

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION PROJECT: Using Photovoice to Understand Women's Experiences in a Poverty Alleviation Program

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Poverty is a condition affecting more than 40 million adults in the United States today. Inability to build financial and social resources, as well as persistent cultural, social, and economic systems are just a few of the significant barriers for those desiring to move from surviving to thriving within their community. Most of these individuals are working adults with wages between the federal poverty guideline and real living wages. In the community of Muncie, Indiana, there is a poverty alleviation program designed to help this population of working adults evaluate and build their resources to create a more sustainable lifestyle.

The purpose of this study was to gain women's perspective of their experiences before, during, and after participation in the poverty alleviation program. I used a participatory action research approach with an eight-step photovoice methodology. I met with four women separately two times for instruction and interviews. Five major themes emerged from the data. This approach and methodology, grounded in the promotion of social change and equity building, served as an opportunity to share their stories with the decision makers and community stakeholders at their annual business meeting and fundraiser.