Beginning in 1990, this nonprofit collective of photographers set out to show how photography could help in the struggle for social justice. Each photographer uses the camera to make social commentaries, to tell stories, and to create awareness and action within viewers. The collective group encourages their photographers to get to know the subjects and then create their best works. Following after, the images will do the work by capturing the audiences’ attention and feelings.

For example, the image of hands on braille by Bernard Weil was used to promote equality for the blind. This particular exhibit focused on showcasing braille as a revolutionary tool for the blind. Viewers experience a feeling that will hopefully encourage advocacy for braille. PhotoSensitive images are often printed in annual reports and brochures after the exhibition is over (Braille = Equality, 2013). The images are intended to capture an audience and make a lasting impression of advocacy for social justice.
Critical Exposure

Critical Exposure is a nonprofit organization that aims to equip young people with the ability to create social and educational reform. Their vision is to use the power of photography to communicate the need for real change as a member of a democratic society. They focus on:

• Youth empowerment
• Real change
• Public engagement

For example, twenty-year-old Pamela captured images of Washington, DC that advocated for the Weed and Seed project. The topic is gentrification and housing. The artist captured the decrepit housing situations that the city neglects. In this particular image, someone was shot in this building, ceilings are caving in, and so forth. The building is not safe for her beloved ones to live in. Her aim is to promote societal change that will improve the living situations of the city dwellers (Gentrification and housing, 2013).


John Stanmeyer

Stanmeyer, a contemporary photographer, used social media and Instagram to share his images with the world. He did photographic work for National Geographic and traveled the world in hopes of bringing to light issues that need social reconstruction. Stanmeyer believed that it is not about the camera but what one does with the camera tool in regards to communication. This example easily reached a host of viewers through photographic social media tools. It shows the pain associated with disease in developing countries.

Image by: John Stanmeyer, The grave of Hassan Kako, 13, being covered with dirt by family members in the Yida refugee camp in South Sudan. Hassan died of acute malaria which is spreading among the 60,000 Sudanese refugees now that rainy season has arrived, 2012

National Geographic: Marcus Bleasdale

Marcus Bleasdale, a professional photojournalist, who worked with National Geographic. His aim it to work with advocacy groups to grow strong campaigns that create real world change. Financiers, government policymakers, and technology manufacturers have utilized his unflinching images to promote social justice and awareness. The photographer believed that although he can not stop wars and civil unrest but he can help provide the communicative tool to discuss social justice issues (Chen, 2013).

Image by: Marcus Bleasdale, A boy loves the feel of a shower at a care center for homeless children in Kinshasa, capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Thousands of children wander the city's streets, their families destroyed by warfare, AIDS, and poverty. 2005
Photography Advocacy

Katharina Mouratidi

Katharina Mouratidi, a contemporary professional photographer, traveled the world seeking to illuminate global conditions that need change (Mouratidi, n.d.). For example, the image of the man in the water cleaning up after an oil spill is from her collection of images that showcase a city in resistance to oil drilling. Her series highlighted the ill effects that oil drilling have on rural, remote villages. She allows viewers to glimpse the lifestyle of the people living in the village.

Image by: Katharina Mouratidi, Sarayaku- a village in resistance to oil drilling, Ecuador, n.d.

Jacob Riis

Jacob Riis was an influential social documentary photographer and photojournalist who focused on the plight of the poor, which later influenced ‘muckraking’ photojournalism. Riis illuminated the environmental conditions of the poor. As a Danish immigrant in the 1800s, Riis experienced New York’s hard, unwelcoming streets upon his arrival. Through his images, he helped divided the poor into two categories: the deserving (children and women) and the undeserving (criminals and unemployed). He intended on alleviating the poor living situations by presenting his images to the middle and upper classes. He wrote How the Other Half Lives (Riis, 1890). He helped create change in the city by getting the president on board with his vision. Dangerous areas were replaced with parks and playgrounds.

Image by: Jacob Riis, Bandit’s Roost, New York, 1888

Luc Delahaye

Delahaye, a contemporary photographer, sought to photograph the “ordinary”. He was interested in the long-term implications of world events that goes beyond the initial news feed. His images capture a different vantage point than newspapers or news media portray to citizens. (Recent History: photographs by Luc Delahaye, 2007). For example, women crowd around an official representative waiting to register for aid at a refugee camp.

Image by: Luc Delahaye, The Registration of Internally Displaced People in Eastern Chad, negative, May 27, 2006; print, 2007

Why Photography?

The moment the tool is at the eye people begin to see and think differently. The camera becomes a tool to help people communicate effectively in a visual language, which can be more powerful than words. Photographers aim to capture a mode and a feeling and then communicate that with their viewers. The camera is a highly effective tool because it can be used all over the world.

Photojournalism

objective photographic images that tell a real story and timely record an event captured a photographer working within a rigid ethical framework; it does not include manipulated images or set-up compositions.
Child Labor and the Global Village: Photography for Social Change

Lewis Hine

Lewis Hine began photographing immigrants at Ellis Island in the early 1900s. He also documented the child labor industry in America. He used his images to advocate against child labor. Hine became a leading social reformer as he worked for various magazines and organizations that fought for social justice. His photographs focused on the working conditions in industries such as steelmaking and construction. Some of his most significant photographic work was for the TVA and the WPA National Research Project.

The image below is an example of the grueling work that industry was requiring of men during that time. Through his images, Hine was able to expose the gruesome, daunting, even dangerous work men and children were being forced into. Social change was a result of his powerful photographic voice.

Image by: Lewis Hine, Power house mechanic working on steam pump, courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, 1920

Gigi Cohen's striking image of a young girl in a Haitian house conjures emotions in the viewer through the use of value. Cohen wants to raise awareness about the individuals: who they are and what they need. Cohen makes the viewer aware of the line between work and child labor: that which harms or exploits them.


Child Labor and the Global Village: Photography for Social Change is a collective of 11 photographers whose goal is to move people emotionally and to motivate people to action through viewing their photographs about child workers. The collective body of work travels around the world visiting places like Congress, schools, and universities. The organization wants to bring child labor to the attention of citizens to inspire compassion. Many of the future workers will come from developing countries where they have been injured or harmed at an early age.
Collective Lens: Photography for Social Change

A nonprofit organization, Collective Lens promotes awareness of important societal issues through pictures and social media. It hosts a public forum where any photographer can upload their work to the Internet with the intent of creating awareness.

For example, *Water with hope* is an image by Shaun Boyte who uploaded his image to Collective Lens website, advocating for help and hope for refugees Boyte, S. (2010, October 7).

![Image by: Shaun Boyte, Water with hope, October 7, 2010](image)

PROOF: Media for Social Justice

In 2006 Leora Khan, along with a group of internationally acclaimed photographers, journalists, and activists, PROOF’s mission is to promote peace building and to prevent genocide around the world. They create visual documentary presentations using images to communicate a message of sustainable peace to armed and warring nations.

PROOF hosts many exhibitions, conferences, workshops, and benefit auctions to raise awareness in the community. They partner with many nonprofit social justice organizations around the world to promote their sustainable peace idea.

![Image by: Jan Grarup/ Noor, 2002](image)

The brutality of war effects all, young and old people alike. PROOF created a book *Children Soldiers* to illustrate the profound costly consequences of child soldiers. The image captured of the young boy riding in a jeep during a funeral of a martyr, escorted with armed militia, communicates a strong message of corruption and violence. Through the use of a strong composition, technical skills, and emotions the PROOF artist advocates for an end to child soldiers. Children are losing their innocence, youth, and their lives (*Child soldiers: forced to be cruel*. 2013).

Communication

Photography is a communicative tool that artists use to vocalize to others what they find interesting and significant in life. The photograph can have many possible meanings, which depend on the viewer, the audience, and the context in which it is seen. People can learn much about the world through photographs. The individual and culture work in tandem because culture is the individual’s way of seeing and understanding the world.

![Image](image)
### How to use this resource:

* Share ideas with your administration, parents, community, and potential benefactors to encourage community support for your program and projects.
* Use exemplar artists and organizations in your classroom with students to get them thinking and aware of social justice works already in place.
* Send out requests for sponsorship to support your program.
* Connect with exemplar artists or organizations.
* Contact local charities or government agencies to find out about how your classroom and your students can get involved.
* Use resources listed below as a starting point for your lessons.

### Teaching Photography:

* Discuss photography and social justice as a class. Have your class formulate a list of possible areas that they perceive to be in need of change both locally and globally.
  - How do photographs convey meaning?
  - What role can photographs play in revealing injustice?
  - How can photography help people to take action against injustice?
  - How do viewers add to the construction of the meanings of these images?
* Have students create a body of photographic work that features a social justice issue that they personally are interested in. Students could exhibit their artwork in the school, local coffee houses, other public establishments, or gallery spaces around town.

### Resources

**Social Justice:**


Critical Exposure: [http://www.criticalexposure.org/gallery/photographer/Pamela](http://www.criticalexposure.org/gallery/photographer/Pamela)


PhotoSensitive: [http://www.photosensitive.com/projects](http://www.photosensitive.com/projects)


**Additional Social Justice resources:**


**Photography Resources:**


Holly Ballenger: [http://hollybb.wix.com/hphoto](http://hollybb.wix.com/hphoto)

International Center of Photography: [http://www.icp.org/school](http://www.icp.org/school)


Professional Photographer Association: [http://www(ppa.com](http://www(ppa.com)

Society for Photographic Education: [https://www.spenational.org/](https://www.spenational.org/)

**Arts Advocacy:**