

# Rural Youth Photovoice: Civic Engagement

## INTRODUCTION

- What is photovoice?

-A process that aims to use photographic images taken by people to enhance community needs assessments, empower participants, and induce change.

- Oftentimes, youth fail to know how policies are developed, laws are enacted, and decisions are made in their communities, leading youth to not feel connected or involved.
- Create youth who are passionate leaders in their communities through a developed understanding of areas to create change and the steps necessary to do so.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

How do youth perceive their communities?

## METHODOLOGY

This study followed the photovoice methodology. This included:

- Two workshops on photography and local civics and government.
- Four photo prompts to identify parts of their communities.
- A focus group discussion on the photos taken.

This study took place for 10 weeks in the summer of 2022, in three counties in rural southwest Oklahoma. These counties were Harmon and Tillman, with the purpose of interacting with their youth. Said youth were ages ranging from seven to 17, with a focus on middle and high school students. There were a total of eight participants total. These eight participants submitted a total of 20 photos taken to answer the four prompts. All eight youth attended focus group sessions discussing the photos they had taken.

## PROMPTS

1. Please take a photo of the place you could serve your community
2. Please take a photo of the thing that is the most unique about your community
3. Please take a photo of the greatest potential for growth in your community
4. Please take a photo of the place with the most unrealized potential in your community

## RESULTS

- The youth struggled to locate places that fit the description of the prompts.
- Most of the places in the photos were on the main downtown streets or areas that the participants regularly visited,
- The photos showed many areas that could use improvement but the participants had very few ideas to achieve the change and growth they wanted to see.

## CONCLUSION

Youth in the rural communities felt disconnected from the events happening around them. The photos showed many areas where youth were disappointed in their communities, including abandoned buildings and projects that were never finished. The focus group discussions revealed a want for things that interested the participants including food shops and activity-based stores including recreational opportunities. These group discussions also showed a lack of understanding of how to change and create growth. This leads to youth feeling disconnected from their hometowns.

## AUTHORS



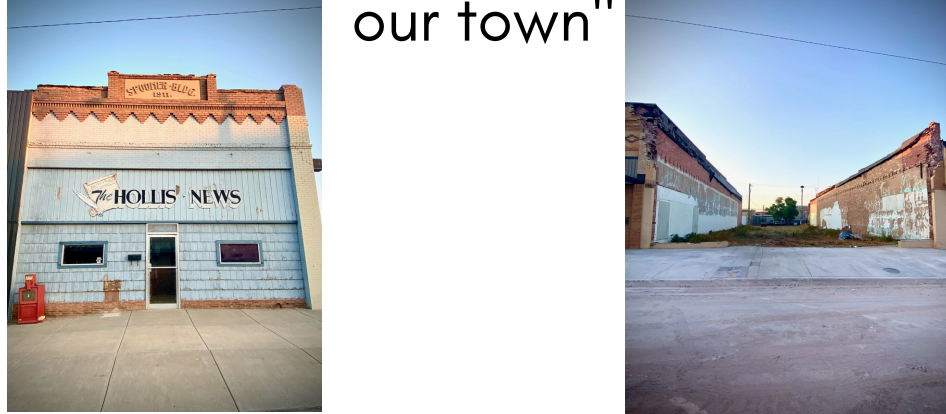
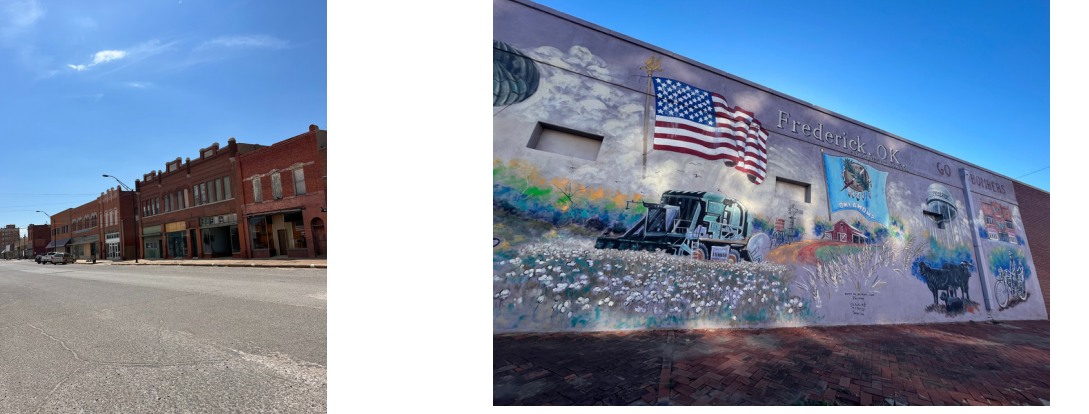
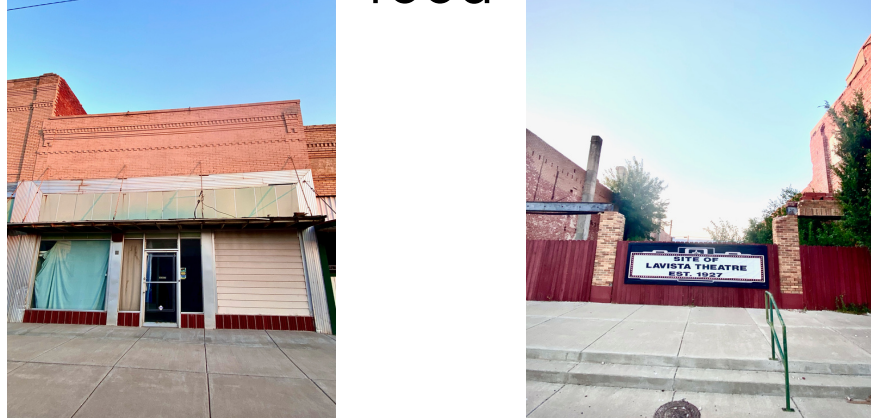

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## AFFILIATIONS

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## PHOTOS

The following photos were taken by participants in the study to describe the prompts.

	Harmon	Tillman
1) "Hudson's is a place in town I could work when I get older"		
2) "The Hollis News would let us know what's happening in our town"		
3) "Maybe we could put in a donut shop for breakfast food"		
4) "A place we could fix up and put in a bowling alley for kids to use"	