SIX STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY

A practical guide for youth campaigners on the use of photography against trafficking & sexual exploitation
SIX STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY

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Content: Natalie Binder & Margarita de Forteza
Photography & Design: Margarita de Forteza
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## Table of Contents

1. About Photography
   - Introduction: page 2
   - Why Use Photography?: page 3
   - Rules And Guidelines: page 4
   - What Images Can Photography Convey?: page 6
   - Beyond The Still Image: page 10

2. Learning More
   - Learning More: page 14
   - Learning The Language: page 15
   - Exposure: page 16
   - Shutter and Aperture: page 17
   - Light: page 20
   - Checking The Light: page 22

3. Getting More
   - How To Use Natural Light: page 26
   - How To Use Depth Of Field: page 28
   - Movement In Photography: page 30
   - Framing And Composition: page 34
   - Angle And Perspective: page 37

4. Production
   - Photography Production: page 42

5. Post Production
   - Transfer The Photographs: page 44
   - Resolution: page 46
   - Organizing Your Photos: page 48
   - Storing Your Photos: page 48
   - Selecting Your Photos: page 49
   - Editing Software: page 50
   - Editing Tools: page 52

6. Distributions And Exhibition
   - Writing Captions: page 56
   - Compress And Send: page 57
   - Social Networks: page 58
   - Exhibitions: page 60

Glossary Of Terms: page 70

Bibliography & Further Reading: page 74

Useful Films & Websites: page 75
Introduction

This handbook is designed for Youth Activists who want to take better and more accurate photographs about the work and campaigns they are involved in and spread the message regarding issues related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) more effectively.

“Six Steps to Improve your Photography” is designed to be a fun and effective tool to teach you how to improve your photography skills, edit, upload, and showcase your pictures. ECPAT hopes you find this guide a useful incentive to bring about positive changes on both an individual and community level.

Most of the tips found in this guide will be useful no matter what type of camera you have. However, the tutorials are geared towards 35mm/digital SLR cameras with manual operation, meaning that you are required to set the aperture, set the shutter speed, and physically focus the camera. Having said that, always consult your camera manual! This is your best source of information for how your camera functions.

Why use Photography?

Photography has the ability to capture a moment in time and convey an emotion. With today’s technology virtually anyone can take a good photo. However, the purpose of photography isn’t simply to capture a memory, but to convey a message. And the message conveyed depends upon many factors, for example, the lighting, position of the subject(s) in the frame, props, etc.

Photography is a popular art form dating back to the 1820s. Making good quality photographs used to require equipment, time, and lots of money, but over the past centuries photography has evolved into a digital process that gives the picture-taker a vast amount of options to capture and recapture a shot, manipulating images along the way. Nowadays, with a wide availability of affordable digital cameras, we can save time and money without the added cost of purchasing film and developing photos. Digital cameras capture not only still photographs, but sound and video.

The days of spending endless hours in the darkroom processing photos are gone, replaced with a variety of editing programmes which promote endless creative options, allowing anyone to improve or alter digital images to successfully convey the desired message. Best of all, there are countless online platforms to post your images so others can view and even print them. You can also create slide shows that can be burned to a DVD for playback on a TV complete with background music or narration, or print your images on the pages of a bound book.
Rules & Guidelines:

Before getting started we need to have some basic rules to ensure the protection of people involved in producing visual materials related to cases of violence or abuse. Remember that your primary objective is to provide support and promote awareness to children and young people who may be vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation (CSEC).

1. Work in safe places and always inform your friends, parents, or tutors of the place you plan to take photographs, with whom, and what it is about. Do not endanger yourself and remember that you are neither a war photographer nor an investigator seeking to capture criminals.

2. If you decide to tell the story of a victim of sexual exploitation, you must take the necessary precautions to protect the integrity, anonymity, and confidentiality of the person you are working with. For example, do not give out their real name and do not show their faces (or anything that can identify the victim, such as scars and markings) to prevent other people from recognizing them.

3. Explain in detail the purpose and process of an interview or photo shoot. Explain what and how you will use the material, and seek permission to use it. Participation should always be optional.

4. Please do not replicate scenes of violence, as they are distressful to see. Always try to link children to positive experiences, as it is more important to show what children are capable of doing and what they have to say, rather than making people feel sorry for them.

5. Always think of projecting a positive message. It is proven that negative messages can create stereotypes or worsen situations. We encourage you to ‘inspire’ and ‘empower’ with your photographs.
What Sort Of Images Can Photography Convey?

Photography allows us to document and collect images of a particular event, promote awareness, and awaken within the viewer a sense of personal connection to the subject in the photograph, a change in their perceptions, and a change within society. Look at other photographers’ work or at previous projects done by the organization you are working with. Ask yourself what sort of message you want to convey in your photograph and who the audience is that you want to address.

It’s important to remember that the answers to these questions will determine how you present your photographs. For example, if your images are to be shown with an explanation text of an event in the form of a booklet, you will have to keep an accurate record of all the information related to the photograph and the permission of all individuals portrayed in it.

Let’s put on our critical eyes on and look at some examples of pictures published by The Body Shop and ECPAT for the “Stop Sex Trafficking of Children & Young People” campaign! Remember to ask yourself about the message and objective of the photograph and why these pictures are successful (or not) in conveying that purpose.

Take a moment to think about your ideas and answer the following questions:

1. What is the message and objective of the photographs? (What for? Why?)

2. What format is it going to be shown in? (Web, printed publication, etc)

3. Where will it be shown? (Private exhibition, the web, etc)

4. Who will you be working with? (When & where?)

Photo One: This photo is unsuccessful because there is no clear subject. Because we do not have a clear subject, the context is confusing and there is not a clear message or objective in the photograph.

Photo Two: This is a successful photo. The subjects in the photo are posing and looking at the camera. There is a clear background, which helps us to focus on the subject. In this way we are able understand the message and the objective is successful.
**Photo One:** This photo is not as successful as it could be, because there is too much going on. We cannot see one clear subject or message, which creates confusion.

**Photo Two:** By cropping the photo the context and message are much clearer, as we can see activities in promoting the campaign, and the photo is zoomed in on the campaign petition box. Now we understand where the photo is taking place and can understand the context.

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**Photo One:** Although we can tell that it’s a campaign event, it does not tell a story of what is happening. There is no clear subject or context. We do not receive an emotional message; we simply see people standing around. The only use for this photo is to show the campaign set-up.

**Photo Two:** This photo is successful because the campaigners are standing outside The Body Shop store, wearing t-shirts, and holding signs. This creates a great amount of context and conveys an emotional message that demonstrates a united front.

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**Photo One:** This photo is unsuccessful because the subject is lost in the background. It is hard to read the posters and therefore the message is not clear.

**Photo Two:** This photo is very successful. By zooming into the image we have a clear concept of the message and context. We are also able to read what is on the posters, which creates a stronger message and an emotional response.

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**Photo One:** This photo is unsuccessful as there is no clear focal point and one of the subjects faces has been cropped. The audience is unable to determine who to focus on in the picture and we do not know what the lady is writing!

**Photo Two:** This photo is successful because it focuses on one clear subject. The Stop Sex Trafficking t-shirts worn by two of the subjects creates context and we are able to tell that young people are approaching the public to sign the petition for the campaign.
Beyond The Still Image

Whilst the aesthetics of a photograph is very important, we must ask ourselves one simple but important question: how do photographs communicate meaning?

When a still image moves beyond a moment in time to capture a symbolic meaning, it is then that we have achieved a language that can reach others; a medium that communicates an emotion, whether that emotion can be expressed in words or not.

Conveying an emotion in a photograph will help you connect your work with those viewing it, but before you take a photograph it’s important that you ask yourself: “What emotion am I trying to convey?”

Happiness and joy, sorrow and despair, are some of the easier emotions to express in a photograph, but try to go further. Think about the message you want to transmit and the purpose behind awakening certain feelings within the viewer.

When dealing with sexual exploitation of children, you might be tempted to use shocking images to provoke people into action, but you may have the opposite effect if the audience rejects the message because of their sensitivities. Portraying an optimistic message will emphasize a positive effect and mobilize people into action.

The Body Shop and ECPAT’s “Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People” campaign aims to raise awareness and call upon the public to sign a petition that will be handed over to the governments and the United Nations. By portraying youth participation and social activism through the use of a positive and educational message, The Body Shop and ECPAT encourage people to join their effort to create a united front to stop the violation of children’s rights.

If you want to take some pictures of community based workshops or awareness raising events, you would aim to capture people working together, joining efforts, and achieving goals. Look at the pictures taken by ECPAT’s YPP Global Programme and think about other ways in which this commitment to social change can be represented visually.
Quick Tips:

Let’s look at the following tips to help you convey emotion and create feeling in a photograph to make a stronger connection with viewers.

Tighten The Shot: Concentrate on the main subject of the image before taking the picture. Remember that a single emotion in a busy scene often gets lost. A faraway view of a group or an event might demonstrate size, but it will lack a subject. The message of a photograph is best conveyed on the faces of those in it or in the action!

Focus On Faces: Don’t be shy! If possible ask for permission before taking a picture of a stranger and focus on a close up of the subject’s face. Be natural and let the subject react in the way they feel. Remember to get sharp focus on the eyes.

Set Your Camera Down And Observe: Every now and then, simply put your camera down for a few minutes. Forget about shooting and just sit and observe. Look at the mood of those around you. Remember the objective of your shoot and continue taking photographs.

Return If You Can: If you are shooting a multiple day event or workshop, always return to a location with an open mind for a second look. Remember that the same place, conference, and characters will have a different feel on different days, especially if the agenda is different, becomes interactive or, has new facilitators or participants.
Although the camera is a well-used form of technology, most of us know nothing more about the device other than “point and shoot.” In this booklet, we aim to guide you through taking portrait photos of a subject with a blurred background (depth of field), moving lights (low shutter speed), as well as photographs that transmit the image with a feeling.

There are two main types of cameras you may use: a single lens reflex camera (SLR) or a compact point and shoot camera.

**SLR Cameras:** SLR (single lens reflex) cameras allow for a much greater range of options in choosing how you want to shoot your pictures. Explaining all the modes and functions would require technical information that will not be covered in this booklet. To learn more about your SRL camera, start by reading the manual that came with it and check the internet for further specific information.

**Point and shoot Cameras:** A point-and-shoot camera, also called a compact camera, is a still camera designed primarily for simple operation. It allows the user to point at the subject and take the photo. The camera automatically calculates the shutter speed and aperture values (this will be explained under Learning the Language section on page 17). Some compact cameras, however, allow the user to adjust the shutter speed and aperture. Please refer to the manual that came with your camera to see the level of automation.

**Learning the Language**

Depending on the camera you are using you will either have to set the controls manually or use a fully automatic camera, which makes the decisions for you. If you are serious about improving your photographic abilities there are a few concepts that you must become familiar with. Here are some of them:

**Focus:** The focus refers to the area in which the subject appears to be sharp, crisp, clear and well-defined (in focus). With focusing you have two choices: auto focus (AF) or manual focus (M). While SRL cameras have both options, most compact cameras only have a fully automatic focus (AF).

To illustrate, let’s look at the examples below: the first picture has the focus on the wire, while picture number two focuses on the boats (please refer to the Depth of Field section in page 27).
Exposure: The exposure refers to the total amount of light allowed to fall on the image sensor. It is regulated by the aperture and shutter.

Look at the examples and note the difference of light in them. While giving your film more light than necessary will result in overexposure (pale or light with poor washed out colours), giving your film less exposure than necessary will result in under exposure (dark with poor detail and shadows).

The pre-arranged combination of the aperture and shutter values are usually referred to as ‘modes’. Most SLR cameras and modern compact cameras are ‘multi mode’, which means you can choose the mode you want to work in, prioritising either the aperture or the shutter speed function of your camera. Manual, Aperture Priority, Shutter Priority, and Program are some of the most popular modes.

Manual (M): You set the aperture and shutter yourself.

Aperture Priority (A): You set the aperture and the camera will automatically select the corresponding shutter speed.

Shutter Priority (S): You set the shutter speed and the camera will automatically select the corresponding aperture.

Program (P): You point the camera to the subject you want to photograph and the camera will automatically select a suitable aperture and shutter combination.

Shutter and the aperture: Of the various controls on your camera, the aperture and shutter controls are the ones which are going to give you the most control over the content of your finished photographs. It is important to understand from the outset what they are each responsible for and how they affect one another.

Aperture: The aperture refers to the opening in a lens through which the light passes through. These openings have been standardized into specific sizes, called aperture stops, or F-stops. The following are some of the most common aperture values: f 2.8 f 4 f 5.6 f 8 f 11 f 16 f 22

The smaller the f-number is, the larger the aperture is, therefore more light will enter the camera. The larger number represents a smaller aperture with less light entering the camera. You will learn about how this affects your photograph in the following section, “Getting more out of your camera.”
Aperture goes hand and hand with the shutter. While the aperture controls how much light enters, the shutter lets that light hit the film or digital receiver.

**Shutter:** The shutter speed is simply the length of time that the shutter remains open to let light hit the film. It is directly dependent on the aperture, because the amount of light entering the camera through the aperture determines how long the shutter needs to remain open in order to have the right amount of light. Like the aperture, shutter values or ‘speeds’ are expressed in seconds or fractions of a second and follow a standard sequence, with each one being half the speed of the next, therefore allowing half as much light to pass through. A typical shutter speed range may look like this; 1sec; 1/2sec; 1/4sec; 1/8th; 1/15th; 1/30th; 1/60th; 1/125th; 1/250th; 1/500th; 1/1000th; 1/2000th

What does this means to us? It means that if you don’t want too much light getting through the lens and over exposing your photograph, you must either increase the f number in order to have a smaller aperture, or increase the speed of the shutter to have a shorter time of exposure.
**Light:** The most important element of any photograph is light. An easy way to think about the relation of the camera to light is to compare it with how the human eye responds to light. In dim light our pupils dilate to bring in more light so we can see better; while in bright light, our pupils contract to restrict the amount of light so we can see without being blinded. The camera reacts in the same way, the difference being that instead of using pupils to control the flow of light, it uses the aperture of the lens. The pupils work hand-in-hand with the opening and closing of your eye lids, which is in comparison like the opening and closing of the camera shutter.

Let's think about photography as the art of capturing the light reflected off objects. Natural light (as produced by the sun) is constantly changing, giving all the time different characteristics: such as intensity, angle and colour. To get a well-exposed, evocative picture, you must learn how to use all three characteristics to your advantage. Let's look at the qualities of each type of light:

**Intensity:** As light becomes more intense, contrast increases. Light and dark areas become more defined. High contrast light is typical at high noon on a clear sunny day. As the intensity of light decreases, shadows soften, glare is reduced, and objects tend to look flatter.

**Colour:** Light at different times of the day has different colours. This is typically referred to as colour temperature and it can affect the mood of your photograph. The exact same object photographed under different colour temperatures can produce surprisingly different results. The light that exists just after sunrise and just before sunset is warmer and perfect for portraits, while the midday light is more intense and has a bluish cast.

**Angle:** The angle of light works in conjunction with the intensity to produce patterns, texture, and shadows. Objects that are lit straight-on do not have a well-defined texture. The same object lit from an angle will display a clear pattern. Angular natural light can be captured early in the morning or in late afternoon.
Checking The Amount Of Light In Your Image

Digital camera light sensors are always trying to get the correct exposure for your photograph. If you don’t change anything, point the camera at a scene and take the shot, chances are the camera will get the exposure correct automatically but sometimes your camera’s light sensor can be fooled. For example, say you take a photograph of somebody standing in front of a bright background. You take the photograph on automatic mode and when you look at the photo later, the background looks just fine, but your friend’s face is completely dark. In order to correctly expose the background, your camera underexposed your friend.

To get the best possible exposure for your photographs, it is important to learn how your camera light sensor reads the light. Always refer to your camera manual for further information.

SLR cameras: SLR cameras come with a built-in light metering system that measures the light reflected back through the camera lens from the scene in front of it. When using your camera in an Automatic mode, simply compose your picture as normal. When ready, press the shutter button half way down and the light meter will take a ‘reading’ from the scene. Depending on your camera you will see an illuminated scale from plus to minus through the viewfinder, at the bottom of the image you are framing. The plus sign means over exposure, the minus sign means under exposure, and the zero symbol means that the exposure of the photograph is OK.

Once you have the information given by the light-metre (+,-, OK), you will have to increase or reduce the aperture or shutter settings as required. For example, if your camera is set on Shutter priority mode and the light meter reads that the image is underexposed (-), you will have to change the shutter speed to a slower one or give a bigger aperture to the lens in order to allow more light through the lens.

Compact Cameras: Compact cameras come with an automatic light metering system that will be triggered when you press the shutter button half way down. Once triggered, the camera makes an overall reading and decides the best combination of shutter speed and aperture. If you let the camera determine the exposure for you, it won’t always get it right. The camera thinks that everything in a photograph should show up as a medium tone. Take a photo of a white wall and it will look grey — the camera has intentionally underexposed the image. Take a photo of a black wall and it will also look grey — the camera has overexposed the image. It’s important to remember that the camera needs your help in order to make the best of the light available.

The following is a very useful explanation of how to let your camera know which area of the picture is of most importance for you in order to take a light reading of that particular section, and not to end up with an over or under exposed photograph. Look at the scene you want to photograph and identify the light, mid, and dark tones of your picture. Once you have done that, ask yourself which of these areas have the greatest importance for you.
For example, if the subject you want to photograph is standing under the shade of a tree in the middle of a bright garden, you will want to prioritise the mid tone light of your picture. If your subject is standing in front of the main source of light, make sure you take the light reading from your subject's skin tone. Before taking the picture, point your camera to a mid tone light area or object and press the shutter speed halfway down; in this way the camera will take a light reading of the mid tones and set the aperture and shutter speed accordingly, allowing your subject to be correctly exposed in your picture. While keeping the shutter button pressed halfway down, re-frame your picture and press the button the rest of the way to take the shot.
How to Use Natural Light

Now you know that light has intensity, angle, and colour. But how can this help you to take better photographs? Luckily, there are some typical situations where paying a small amount of attention to the light can greatly improve a photograph.

**Portraits and Intensity**: Most portraits turn out better when the light is less intense. Severe contrast on a person’s face produces very dark shadows that are not flattering. Since you are looking for less intense light, overcast days are great for people photography. But what if it’s not overcast? Find a way to artificially reduce the intensity of the light hitting your subject. Put them in the shade or create shade by hauling a white sheet inbetween the sun and the subject.

**Patterns In Nature**: Sand dunes. Rocks. Grass. Waves. Any pattern in nature stands out in the morning and in the evening. At high noon, most patterns disappear. In the morning and evening the light from the sun hits natural subjects at more of an angle, resulting in clearer patterns.

**Evoking a Mood**: Moods are sometimes associated with colour, and they can also create a response in the person seeing your photograph. If you want your photo to express a feeling or mood, wait for the right time of day to take it. Colours tend to be cool and blue in the morning and orange and warm in the afternoon. A shot of snow at sunrise should make the viewer feel the cold. The beach at sunset should feel relaxed and warm. There are many colours and moods in between these two extremes, so feel free to experiment. Once you find what works for you, you’ll be able to capture that same feeling over and over again.
How to Use Depth of Field

As well as the amount of light coming through the lens, the aperture controls how much of the scene will be in sharp focus. This area of sharpness is known as the ‘depth of field’ (DOF) and it refers to the areas of the photograph both in front and behind the main focal point which remains “sharp” (in focus). The depth of field of a photograph is affected by aperture and focal length. For example, if you are focusing on a subject that is very close to the lens (shorter focusing distance), you will have a shallow depth of field (less amount of things in focus) than if you are focusing on a subject which is far away (large depth of field).

1- Wide aperture: narrow depth of field
2- Small aperture: large depth of field

Shallow depth of field: A larger aperture (smaller f-number, e.g. f/2) has a shallow depth of field. Anything behind or in front of the main focal point will appear blurred. A shallow DOF can be very useful when you want to isolate your object from the background, such as when taking portraits or macro photography.

Large depth of field: A smaller aperture (larger f-number, e.g. f/22) has a greater depth of field. Objects within a certain range behind or in front of the main focal point will also appear sharp. A large depth of field is great when your photograph landscapes and when you want every detail to be in focus.

Portrait framing sets the camera for minimum depth of field so it has a soft, less distracting background. To maximize the effect, zoom in on the subject so it fills most of the viewfinder, and make sure there is as much distance as possible between the main subject and the background.

Landscape framing sets the camera for maximum depth of field so as much of the scene as possible is sharp from the foreground to the background. Since a slow shutter speed may be used in this mode, you may need to support the camera in order to prevent unwanted movement.
Slow Shutter Speed And Camera Movement

The longer that the shutter remains open the more movement will appear in your photograph. A slow shutter speed will blur a moving object and a fast shutter speed will freeze your subject, allowing no traces of movement to be seen. Remember that while movement is a great way to evoke and convey emotions in your images, camera shakes and unfocused images are some of the worst enemies of photography! It takes time and work to master the technique of movement, so until you’ve managed to successfully communicate movement, always back up your experiments with crisp, well-centred, and well-focused images.

There are two main approaches to making a slow shutter speed work in your favour: the movement of the camera (blurred background with subject in focus/panning) or the movement of the subject (blurred subject with background in focus).

**Subject movement:** This technique keeps your main subject blurred while the rest of the picture remains in sharp focus. For example, if you want to photograph a speeding train to communicate to the viewer that the train is moving quickly, you can blur the train while leaving the commuters waiting at the station in focus. To accomplish this, use a slow shutter speed and mount the camera to a tripod; the camera must remain steady in order to create a crisp image of the people waiting for the train. You often see this technique used in night time photographs with car headlights cutting through the image.

**Camera movement:** This technique keeps your subject in sharp focus while the background is blurred. In this example, the cyclist is in focus while the background is blurred, thereby conveying the bike’s movement. Similar to the first method, you must use a slow shutter speed. However, instead of using a tripod, you’ll be panning your camera along the directional path of your subject. Panning requires that you move your camera with your subject. Specifically, you’ll be matching your subject’s rate of movement and the direction in which your subject is travelling. For example, if you want to photograph a man on a bike moving from east to west, you’ll need to pan your camera along the same direction, matching the speed of the bike.

Remember that movement can also communicate mood. For example, trees rustling in the wind suggest serenity, while groups of people on a busy city block imply hurried activity. If you have a compact camera and want to experiment with a slow shutter speed, use the night mode function but remember to be careful not to over expose your photographs.
Let’s look at the following points and double-check that you fully understand the concepts of speed and aperture and how they affect your pictures.

- If you want a lot of depth of field you will have to select a small aperture (larger f-stop number - smaller opening). To counter this you will have to select a shutter speed that will give you the correct exposure, and be quick enough to freeze movement and prevent camera shake.

- If you want to capture and freeze a fast movement you will have to select a reasonably fast shutter speed. To counter this you will have to select an aperture which will give you the correct exposure and be small enough to provide sufficient depth of field.

- If you want to capture movement you will have to select a slow shutter speed. To counter this you will have to select larger f-stop number (smaller opening) which will give you the correct exposure.
**Framing and Composition**

**Composition:** Composing a shot is one of the most vital requirements in producing a good photograph, and can be the only thing that separates a good photo from a mediocre one. If you're looking for ways to frame and compose your photos to make them stand out, research different styles of composition and framing and look at what works best for you and why. There are many different ways to compose a shot, and in this section we'll look at an easy and useful composition technique called the “Rule of Thirds” and six easy steps for great composition. There are many different ways to frame your image, so don't be afraid to break the rules and get creative!

**Rule of Thirds:** The purpose of the rule of thirds is to avoid having your subject appear directly in the middle of the photograph. It is an old rule that applies to more art forms than just photography, but it has become a very common practice and often works for the better. It works by splitting the image into 9 equally sized parts, divided by two vertical and two horizontal lines. The four lines create four intersections, which should serve as the main points of interest.

Keep in mind the Rule of Thirds when you have strong lines in a photograph. Try to frame your horizontal lines square with the edges of your image, and the vertical lines with the sides of your image to prevent an off centre picture. For some successful examples of the use of lines in photography, please visit: http://www.digital-photography-school.com/converging-lines
**Framing:** Framing is the technique of drawing attention to the subject of your image by blocking other parts of the image with something in the scene. Look for natural frames in the scenery you have; having some frames can do wonders for a photograph.

In the example above the subject is framed by a window. By using objects in the scene to frame your subject you will give both context and a sense of depth and layers to your image. Remember that intriguing your viewer will draw them into your picture, as they will be imagining what is behind your frame -but if you get the framing wrong, it can ruin the shot! To be on the safe side, always take an extra safety shot of the scene until you master your composition skills!

**Lines and Shapes:** The lines that can be found in images are very powerful elements that, with little practice, can add a dynamic impact to a photograph in terms of mood, as well as demonstrate how they lead a viewer into a photo.

While horizontal lines in an image give a sense of ‘stability’ or even ‘rest’, vertical lines have the ability to convey a variety of different moods in a photograph, ranging from power and strength (think of skyscrapers) to growth (think of trees). Diagonal lines create points of interest as they intersect with other lines, often giving images depth by suggesting perspective.

**Angle & Perspectives:** One of the most effective ways to make your digital images more interesting to the eye is to change the angle that you’re shooting from. Physically move objects, ask people to move relative to each other, and move around to find the best angle for your picture. Remember that the most effective way to control your composition is to alter your viewpoint. After taking a photograph, wander about and see if you can improve on your original composition by moving around and changing your viewpoint. You may be surprised how much difference walking a few metres can make.

In addition to standing in front of your subject, be creative and try lying down, crouching, climbing, or placing the camera on the ground. Not only does changing the angle that you shoot from impact the feeling or size of your subject, but it can have an effect upon the light and shade and patterns on it. Please do not put yourself or others under any potential risk or danger, and remember that safety always comes first.
**Fill your frame:** While empty spaces can be used effectively in photos to create stunning results, it is much more likely to be successful if your shots are filled with interest. Most digital cameras come with a zoom lens; use it, but don’t rely on it to get a close up shot. Move around and position yourself effectively. If this doesn’t work, crop your shots but remember that any major cropping will result in a loss of quality of your image.

**Breaking the rules:** Don’t be afraid to break these rules. Review photos you have taken and be critical of what you are seeing. Exploring what other photographers are doing in similar conditions will enable you to pick up on their skills, which will improve your skills and produce better images. When looking over your photographs, think about what you could have done and how you could have utilized different props around you. This could be by using different lighting sources around you, standing on chairs or tables to get different angles, or experimenting with your depth of field.
Quick Tips Checklist

1. Plan the composition of your picture. When composing a picture, think about the elements that will fill the picture plane, such as patterns, textures, and lines. Patterns and textures create interest and lines create movement within a picture. Try to keep your compositions clutter free. Remember that most of the time less is more, so focus on small things rather than on a vast scene.

2. Decide if you will be shooting the photo vertically or horizontally. Not all photos work well with the standard horizontal picture plane. Shoot vertical to capture subject matter that has some height to prevent cutting off interesting areas.

3. Determine the depth of field within the composition. Decide on the subject of focus for your photograph. Make sure that you don’t have acres of space full of nothing interesting and check for ‘stuff’ intruding into your frame. If any object that appears in the viewfinder’s frame does not “enhance” the image, then it will most often “detract from” the image.

4. Study the light that is hitting your subject. Avoid lighting that is too bright, which can cast strong shadows on your subject matter or overexpose the photo. Take outdoor photos early in the morning or just before sunset for best results.

5. Remember the Rule of Thirds when deciding where to position the subject. There are occasions where the subject works well in the centre of a photo, but strongly consider moving the subject from the dead centre. Off-centre subjects work well when the background and foreground details create additional interest.

6. Turn on your camera and flash, and focus the camera on the subject matter. Most cameras focus automatically. Many cameras show a green ready light when the shutter button is pushed half way down, indicating that the auto focus is ready. Press the shutter button halfway down, centre your subject matter in the picture plane, look for the green light (if applicable) and press the button all the way.
Be Prepared: It’s time to take what you’ve learned about photography and apply it to your photo shoot. Before you get started it is essential to ensure that you are prepared. There are some key items that you will need at every photo shoot, whether it is planned or spontaneous. Here is a list to consider:

Once you have your basics, take a step back and factor in all elements that might have an effect on your shoot. Surprises and unexpected events take place on a daily basis – no doubt they will occur during your photo shoot. Try to anticipate everything that might happen, such as a sudden change in weather or a wardrobe malfunction. Do you have an umbrella? Extra clothing? Material to protect your equipment?

Be Spontaneous: If you are taking spontaneous pictures you will obviously not arrange and carry out a photo shoot. Sometimes the best shots are the ones that are totally unexpected. Here are some tips that will prepare you for those spontaneous photo sessions:

Get Ready: Point your camera where the action is likely to happen and keep your finger poised over the shutter button so you can catch the shot at the perfect time.

Go Photo Crazy: Take lots of photos! Use the “sequence” or “burst” mode on your camera, which allows you to take one shot after another within seconds.

Up Close and Personal: Getting up close to your subject will allow you to take photos that emphasize what is important and create a greater impact. A hand or a facial expression can sometimes tell a story better than the entire subject.

Be Invisible: Blend into your surroundings as much as possible to prevent the subjects in your photo from feeling self-conscious. The goal is to shoot them in their natural state. To avoid drawing attention to yourself, try taking photos from a ground shot or waist level.

Prepare the Subject: Unless your subject is a model, he or she might need some direction on how to pose. This is your opportunity to be a picture director, not a passive picture taker! Come to the photo shoot with a chart of different shots. Be specific. Do you want a photo with or without certain props? Should your subject sit or stand? Direction is key to prevent your subject from feeling self-conscious. On the flip side, allow for some flexibility, should he or she be completely at ease with being a model. In the end, however, you are the director. What shots are you looking for? What do you want to convey?
Transfer the Photographs to your Computer

Transferring your photos from your camera to a computer is simple. There are two methods of doing this, and the method that you use will depend on your computer’s capabilities.

**Firewire Cable:** A firewire is a high-speed, hot-swappable peripheral interface that supports data transfer rates of up to 800 megabits/second. It is the quickest and most effective method of transferring your photos. Firewire devices can be connected and disconnected at any time unlike a USB cable, which must be safely removed. The key difference between Firewire and USB is that Firewire is intended for devices working with a lot more data and can transfer information with increased speed.

**USB Cable:** If you don’t have a Firewire cable you can use a USB cord to connect your camera to the computer. Unlike FireWire, a USB cord is included with the purchase of your camera. Connect the cord from your camera to the computer and turn on your camera. A menu will pop up, offering you a variety of options. Select “import photos” for an automatic import or “open folder to view files” to manually select the photos that you want to upload.

**Card Reader:** If your computer has a card reader then this is a quick and easy method of transferring photos that doesn’t require you bring your FireWire or USB cable. Simply remove your memory card from your camera and insert it into the card reader slot in your computer. You will be prompted to take the same steps that you did with the USB cord.

**Quick Tips:**

*Safely Remove Hardware!* Before you remove your USB cable or memory card, it is important to safely remove hardware to avoid potential corruption, which could take place if the programme hasn’t stopped running. Right click on the “Safely Remove Hardware” icon on the bottom-right side of your screen and select “Safely Remove Hardware.” A screen will pop up, giving you an option of which hardware to remove. Select the device you were using and click “Remove.”
Resolution

The needs for print and web images are different. There are three points you should remember about resolution.

1. The higher the resolution, the better printed image quality.
2. The higher the resolution, the larger the file size and the larger the print size.
3. Do not confuse pixels with dots. They are not the same. Pixels per inch (PPI) refer to the number of pixels per inch of your image, affecting the quality of the output; and dots per inch (DPI) refer to the number of dots per inch that your monitor and printer uses, affecting the tonality and quality of your image.

On the next page you will find a table of values that will help you decide what size image you can print with a determined resolution value or what resolution you need in order to print an image in a particular size. It is important to remember that a printed image needs a higher resolution than an image that will be looked at on a monitor. For example, an image with 80 ppi (pixels per inch) will give a good quality representation on a computer monitor, but to get the same quality of representation on photo paper you will have to increase the resolution of your image to 200 ppi. Until you become more familiar with the concept of resolution we suggest you use the following sizes:

**Suggested Resolution for Printed Images:** 200 - 300 pixels per inch (PPI). Printed images are set up in CMYK format.

**Suggested Resolution for Web Images:** 72 pixels per inch (PPI). Web images are set up in RGB format.

Let’s look at the following table to ensure that you have all the necessary information to provide your image with the right size and resolution:
Organizing Your Photos

After a photo shoot chances are you will have hundreds, perhaps thousands, of pictures to sort through. To make this process as easy as possible, the best thing that you can do is organize your photos immediately after you upload them to your computer using folders and sub-folders.

When it comes to organizing your photos, you want to make sure that you do so in a way that's going to make it easy for you to find them in the future. Choose a method that makes the most sense to you – date, categories, or subject.

Here is an example of how you can organize your photos: in your “My Pictures” folder, create a subfolder with the date. Open that folder and create another sub-folder with the name of the event, such as “Body Shop Campaign Launch in Nepal.” You can take your organization a step further by naming your photos individually after you've selected the ones that you want to share.

Storing Your Photos

To take your photo organization one step further, you may wish to back up your files onto a CD or DVD for safekeeping. Just keep in mind that these technologies might begin to change over time as new technologies make their way into the marketplace. You may also choose to save your photos on an online platform, such as Flickr, Picasa, or SaveMyMemories.org, where you don't have to worry about accessing your files through your personal hard drive or keeping up-to-date with digital devices.

Selecting your Photos

Have you ever flipped through a friend or family member’s photo album and noticed that picture after picture looks the same? Eventually you find yourself scanning through the photos, uninterested in the work of art before you. Selecting photos to showcase is key. Before you show anyone those hundreds of holiday photos or the two hour slide show, edit your work. Take out the doubles, the duds, the out-of-focus, and beyond. If you have 10 photos of “Sarah” sitting in a tree, choose only two. Showcase your good work, and guaranteed, your standing as a photographer will increase. Professionals can shoot a load of rubbish like anyone else; they just don't show it to anybody.
Editing Software

Nowadays most computers come with basic editing software that allow you to crop, rotate, and fix red-eye. Also, there are lots of online editing programmes that will solve most of your photo editing needs in the most simple way without installing any software on your computer. Online services let you upload your photos, edit, and download them back to your computer. These are some of the most popular editing programs:

Basic Editing Programmes:

Photoshop Express: Photoshop Express lets you edit your organize, store (up to 2GB) and share your photos. Photoshop Express has three main control groups to help you editing your images: Basics, Tuning, and Effects. To leran more about Photoshop Express visit: http://www.photoshop.com/tools

Picasa: Picasa is a downloadable image editing program that will import and organize your photos automatically. It also offers large one-click editing tools, such as lighting, red eyes, and colour. Another advantage of Picasa is that you can be creative, making collages, creating video presentations, or adding text to a photo. Picasa also has built-in functions that let you share your photos with ease. You can upload your photos to a blog or an online Picasa album with just one click. Picasa can also change the size (compress) your photos automatically so that you can email them with a single click. For more information about Picasa or to download the programme, follow this link: http://picasa.google.com/

Advanced Editing Programmes:

Photoshop: One of the more complex photo editing programmes is Adobe Photoshop. Photoshop is for the serious photographer which includes an advanced system of photo editing that allows the user to alter and manipulate images in a variety of ways. The cost of Photoshop is around $700 USD. For more information on Photoshop, including tutorials, visit this link: http://www.adobe.com/products/photoshop/compare/

The Gimp: The Gimp is a free image manipulation programme. It has many capabilities, such as a simple paint program, an expert quality photo retouching program, an image format converter, and an online batch processing system. For more information on The Gimp visit: http://www.gimp.org

Picnik: Picnik is a web-based program similar to Picasa with a wide range of editing capabilities. The advantage of using Picnik is that there is no need to download and install software. Picnik photos can be uploaded either from your computer or online albums. In addition to the editing features found in Picasa, Picnik allows you to alter your image and add text, borders, backgrounds, icons, labels, and create a variety of collages. For more information about Picnik, follow this link: http://picnik.com
Editing Tools

When you open an image on the computer you get to see it for the first time. The display on the camera’s monitor is so small, making captured images hard to evaluate. So what must you take into account when deciding if the image you are looking at can be improved? In this section we identify the qualities of your photos that you can improve and the various ways to make these adjustments. To bring your digital images to their full potential, you do not need expensive or hard to learn software. Today there are many great editing tools available on the Internet. Below you will find some of the most popular editing controls:

Basic Editing Tools:

Auto correct: This option allows you to improve your image automatically.

Exposure: This option adjusts the exposure of the image, choosing among several options from darker (underexposed) to lighter (overexposed).

Red Eye Removal: This option eliminates or mitigates the dreaded red-eye effect caused by the direct application of flash on the pupil.

Crop: Cropping is a quick and easy way to eliminate distracting or unimportant portions of your photo and focus on the subject to bring across clear message. You might also want to crop the image if it has to fit into a specific design, such as a newsletter or greeting card.

Rotate: Rotating an image may be necessary if you turned the camera vertically to capture a picture, or if the horizon line is tilted.

Clone Brush: The clone brush is the most simple and powerful tool for digital retouching. This retouching tool can be used to clean up dust spots, pimples, or even remove large areas of the scene. Spend a few moments experimenting and you will soon get the hang of it.

Tuning Editing Tools:

Brightness and Contrast: Brightness and contrast affects the overall tone of the photo. Changing the brightness will make an image lighter or darker. Adjusting the contrast makes the image more flat or “punchy”. Brightness and contrast are commonly grouped together in the same window.

Adjust Levels: The Adjust Levels command is similar to brightness and contrast, but gives you much more control over the tonal range. This is one of the most powerful and simple photo editing tools. It also shows a graph of your image called a histogram. The histogram is a detailed map showing shadow detail towards the left and highlight detail towards the right. You can adjust the levels by either dragging one of the sliders or by entering a value directly into the box.

Hue and Saturation: The Hue and Saturation tool controls colour. Changing the hue alters the balance and strength of the colour, for example shifting red to yellow. If you de-saturate your photograph (remove all colour) you will be left with a monochrome (black and white) image.
**White Balance:** The white balance function helps us reach a true representation of the colours in any lighting condition. Our eyes are very good at judging what is white under different light sources, but digital cameras often have great difficulty with auto white balance and can create unsightly blue, orange, or even green colour casts. Fortunately, most digital cameras have a variety of white balances settings you can choose from. To learn more about how to use this function visit: [http://www.cambridgeincolour.com/tutorials/white-balance.htm](http://www.cambridgeincolour.com/tutorials/white-balance.htm)

**Quick Tips:**

- Always work on a copy. Remember that until you make a backup copy your digital photo is a one of a kind original. Make it a habit to make copies immediately after loading them from your camera, even before looking at them! Back up your images onto removable media as often as you can.

- If you would like to learn more, please visit: [http://www.photonhead.com/photo-editing/techniques/](http://www.photonhead.com/photo-editing/techniques/)
Campaigning to raise awareness about the commercial sexual exploitation of children and young people has been the main objective of your photographs. Now is the time to show all your hard work! Your photographs are finished, but to raise awareness they must be seen by as many people as possible. The more often people see the material, the better they will remember the message, and the more effective the action will be. In this section we will look at social platforms and emailing alternatives so that your photographs can finally be seen by the public. We will also highlight the importance of writing interesting captions.

Writing Captions:

A caption, which is also known as a cutline, is a piece of text that is printed below an image, usually describing something that is not obvious in the photo. Captions can be a few words or several sentences. A good caption will enhance a photo by conveying the message with even greater strength.

Here is some useful criteria for writing a good caption:

1. Be clear and concise without stating the obvious
2. Provide context for the picture (who, what, where, when why, how)
3. Don’t editorialize: Don’t try to explain a person’s feeling or expression. Leave it up to the audience to determine the emotion

Compress and Send:

If you want to email your photos to friends, family, or the ECPAT office, be advised that regular email can only send 10MB of content maximum. You have two ways of getting around this. One: you can compress (zip) and send your photos, or two: you can send them using a web-based programme such as MediaFire or You Send It.

Compressed files take up less storage space and can be transferred to other computers faster than uncompressed files. You can combine several files into a single compressed folder, making it easier to share a group of files, since you only need to attach one folder to an email message instead of several files.

How to compress a folder: In order to compress a folder, first make sure that all of the photos that you want zipped are contained inside. Next, right click on the folder and select “Send to” and then “Compressed (zipped) folder.” This will create a compressed folder with the same name as your file and in the same location. The folder will contain your compressed file. To uncompress the folder right-click and choose “Extract All” and follow the prompts. Another useful Windows data compressor is WINRAR (www.win-rar.com)

How to send a folder: MediaFire is a file-hosting website that offers unlimited downloads, unlimited uploads, and unlimited storage, all for free! Users can share their files with email, Facebook, Twitter, and more. After you create an account you can begin to upload your files easily using the “drag and drop” method. Visit www.mediafire.com for more information and to create an account!
Social Networks:

One of the advantages of taking digital photography -and thanks to the latest advances in technology- is that sharing photos with family, friends, and other young activists has become easier than ever. There are many social networking sites that help you create digital photo galleries that can be accessed by anyone, anywhere in the world. Some of the most popular Internet sites that promote the distribution of photographs are:

**Facebook**: Facebook is one of the main platforms used to share photos. Simply click, “Create Album” and use the simple uploader tool to select your photos. Don’t forget to include an album title and description. Before you publish your photos you can rearrange and crop them. Writing enticing captions and selecting quality shots are key to sharing your photos.

**Blogging**: A blog, or a “Web Log” is an online journal and a popular medium of expressing your artistic side, whether through words, photos, or both. There are a variety of blogging platforms to choose from, including Blogspot (www.blogspot.com), Wordpress (www.wordpress.com) and Tumblr (www.tumblr.com).

**Flickr**: Flickr is a photo sharing site that allows the user to showcase their work and connect with other photographers. To use Flickr you can log in with your existing Facebook, Yahoo!, or Google accounts, or you can create a new account with Flickr. Upload photos to your “Photostream” and then create “Sets” to organize your photos. Include captions to tell a story about your photos. Like Facebook, you can also connect with other users on Flickr to share your photos and exchange messages. You will receive an alert on your homepage every time one of your Flickr friends uploads more photos.

Privacy Setting: Facebook, Flickr, and all blogging sites allow you to choose if you want to make your photographs and information available to all public or just to a group of people and friends. Before uploading any information to the web, think about who you want to access your photos and set the privacy setting accordingly.
Exhibition

Exhibiting your work not only shows the weeks of hard work and effort, but also helps you achieve public awareness regarding the commercial sexual exploitation of children and young people and you can even raise funds for future projects. Here are some methods to showcase your photographs to as many people as possible:

Posters: Use your photos to create posters by adding text to your picture with programmes such as Picnik, Picasa, or Photoshop.

Notebooks/Bookmarks: Notebooks and bookmarks are small and easy to create (you can generally find a template on most computer programmes).

Calendar: Showcase your 12 best shots in a calendar. If you wish you create a YPP calendar include a small piece of text with each month explaining different aspects of the Youth Partnership Project.

Photo Book: Various websites offer the opportunity to create a custom photo book, which you can get printed and bound professionally. Choose your favourite photos and arrange them in a layout. Add text to tell a story.

Photography Exhibition: An Exhibition is a great opportunity to collaborate with other friends and photographers to showcase your work, raise awareness, and raise some funds. To have an exhibition you will require a number of photos and a large area where you can put your work on display. You can arrange a show day at your local school or university and you can even charge an entry, ask for donations, or sell your photographs. Remember that it is important to talk with the audience and ask for their opinion and comments on you work. It is through this exchange of views and learning from your experiences that your next photographic work can better the previous one and so on.

Competitions and festivals: It may seem unusual, but there are thousands of photography contests all over the world. If you run a Google search for “photography contests” you will get thousands of results (also in the Useful Websites section in page 72). One very productive idea is to create your own list of contests so that when your photographs are ready you can find the most convenient options. Some contests are divided by theme or type of picture. Find the right one for you!

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. We hope it has helped you understand more about how to work with photography and what you can do to support the fight to end the trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents and protect yourself from becoming a victim.
Glossary Of Terms

Pixel: Pictures are made up of little dots called pixels. Pixel stands for PICTure ElemenT. Put enough of them together and you have a picture. They are arranged horizontally and vertically. Get close enough to your computer screen (or use a magnifier) and you'll see them.

Megapixel: A megapixel is a unit equal to one million pixels. The higher the resolution is, the more pixels there are in an image, which produces a greater image quality. An image file that is 1 megapixel (MP) can make a photo realistic print of 5 x 7 inches; a 2 MP file can make an 8 x 10-inch print; a 3 MP file can make an 11 x 14-inch print.

Resolution: Resolution is the number of pixels in an image. The more pixels there are, the higher quality the image is.

Megabyte: A Megabyte is an amount of computer memory consisting of about one million bytes.

Liquid Crystal Display (LCD): An LCD is a full-color display screen on cameras used to preview and review pictures and view information, such as menu options and camera settings.

Memory card: This is a storage device used to store data, such as picture and movie files. A memory card is available in a range of sizes, such as 8 MB, 32 MB, and 256 MB.

Depth of field (DOF): This term refers to the areas of the photograph, both in front and behind the main focus point which remain “sharp” (in focus).

File Format: The file format lets you specify what format the image is saved in; different formats offer different pros and cons depending on the camera and software available to you. For the purpose of using the most manageable format we suggest to use the largest available JPEG size with the least compression available. If you have to reduce either, you can do so later using a photo-editing program. If you shoot the image at a lower quality setting, you can never really improve it much or get a large, sharp print if you want one. The only problem with this approach is that higher quality images have larger file sizes. Since many digital cameras offer more than one image format, here are some things that might help you select the best one for your needs.

- JPEG: When JPEG images are recorded the images are processed inside the camera for optimum image quality and compressed to allow a larger number of images to be stored on the memory card. However, the compression process is irreversible, meaning that the raw data cannot be recovered once it has been compressed, losing some of the original image data for good.

- RAW: A RAW image file is raw data recorded with nearly no deterioration in image quality resulting from image processing inside the camera. RAW images can only be used for viewing or printing on a computer with a specific software that allows you to convert the RAW image data files to a JPEG or TIFF file.

- TIFF: A TIFF file tends to be larger than both JPEG and RAW images and therefore requires a large quantity of memory space to be stored. It's supported by virtually all paint, image-editing, and page-layout applications.
**File Compression:** Image files are huge compared to many other types of computer files. To make image files smaller and more manageable, digital cameras use a process called compression. During compression, data that has little value is eliminated or saved in a shorter form to reduce a file’s size. For example, if large areas of the sky are the same shade of blue, only the value for one pixel needs to be saved along with the locations of the other pixels with the same colour. When the image is then opened and displayed by any application, the compression process is reversed more or less depending on which form of compression was used—lossless or lossy.

- Lossless compression compresses an image so when it is uncompressed, as it is when you open it, its image quality matches the original source—nothing is lost. Although lossless compression sounds ideal, it doesn’t provide much compression, so files remain quite large. For this reason, lossless compression is only used by the highest quality image formats—namely TIFF and RAW.

- Lossy compression can dramatically reduce file sizes. However, this process degrades images to some degree and the more they’re compressed, the more degraded they become. In many situations, such as posting images on the Web or making small to medium sized prints, the image degradation isn’t obvious. However, if you enlarge an image enough, it will show. The most common lossy file format is JPEG and many cameras let you specify how much they are compressed. Less compression gives you better images so you can make larger prints, but you can’t store as many images.

**Image Resolution:** In photography the image resolution is determined by the number of small points (pixels) gathered together to form a photograph. The more pixels an image has, the more elaborate and detailed an image is. Larger resolution, however, also means larger image file size. You can make your print smaller without losing any quality, but you cannot enlarge a small resolution image without starting to get defect on the quality of your print (we call this pixilation). For this reason it is important that you save it in its original resolution quality before re-sizing an image. Save it in its larger and pixel-rich size and then make it smaller in the editing program for emailing. In that case you will always have a copy of the original if you would like to print it. Remember that once resized, an image cannot be brought back to its previous size, as it is larger and the resolution would be changed for the worse.

- **Suggested Resolution for Printed Images:** 200 - 300 pixels per inch (PPI). Printed images are set up in CMYK format.

- **Suggested Resolution for Web Images:** 72 pixels per inch (PPI). Web images are set up in RGB format. CMYK images will not show up properly in web browsers, so use a photo imaging programme to convert a CMYK image to a web RGB image at 72 ppi.
Bibliography & Further Reading

Content Photography

Motion in Photography
http://www.digital-photography-school.com/a-beginners-to-capturing-motion-in-your-photography#ixzz1HPVz9J9G

Composition in Photography
http://www.ehow.com/how_8033407_pictures.html#ixzz1HZhSynQF

Rule of Thirds in Photography

Lines in Photography
http://www.digital-photography-school.com/converging-lines
http://www.digital-photography-school.com/working-the-lines-in-your-photography#ixzz1HyLgC7Mp

Framing in Photography
http://www.tutorial9.net/tutorials/photography-tutorials/composition-and-framing

Beyond Image in Photography

http://www.digital-photography-school.com/adding-emotion-and-feeling-to-photographs#ixzz1HITv8cbO

Useful Websites

Technical Information: Compress and Send
Win-Rar: http://www.win-rar.com
Media Fire: http://www.mediafire.com
You Send It: http://www.yousendit.com

Technical Information: Editing Software
http://www.freeonlinephotoeditor.com
http://fotoflexer.com
http://www.lunapic.com/editor

Examples and Inspiration
http://www.magnumphotos.com
http://www.socialdocumentary.net
http://www.photophilanthropy.org/
http://www.basetree.com/

Photography Competitions:
http://www.photocompete.com
http://photophilanthropy.org/award/guidelines
http://prizedo.com/community-competitions/activism/
http://photobucket.com/
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