

## Taking photos when visiting communities

Joe Wilkins, former Long Term Volunteer from the UK and professional photographer, shares his advice for taking photos in the communities we visit.

- If at all possible, don't take any photos until your last day in the communities. That will give you time to build relationships.
- A camera (or smartphone) is a status symbol and can be a barrier to building relationships.
- Ask permission to take photos, especially if you don't speak the language. Ask through a Care Worker or Hands person.
- Explain why you want to take a photo (e.g. so that you can pray when you get home, so that you can share your visit with your church...)
- On a Holy Home Visit there may be a delicate situation being discussed which you don't understand. It may not be appropriate to be taking photos.
- Sometimes taking photos of an inanimate object can tell the story just as well: the place where water is collected, the mat you have been sitting on, cooking pots...
- When you take a photo, find ways of bringing people back home into the conversation. Take a picture of something that is familiar: walk to school, washing hands, cooking...
- Meet people at their level when you take a photo: squat down to the level of the children you photograph.
- Try to make a level playing field when you take a photo. Keep eye contact with the person whose photo you want to take. Only bring the camera in front of your face at the last minute.
- Try not to walk around with a camera in front of your face.
- Look for joy, beauty, happiness, and powerful personalities to photograph.
- Remember: you are not collecting new profile pictures. Your photos should be conversation starters.
- The Care Workers are the heroes in all your photos.
- Less is more! The more photos you take, the less you will experience. The fewer photos you come home with, the more precious they will be.