under the GNU General Public License. The basic program allows the recording of multitrack audio, their modification and their mixing.

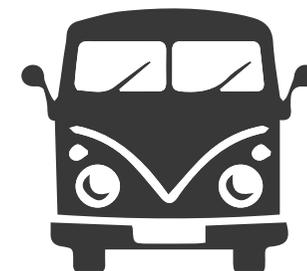


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Milano



ACTIVISTS TOOLS

mini
toolkit



**AUDIO-VISUAL
STREET ACTIONS**



AUDIO-VISUAL STREET ACTIONS

By street action we mean all those actions aimed at involving people in public spaces to create moments of information or mobilization.

There are many possible forms of street action, these are the most used:

flash mobs, street art actions, performance events (theatre, cinema, radio).

In all cases, the goal is to involve people who pass through a given territory or who live in that territory using the road as a stage to maximize the impact of the actions or to redefine a public space thanks to the actions themselves.

Therefore, there is not a single way to carry out street actions, but all possible actions must still take into consideration some fundamental elements:

- the context
- the public
- the strategy



Photo by Alessandro Viganò - Cinevan



The context

To choose the right context we must first try to answer these questions:

Do we want to fill a place with a new meaning?

Are we interested in the intrinsic value of that place and do we want to enhance it?

Or are we looking for a place of great passage that is useful to maximize the visibility of our action?

The public

Do we know what audience we will have?

Do we aim to have as much audience as possible, or to have a certain type of audience?

How do we imagine that the public can react or interact with our action and how do we intend to manage it?

Which brings us to the next point.

The strategy

What is our goal and what kind of strategy do we want to use?

Do we want to create a moment of breaking from the routine and destabilize our audience?

Or do we want to create moments of aggregation by actively involving our audience?

Or eventually do we want our audience to take action following the street action?

Last but not least, there is always the delicate question of institutional relationships: since these are often public spaces, we will have to plan our street action in agreement with the relevant institutions, or if we decide not to do so, we will have to make sure to act in limits of the laws in force in order not to cause damage to the public and to the success of the action itself.

The most relevant aspects are: permission for the occupation of public land, license to use the chosen contents, safety of the event.

Each nation has its own rules and often each place has its own specific rules, so before organizing any event, a precise survey of the legal and safety aspects must be made.





CINEMA STREET ACTION - CINEVAN



As we have said there are many ways of doing street action. In this section we will focus on the use of images as a means of raising awareness, mobilizing and sharing.

A first famous example of an awareness raising action to convey an anti-discrimination message is represented by the "Love has no labels" campaign in which the use of an X-ray screen places viewers in front of the curiosity to know who is behind and the disclosure it brings with it not only the solution but also the message. Never as in this case can it be said that the medium is the message:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnDgZuGIhHs&t=105s>

Another very famous case concerns a street action on sustainability in the production of a very popular low-cost garment, the T - shirt. Its low cost is at the heart of this awareness-raising action and the trick used is to exploit the propensity to save of the average citizen to inform and sensitize them on the exploitation system behind the product they are about to buy:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfANs2y_frk



Let's now examine two ways of using images in order to create mobilization and sharing. The first mode consists of a Flash mob from the balconies of private homes.

This street action mode involves the involvement of the inhabitants of the cities (but also of smaller places) to convey visual messages on the walls of the buildings. It is a mode that has as its main strength its feasibility even in

the event of a lockdown, as well as its ability to activate territorial networks and create activism. Do what exactly is this about?

On the occasion of special anniversaries or events linked to campaigns (for example a campaign on climate and sustainability), a public call can be activated on the web to call networks of activists or ordinary citizens and invite them to take a position publicly through the projection of photos or videos.



Photo by Bruno Zanzottera - Parallelozero



In April 2020, when the first wave of the pandemic was raging in Italy and there was a total lockdown, an online call was made on the occasion of the national anniversary of the liberation from Nazi-fascism, on April 25, in a moment of complete personal segregation in which there could not have been the traditional live demonstration.

A public call was therefore made to collect photographs and also a call to action so that people on the evening of April 25 projected from their balconies on the walls of the buildings opposite, photos or videos that represented their idea of "liberation". Since ordinary citizens were involved, no particular technical specifications were required, anyone with a projector in the house and a wall in front of the house was invited to project!

The walls of Italian cities were thus animated with personal images or historical photos and everything was also told with various live coverage on a Facebook event that went on until late at night. Ample space was also given to this event in traditional media (newspapers and radio). To document this type of event it is also recommended to make a video that can tell it in its entirety.

This video summarizes what happened in that event in which the street, the public space became the stage for collective action (#Panoramidilibertà – Freedom landscapes):

<https://vimeo.com/527200480>

This type of flash mob does not incur particular logistical or legal problems as it is carried out from one's home and has a limited duration. It is also achievable at any time of the year and in any urban or residential context.

The second street action mode that we are now examining aims to activate sharing and sociality and can be implemented in different contexts but is primarily designed for an urban periphery context.



Photo by Alessandro Viganò - Cinevan

The urban outskirts of the great European cities and the social housing centers in particular are often places of degradation where there are more problems than solutions and where cultural and sharing initiatives are absent. To overcome all this, it is possible to use video and cinema as tools to carry out a street action that aims to give a new meaning to a given context and activate processes of socializing and sharing.

First of all, video interviews are carried out with the inhabitants of the place, about their life, their problems and their expectations. While the interviews are done, some emblematic characters are also taken with photographic portraits. Then these interviews are assembled into a short video product and a photo exhibition.

An event is then organized within those same places, in this case within the courtyards of social housing or in the squares of the peripheral contexts (it is possible to create a series of events of this type in different urban contexts if



the testimonies and photographs come from more than one context. In this case we will have a traveling tour of projections and photographic exhibitions). The photographic portraits are printed in A3 format and hung on threads (a bit like it used to be in the dark room to develop the photos) to delimit the event area, a screen and audio system is placed and condominiums are invited to participate, perhaps even bringing a chair from home. Once the audience is settled, the video made in the previous days is shown followed by a film relevant to the context. In this way there will be a restitution to the inhabitants of their own life context and a moment of sharing and socializing will be created in a place that is instead often the scene of loneliness and conflicts: *“Welcome to everyone, come to the open air cinema in the square! We are not selling you knives, it’s for free, come to the square to watch the movie Frida!”*

<https://vimeo.com/529910565>

This type of action can help give a community a voice and often fortify bonds or create new ones but needs meticulous preparation:

- Check all safety conditions (cables, electrical systems, etc) and the presence of public lighting that could disturb the projection (in case check if it is possible to obscure the light sources);
- Contact with the managing bodies of public spaces and consequent authorization;
- Preparation of an information campaign among citizens (in case of bad weather forecasts, communicate at least two days before the cancellation date and possible rescheduling);
- Contact with film distribution companies and bodies responsible for the protection of copyright;
- Safety of the event and observation of any physical distancing.

P.S. All these aspects vary from country to country and from context to context and therefore must be evaluated case by case.

Exercise 1 (both live and online):

Trainees must plan a street action that involves the use of images (photos / videos / films). It is advisable to divide the group into groups of 4/5 participants.

Exercise duration: 1 hour, addressing the following steps:

1. *identify the goal / message of the street action*
2. *choose your target, who would you like to involve and reach?*
3. *identify the methods: what do you do? How?*
4. *identify the context (where and when)*
5. *communication and engagement: how do I promote the action before, to involve participants and the public?*
6. *communication and visibility: how do I promote the action during and after its implementation?*
7. *check preliminary steps: how to prepare and organize the action? Do not forget technical / logistical / legal aspects*
8. *define roles and tasks of the group members⁴*

At the expiry of the set time each group will illustrate the planned intervention in plenary.



Photo by Alessandro Viganò - Cinevan

⁴ Steps integrated with the experience of Mani Tese, Action Aid Italy and the Municipality of Milan in the 1st Food Wave School of Activism in Milan



RADIO STREET ACTION - SHARE RADIO

One of the radio applications that Shareradio has experimented with great success in recent years is the creation of live radio shows. On the occasion of public events, school parties, sporting initiatives, the radio amplified and conducted live becomes the voice that accompanies the public to enjoy the activities and get to know its protagonists.

First of all, it is necessary to pay attention to the rules governing the dissemination of music in public, and investigate the possible need to apply for a permit for the occupation of public land. Each country has different rules in this regard, the use of non-copyrighted creative commons music can be a good solution:

<https://audionautix.com/>

<https://incompetech.filmmusic.io/>

<http://dig.ccmixer.org>

<https://musopen.org/music>



A good mix of music, carefully chosen according to the type of audience with which you are confronted, and interviews with organizers, participants, artists, institutions present, allows you to tell and facilitate access to the initiative. Service radio, therefore, with the possibility of announcing and remembering the program facilitating the organizers, but also exploratory and discovery radio, an opportunity to get to know active subjects of one's own community. The recording and publication of the live broadcast also offers a way to historicize the initiative through the voice of its protagonists.

Furthermore, the radio can itself be an opportunity for a public event, which takes place live with the involvement of passers-by and users of the city space. From a technical point of view, the bare minimum to create a good live stream is: mixer, two microphones, a computer, two amplified speakers, a camping table and possibly a gazebo to protect yourself from the sun or bad weather.

You will need an internet connection: audio streaming is quite light and also works with hotspot connections from phones or internet sims. To save bandwidth, you can also decide to transmit in mono or by lowering the transmission bitrate!

<https://sourceforge.net/projects/butt/>



Create participated narrations, the street action of Share Radio

Live radio can be an exceptional tool for engaging and interacting with the public during parties and public events! The voice of the speakers and the opportunity to interview promoters and participants in the initiative facilitate access to events and improve their communicative potential.

LIVE BACKGROUND

Using music to create connections, recall common cultures and intertwine different generations is a great way to bring the public closer: a background carefully chosen based on the target present on the spot will capture the attention of people, who are asked to participate in the background of the situation in which we all find ourselves.

This creates familiarity with the radio instrument and with the rest of the bystanders.

Activity: together we choose the background for this moment, for this day, for this space.

Creation of a collective live set via a PC available to the public.



LET ME ASK U | RADIO BOX

Making available to the public a vase with many questions, on specific topics or on their own territory - some examples:

What is my favourite place in the neighbourhood?

In my neighbourhood I would like to ... (do)

In my neighbourhood I would like to ... (have)

How do you imagine your neighborhood in ten years?

Creation of a space for individual reflection, shared with the other people present.

JUST ASK ME

Ask whoever you want a question on the radio.

The action can be proposed as an interview with someone specific or as an open question to anyone who wants to participate; the goal is always to connect people in the same space, questions can be suggested or invented.

WHO ARE U?

Double interview with two people who do not know each other, or of a different generation, or of a different gender. Depending on the themes, the territory and the moment, various thematic paths are proposed to investigate, to inform and raise awareness through the direct involvement of the public.

EXERCISE 2: online planning of a street action in the area

How to do it

- create an online room on a remote communication platform (Jitsi.meet);
- invite your friends and form your work group;
- together identify a territory, a street, a square, a path on which to focus your street action.
- cue question: What is your goal? What is your research? What are u looking for?
- identify the theme, the topic, the field of research you want to focus on;
- identify the shops, the points of reference, the realities located around the defined place;

- choose the characters. cue question: who do you need to interview to achieve your goal?
- define an action time and a hypothetical day;
- create a list of questions, which will be your outline for the interview;
- if possible, make contact with the identified characters, so that they are ready for when you can go to the field!

Tip:

Build a small theme song for your project: choose an instrumental piece you like, use 20/30 seconds and then let it fade. You can record your voices and mix them together, so as to make the jingle unique and personalized!

EXERCISE 3: realization of a live street action

As in the previous exercises, fundamental skills for these street actions are listening, opening horizons and the awareness that the result could be different from what you expect, because it is based on the people you will meet.

Build your interviews starting from your target and your goal:

Who would you like to hear this episode?

Which age groups are you referring to?

How many interviews do you think you will be able to do in the time you have available?

Define a minimum and a maximum of people that you think are important to interview in order to produce interesting content.

When you are on the road, look for the best way to put people at ease, perhaps hooking them up with a piece of music or a few questions about the neighborhood: show yourself curious and respectful of the experience that people bring you.

If you ask people to stop for a few questions, remember that they are putting their time at your disposal: choose your questions carefully based on the objective, and stop at a maximum of three.



After about ten minutes of speaking, play a piece of music to move from one interview to another or from one topic to the next.

Be careful to put yourself in a passageway and to be visible without hindering the daily activities of that place.

Take care to provide the people you interview with contacts to listen to the episode you are broadcasting.

a) with a cargo bike or van:

Radio in public can be offered by loading the necessary equipment on a cargo bike. To compensate for the absence of electricity you can use equipment with battery, or the battery of a car with an inverter. The radio on the cargo bike can reach even more secluded places: parks, gardens, residential courtyards, etc.

1. define the route you are interested in taking to collect the number of testimonials you need;
2. create a list of questions that you are interested in asking who you will interview;
3. choose a background music, which will play when you move and will remain under the voices of the interviewee;
4. involve citizens in the choice of background, and to improvise interviewers with your trace of questions.

b) with a recorder:

- define places and characters of your research;
- create a list of questions you are interested in asking who you will interview;
- enter the places you are interested in mapping, listen and remember to record the typical sounds and the background;
- while editing alternate interviews and music



Photo by Share Radio



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Food Wave - Empowering Urban Youth for Climate Action- is a project promoted by the Municipality of Milan with ACRA, ActionAid Italia, Mani Tese and 26 other partners (18 Local Authorities, 8 Civil Society Organisations). Food Wave has the aim of increasing knowledge, awareness, and engagement of young people on sustainable patterns of food consumption and behaviour. The project is co-funded by the European Commission in the framework of the programme DEAR - Raising public awareness of development issues and promoting development education in European Union. The project is developed in over 21 locations across 17 countries (16 within the European Union and 1 in the Global South - Brazil). The global network C40 is also an associate of the project.

www.foodwave.eu - info@foodwave.eu - [Facebook/Instagram @foodwaveproject](https://www.facebook.com/foodwaveproject)

ACRA is a Milan-based non-governmental organization, engaged for over 50 years in the fight against poverty and in international cooperation on: food, education, water, energy and environment. In Europe and in Italy it fosters a culture of dialogue, integration, intercultural exchange and solidarity. For more than 30 years it has been implementing projects, initiatives and workshops on Active and Global Citizenship Education.

ACRA, via Lazzaretto 3 - 20124 Milan, Italy
T +39 02 27000291

www.acra.it

CINEVAN is a Cultural Association made up of videomakers, photographers and communication experts. We bring cinema to squares, streets and courtyards, creating new opportunities for culture and socializing, we produce video and photographic narratives for events, we teach in schools, we work together with profit and non-profit institutions to communicate projects and carry out awareness and fundraising campaigns.

SHARERADIO is a web radio born in 2009 in Baggio, a western suburb of Milan, with the aim of promoting social cohesion in the city that became an association for social promotion in 2015: communicating and teaching how to communicate are the actions that characterize its activity. The association aims to combine in its activities forms of citizen journalism, story telling and media education, understood as disciplines and processes of collective teaching and learning on the media aimed at social changing.

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Videomaking chapter by *Luca Cusani, CINEVAN*

Photography chapter by *Bruno Zanzottera*

Webradio chapter by *Share Radio*

Street actions chapter by *Cinevan and Share Radio*

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