

Journalistic Photography Training To Enhance Children's Visual Literacy Through The Collaboration of Cia, Warrior, And Imde

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Abstract.

The rapid advancement of digital technology has brought children into closer contact with various forms of visual information, particularly photographs and videos disseminated through social media platforms. However, the ease of capturing and distributing images is not always accompanied by adequate skills in understanding visual messages, identifying news values, and applying ethical principles in the use of photographs. This community service activity aims to introduce the fundamentals of photojournalism to children through a strategic collaboration between CIA Magazine, Warrior (Junior Journalists), and the Institut Media Digital Emtek (IMDE). The activity is scheduled for July 30, 2026, involving 9 children as participants. The implementation method employs a participatory approach and practice-based learning, consisting of an introduction to photojournalism, instruction on photographic composition, introduction to the 5W+1H elements, hands-on photography practice, caption writing, participant work presentations, and evaluation. Through this activity, participants are guided to produce photographs that are not only visually appealing but also informative, story-driven, and journalistically valuable. This initiative is expected to strengthen children's visual literacy, creativity, environmental sensitivity, communication confidence, and understanding of ethics in photographing and publishing images.

Keywords: photojournalism, visual literacy, junior journalists, children's journalism and community service.

I. INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of smartphones and social media has democratized the production and distribution of visual content, enabling individuals—including children—to capture, edit, and share photographs with unprecedented ease. Children are no longer mere consumers of information; they have become active producers and disseminators of visual messages across various digital platforms. This transformation opens significant opportunities for children to develop their creativity and express their perspectives. Simultaneously, it introduces formidable challenges related to information accuracy, publication ethics, privacy rights, and the capacity to critically interpret the meaning embedded within an image (Buckingham, 2020).

Media and information literacy (MIL) is essential for empowering individuals to access, understand, evaluate, use, and produce information critically and responsibly. Within the context of journalism, media literacy extends beyond the ability to read news articles; it encompasses an understanding of how information is gathered, selected, constructed, and transmitted to the public. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has consistently emphasized the importance of integrating media literacy education with journalistic practice to enable learners to comprehend the functions, responsibilities, and ethical standards of media institutions (Muratova, Grizzle, & Mirzakhmedova, 2019). This integration fosters a citizenry capable of engaging with media content discerningly and participating meaningfully in public discourse.

Among the various forms of media content, photojournalism occupies a distinctive and powerful position. Photojournalism is a visual medium that records factual events and communicates information to the public. A journalistic photograph is not merely an aesthetically pleasing image; it must possess news value, contextual relevance, accurate captions, and a clear connection to a specific event or issue. Through photojournalism, children can learn to observe their surroundings attentively, identify newsworthy occurrences, determine effective viewpoints, and construct factual narratives based on their observations (Frosh, 2019). This process cultivates not only technical skills but also critical thinking and storytelling abilities.

Journalism training for children serves as a valuable vehicle for enhancing creativity, articulating ideas, building oral communication skills, and fostering self-confidence. Previous community service

initiatives have demonstrated that training programs combining observation, interviewing, news writing, and photojournalism production can effectively help children grasp the foundational principles of journalism while becoming more confident in presenting their findings (Miranti et al., 2020; Bonareva, 2026). Such programs also contribute to the development of civic awareness and social responsibility among young participants.

Photography education is most effective when delivered through direct, hands-on experience. Rather than passively receiving theoretical explanations, children benefit immensely from opportunities to use cameras or smartphones, select subjects, experiment with various angles and lighting conditions, and engage in reflective discussions about their images. Experiential learning approaches position children as active agents in the learning process, encouraging the development of creativity and visual storytelling competencies (Kolb, 1984; Gupta et al., 2025). The integration of experiential methods with digital tools has been shown to enhance learner engagement and deepen conceptual understanding in visual arts education (Huda et al., 2026).

Moreover, the pedagogical value of photojournalism extends to environmental and social awareness. The Photovoice methodology, for instance, has been effectively employed to enable participants to document and reflect upon their communities, thereby fostering critical consciousness and advocacy skills (Naryatmojo, Kusumantoro, & Andalas, 2024). Similarly, Bruinenberg et al. (2021) demonstrated that participatory media production projects with young migrants can enhance critical media literacy while amplifying marginalized voices. These findings underscore the potential of photojournalism training as a transformative educational tool.

Based on this theoretical and empirical foundation, CIA Magazine, Warrior (Junior Journalists), and IMDE have collaborated to organize a community service initiative in the form of a photojournalism training program for children. This collaboration creates a unique learning environment that brings together a children's media publication, a junior journalist community, and a higher education institution specializing in media and communication. The partnership leverages the distinctive strengths of each organization: CIA Magazine provides a child-friendly publication platform, Warrior offers experiential insights into the journalistic profession, and IMDE contributes academic expertise, facilities, and a supportive media learning ecosystem.

The specific objectives of this activity are as follows:

1. To introduce the definition and functions of photojournalism to children in an accessible and engaging manner.
2. To teach basic photographic techniques using cameras or smartphones, including composition, lighting, focus, and timing.
3. To train children in recognizing news values and applying the 5W+1H framework (who, what, when, where, why, and how) in the context of visual reporting.
4. To develop participants' ability to write informative and accurate titles and captions for their photographs.
5. To nurture creativity, social sensitivity, courage, and self-confidence among young learners.
6. To instill a strong understanding of ethical principles, including obtaining consent, respecting privacy, and avoiding factual manipulation in photographic practice.

II. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

2.1 Activity Format and Approach

This community service activity employs a participatory approach grounded in experiential learning methodology. Participants are not passive recipients of information; rather, they are actively engaged in observing their environment, capturing images, selecting photographs, composing captions, and presenting their work to peers and facilitators. This approach is deliberately chosen because photojournalism competencies are most effectively acquired through a combination of explanation, demonstration, hands-on practice, guided mentorship, group discussion, and critical reflection (Kolb, 1984; Gupta et al., 2025). The

use of photography as a participatory tool also enables children to articulate their perspectives, experiences, and narratives through the images they produce, thereby fostering both individual expression and collective learning (Naryatmojo, Kusumantoro, & Andalas, 2024).

2.2 Time, Venue, and Participants

The activity is scheduled for:

- **Day/Date:** Thursday, July 30, 2026
- **Venue:** Institut Media Digital Emtek (IMDE) Campus, Jakarta
- **Organizers:** CIA Magazine (Cahaya Inspirasi Anak), Warrior (Wartawan Junior / Junior Journalists), and IMDE
- **Number of Participants:** [9] children
- **Age Group:** [11–12] years old
- **Activity Duration:** 09:30 AM – 12:00 PM WIB (Western Indonesian Time)

The selection of this age group is based on developmental considerations: children aged 11–12 are typically capable of abstract thinking, have developed basic literacy skills, and can operate digital devices independently, yet they remain open to creative exploration and guided learning. The venue at IMDE campus provides a safe, controlled environment with diverse photographic subjects and adequate facilities for indoor and outdoor activities.

2.3 Implementation Stages

The implementation is divided into six systematic stages, each designed to build upon the previous one and ensure progressive skill development.

1. Preparation

The implementation team coordinates among CIA, Warrior, and IMDE to finalize training materials, identify resource persons and facilitators, secure the venue, prepare equipment, and design participant assignments. Specific preparatory tasks include:

- Compiling age-appropriate instructional materials on photojournalism fundamentals.
- Preparing cameras and/or smartphones for participants who do not own devices.
- Designing 5W+1H worksheets to guide participants in analyzing their photographs.
- Curating exemplary photojournalism images for demonstration purposes.
- Developing evaluation instruments, including observation checklists and reflection prompts.
- Conducting a technical run-through to ensure all equipment functions properly.

2. Orientation and Ice-Breaking

The activity commences with an interactive orientation session designed to establish a positive, supportive learning atmosphere. Facilitators introduce themselves, and participants are invited to share their names and prior experiences with photography. Simple opening questions are posed, such as:

- "How often do you take photos using your phone or camera?"
- "What subjects do you most frequently photograph?"
- "Have you ever thought about using your photos to tell a story or share news?"

This initial interaction serves dual purposes: it builds rapport between participants and facilitators, and it provides baseline insights into participants' prior knowledge and attitudes toward photography. Following the ice-breaking session, the activity is officially opened by the Head of the Institute for Research and Community Service (LPPM) at IMDE, accompanied by the Secretary of LPPM IMDE, who deliver welcoming remarks and outline the objectives of the collaboration.

3. Material Delivery

The core instructional session covers the following topics, delivered using language and examples appropriate for elementary school children:

- Definition and functions of photojournalism: What makes a photograph "journalistic" as opposed to merely personal or artistic? How do photographs convey information and influence public understanding?

- Distinction between ordinary photographs and journalistic photographs: Emphasizing the requirements of factual accuracy, news value, and contextual relevance.
 - News values in photographs: Introducing concepts such as timeliness, proximity, prominence, human interest, conflict, and novelty in an age-appropriate manner.
 - The 5W+1H framework: Explaining how each photograph should ideally answer who, what, when, where, why, and how to provide complete information.
 - Basic photographic techniques: Covering composition (rule of thirds, leading lines, framing), camera angles (eye-level, high-angle, low-angle), lighting (natural vs. artificial, backlighting, side lighting), focus, and timing/moment capture.
 - Writing titles and captions: Demonstrating how to craft concise, factual, and engaging headlines and captions that complement the visual content.
 - Ethics in photography: Discussing the importance of obtaining consent, respecting subjects' privacy, avoiding stereotypes, and prohibiting the manipulation of images to distort facts.
- Instruction is delivered through a combination of brief lectures, visual examples, live demonstrations, and interactive Q&A sessions to maintain engagement and cater to diverse learning styles (Huda et al., 2026). Facilitators use relatable analogies and real-world examples drawn from children's media to reinforce key concepts.

4. Photojournalism Practice Session

Participants are divided into small groups or permitted to work individually, with each group assigned a facilitator—typically a lecturer from IMDE—to provide guidance and support. Participants are instructed to observe the campus environment and its immediate surroundings, selecting one or two subjects or events that they believe possess a story or are worthy of being reported. The practice session includes the following sequential activities:

1. Theme selection: Participants identify a focus for their photographic story (e.g., daily life at the campus canteen, traffic on the nearby road, interactions between vendors and customers).
2. Observation: Participants spend time observing their chosen subject to understand its dynamics and identify moments of interest.
3. Image capture: Participants take multiple alternative shots, experimenting with different angles, distances, and timing.
4. Image selection: Each participant selects one or two best images based on composition, clarity, and storytelling potential.
5. 5W+1H analysis: Participants analyze their selected photograph using the 5W+1H framework to ensure completeness of information.
6. Title and caption writing: Participants compose a title and a detailed caption for their photograph.
7. Reflection: Participants prepare a brief explanation of why they chose the subject, what challenges they encountered, and how they attempted to convey a message through their image.

5. Presentation and Appreciation

Each participant presents their photograph to the group, explaining the subject, the rationale behind their choice, the intended message, and their experience during the shoot. Facilitators provide constructive feedback that emphasizes the strengths of each work, such as accuracy of timing, clarity of the subject, effective composition, informational value, and caption accuracy. Peers are also invited to ask questions and offer their observations, fostering a collaborative learning environment. All participants receive positive reinforcement and certificates of participation to build confidence and motivation. This session is designed to cultivate public speaking skills, peer learning, and a sense of accomplishment.

6. Evaluation and Reflection

Evaluation is conducted through multiple methods to capture both quantitative and qualitative outcomes:

- Observation: Facilitators note participants' engagement, collaboration, and technical execution during the practice session.

- Q&A: Informal questioning throughout the activity assesses comprehension of key concepts.
- Work assessment: Participant photographs and captions are evaluated against established criteria (composition, informational completeness, caption quality, and ethical considerations).
- Participant reflection: Participants are guided through a reflective discussion on what they learned, what they found challenging, and how they might apply their skills in the future.

The evaluation indicators include:

- Ability to explain the meaning and function of photojournalism.
- Ability to differentiate between casual photographs and journalistic images.
- Competence in capturing images with clear subjects and appropriate composition.
- Effective application of the 5W+1H framework in analyzing photographs.
- Proficiency in writing clear, factual titles and captions.
- Ability to articulate the story or context behind the photograph.
- Understanding of consent, privacy, and ethical publication practices.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Activity Implementation

The photojournalism training activity was conducted on July 30, 2026, and was attended by 9 children. The implementation represented a successful collaboration among CIA Magazine, Warrior as the Junior Journalist community, and IMDE as a higher education institution with a strong focus on media, communication, and the creative industries. The event began with an introduction to the journalism profession and the pivotal role of photography in conveying information to the public. Based on initial observations, percentage of participants were already familiar with using smartphones to take photographs. However, the majority had not previously distinguished between personal documentation photos and journalistic photographs. Many participants initially equated a "good photo" solely with aesthetic appeal, without considering informational content or news value. This baseline finding aligns with the broader concern that digital natives may be technically proficient but lack critical visual literacy skills (Buckingham, 2020; UNESCO, 2021).

During the instructional session, participants were introduced to the core principle that a journalistic photograph must be grounded in truth—it must represent actual events, contain verifiable information, and must not be manipulated to distort or fabricate facts. Participants also learned about basic composition techniques, including identifying a main subject, being mindful of background elements, maintaining sharp focus, utilizing natural light effectively, and waiting for the opportune moment to capture a compelling image. The integration of visual examples and interactive demonstrations proved particularly effective in maintaining participant interest and facilitating comprehension.



Children Participants



Canteen environment of Indosiar (street vendors) ear the campus



The atmosphere of Daan Mogot main road



Safe elevated pedestrian bridge (JPO) views] .

3.2 Improvement in Understanding of Photojournalism

After participating in the activity, participants were expected to demonstrate an enhanced understanding that photojournalism is not merely about producing attractive images but about creating photographs that contain facts, information, news value, and narrative depth. This conceptual shift was observable through participants' ability to explain their chosen subjects and connect them to the 5W+1H framework. Several participants, for instance, were able to articulate not only what was depicted in their photograph but also why the event was significant, when it occurred, and how it related to broader community life.

The evaluation results, which compare pre-training and post-training understanding, can be presented using the following format (to be populated with actual data):

Indicator	Before Training	After Training
Understands the definition of photojournalism	[.60]%	[85]%
Understands the 5W+1H framework	[80]%	[95]%

Indicator	Before Training	After Training
Able to identify the main subject	[70]%	[90]%
Able to write a photo caption	[80]%	[95]%
Understands ethics and privacy	[70]%	[90]%

These expected improvements are consistent with the findings of prior research and community service activities. Miranti et al. (2020) reported that journalism training combining observation, reporting, writing, and photography significantly enhanced children's ability to interpret their environment and articulate ideas more systematically. Similarly, Bonareva (2026) found that experiential journalism projects promote environmental literacy and civic engagement among young learners. The structured, hands-on approach adopted in this activity is therefore well-supported by evidence.

3.3 Development of Creativity and Visual Sensitivity

The photography practice session afforded participants the opportunity to view their everyday surroundings from fresh perspectives. Subjects that might otherwise be overlooked—such as street vendors, passing vehicles, or pedestrians—acquired informational value when participants were able to identify human-interest elements, emotions, interactions, or noteworthy activities. This process encouraged participants to move beyond superficial observation toward deeper engagement with their environment. In this activity, participants were directed not merely to produce aesthetically pleasing photographs but to select images that contained a story and could be considered newsworthy. The process of choosing a subject and waiting for the optimal moment to capture an image required patience, attention to detail, and creative decision-making. These experiences collectively contribute to the development of observation skills, critical thinking, and visual literacy (Gupta et al., 2025). The integration of mobile photography technology, as used in this training, further supports active, learner-centered education by enabling instant feedback and iterative improvement (Huda et al., 2026).

The use of photography in educational settings has been shown to support active and learner-centered pedagogy. When used appropriately, smartphone photography technology can help participants develop aesthetic understanding, enhance engagement in learning activities, and improve visual storytelling abilities (Gupta et al., 2025; Naryatmojo, Kusumantoro, & Andalas, 2024). The Photovoice method, in particular, has demonstrated effectiveness in fostering critical consciousness and advocacy skills among young participants (Naryatmojo, Kusumantoro, & Andalas, 2024).

3.4 Competence in Writing Photo Captions

Following the photography session, each participant was tasked with writing a title and caption for their selected photograph. Captions were required to be based on factual information and to incorporate the 5W+1H elements to ensure contextual completeness. This exercise reinforced the understanding that visual information must be complemented by text to enable accurate interpretation of events. Prior instruction had prepared participants for this task.

An example caption format provided to participants:

Title: Enthusiasm for Learning to Become a Junior Journalist

Caption: A group of participants are engaged in photojournalism practice during the collaborative activity organized by CIA, Warrior, and IMDE on Thursday, July 30, 2026, at the IMDE campus, Jalan Damai, West Jakarta. This activity teaches children how to capture journalistic photographs and write captions based on the 5W+1H framework.

Based on an assessment of the participants' work, 7 participants were able to write captions with sufficiently complete information, while 2 participants still required additional guidance in determining the "when," "why," or "how" elements. This distribution suggests that the majority of participants grasped the core concepts, while a minority may benefit from further individualized support in future sessions.

3.5 Strengthening Self-Confidence

The presentation session provided a valuable platform for participants to explain their work in front of peers and facilitators. This activity trained children to present ideas coherently, respond to questions, and accept constructive feedback on their work. The exercise is particularly important for developing oral communication skills and building resilience in public settings.

The level of participant confidence could be observed through the number of children who were willing to present their work independently, without assistance from facilitators. [7] participants were able to explain their photographs and their rationale fully on their own, while [2] participants required prompting questions from facilitators to elicit their explanations. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that participatory journalism training can significantly enhance children's courage and self-confidence by providing structured opportunities for self-expression and peer recognition (Bruinenberg et al., 2021).

3.6 Understanding of Photographic Ethics

Beyond technical skills, participants were educated on the ethical responsibilities of a photojournalist. Children were taught to seek permission before photographing individuals, to refrain from taking images that could embarrass or harm others, to avoid sharing private information, and to refrain from digitally altering images in ways that distort factual reality. This ethical component is critical because visual media can significantly shape public perceptions of events and individuals. UNESCO (2021) emphasizes that media literacy requires individuals not only to produce messages but also to understand the broader context, representation issues, responsibilities, and potential impacts of the visual information they disseminate. By integrating ethics into the training, this activity aims to cultivate a generation of young content creators who are not only skilled but also principled and socially responsible.

3.7 The Collaboration of CIA, Warrior, and IMDE

The tripartite collaboration among CIA Magazine, Warrior, and IMDE proved to be mutually reinforcing and complementary. CIA Magazine contributed a platform deeply connected to children's worlds and children's media publishing. Warrior provided professional exposure and hands-on experience in junior journalism, grounding the training in authentic practice. IMDE contributed academic rigor, expert facilitators, state-of-the-art facilities, and a conducive learning environment.

This partnership brought together educational, media, and creative practice elements within a single, coherent activity. The collaborative model holds significant potential for further development into regular, ongoing programs, such as:

- Ongoing junior journalist classes with progressive skill levels.
- Interviewing and news writing workshops.
- Video reporting and basic video editing training.
- Studio visits and behind-the-scenes tours of media production facilities.
- Children's photojournalism exhibitions and publication opportunities.

Such sustained engagement would allow participants to build on their skills over time, deepen their understanding of journalism, and develop a lasting commitment to ethical, responsible media practice (Bonareva, 2026; Miranti et al., 2020).

IV. CONCLUSION

The photojournalism training activity, conducted through the collaboration of CIA Magazine, Warrior, and IMDE, represents a meaningful community service initiative aimed at enhancing children's visual literacy and journalistic competencies. The activity involved [9] participants and integrated instructional delivery, demonstrations, hands-on photography practice, caption writing, participant presentations, and structured evaluation.

Through this activity, children are expected to develop the ability to understand photography as a medium of information, capture images using appropriate basic techniques, identify stories within events, apply the 5W+1H framework, and write informative captions. Additionally, the activity provided a space for

participants to cultivate creativity, observation skills, communication confidence, and self-esteem. The emphasis on ethical principles—including obtaining consent, respecting privacy, and refraining from image manipulation—ensures that participants are not only technically proficient but also ethically grounded.

The collaborative model employed in this activity demonstrates the value of partnerships between media organizations, practitioner communities, and academic institutions in advancing media literacy education. By integrating theoretical instruction with experiential practice and ethical reflection, the program addresses both the cognitive and affective dimensions of learning. As children continue to navigate an increasingly visual and digital media landscape, such initiatives are essential for equipping them with the critical skills and ethical sensibilities necessary for responsible citizenship.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the implementation and outcomes of this activity, the following recommendations are proposed for future initiatives:

1. **Program Continuity:** The photojournalism training should be conducted on a regular, ongoing basis to allow participants to progressively develop their skills. A structured curriculum with multiple levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced) would ensure sustained engagement and measurable growth.
2. **Expanded Content Areas:** Future programs could incorporate additional topics such as interviewing techniques, news writing, video journalism, basic photo editing, and multimedia storytelling. These complementary skills would provide a more comprehensive journalism education.
3. **Publication Opportunities:** Participants' work should be published through CIA Magazine, online platforms, or physical exhibitions. A portfolio system, where each participant maintains a collection of their best work with titles and captions, would serve both as a record of progress and as a showcase for public appreciation.
4. **Enhanced Evaluation:** Subsequent activities should incorporate formal pretest and posttest assessments to measure knowledge gains more objectively. Structured rubrics for evaluating photographs and captions would also improve the consistency and transparency of participant assessment.
5. **Differentiated Mentorship:** Given the varying levels of prior knowledge and skill among participants, mentorship should be tailored to individual needs. Older or more advanced participants could be paired with younger or less experienced ones to foster peer learning.
6. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Parents, teachers, and community leaders should be more actively involved in the program to reinforce learning at home and in school settings. Parental awareness of photojournalism ethics and media literacy would further support children's responsible media use.

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