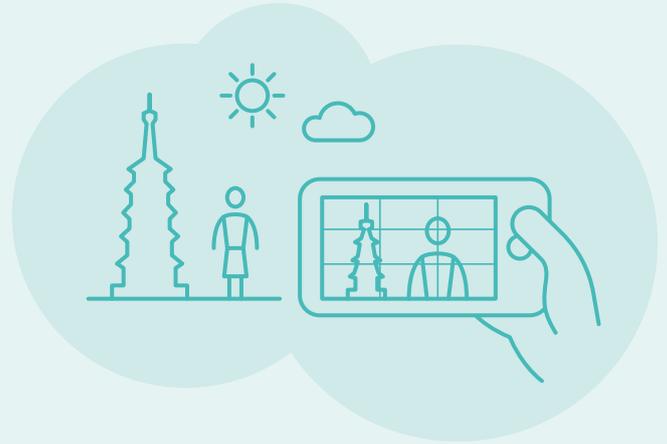


# Photography for Australian volunteers

Photography plays a big part in how we demonstrate the value of volunteering. You may have seen the professional photographs of volunteers and partner organisations on our website, social media, banners, and more.

But you don't need to be a professional photographer or have a fancy camera to take great photos.

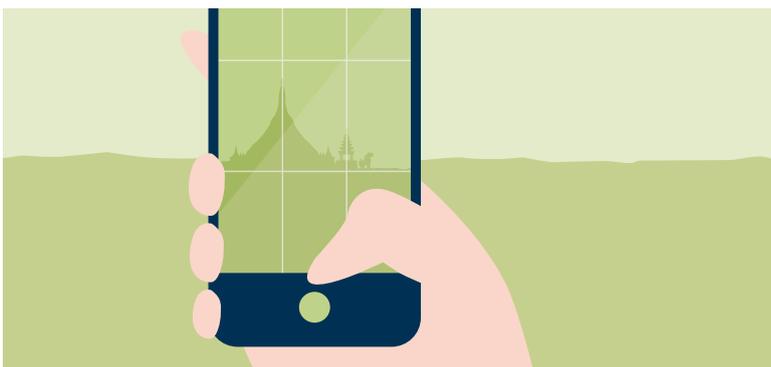
Below are some simple tips to help develop your photography skills, and get the most out of your phone camera.



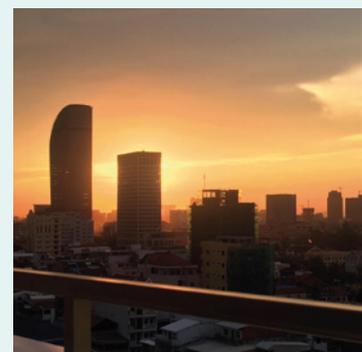
\*Please remember, **you should avoid taking and sharing photos of children**, as outlined in the Child Protection Policy. You will find out more in your child protection training.

## Photography tips

### Framing



For great framing, use the grid lines on your phone camera to line up key elements like the horizon or buildings in your photos. Turn this feature on in general settings – look for 'camera'.



*Sunset over Phnom Penh by Australian volunteer Leanne.*

## Background

Nearly all photos consist of two main elements: the subject and the backdrop. The background you choose and where you place your subject in the frame are just as important as the subject itself.



Try to choose a background that relates to the story of your subject. For example, position a fisherman in front of their fishing boat on a river. Deliberately frame other boats out of your shot to clearly show that this is the fisherman's boat.

When you don't have a strong background, seek out simple backgrounds. Coloured walls or natural blocks of greenery are great.



**Top tip:** If you have access to an iPhone 7 Plus or newer, the Portrait Mode is a great feature to help your subject 'pop' out from the background. On the phone, scroll along the bottom to select 'portrait'.



If you are taking a photo of friends or colleagues, make sure you get their permission if you plan to share their photo on social media.



*Australian volunteer Rachel with colleagues at the Wangsel Institute in Bhutan. What a background!*

To make your subject stand out even more, step back a few paces, zoom in and focus on your subject. This will make your background out of focus and your subject stand out more.

For a portrait photograph, backgrounds that aren't too busy are best. Look for solid colours or subtle patterns to make your subject stand out.

## Lighting

Light is one of the most important elements in photography. Great light flatters while average light makes the picture feel flat.

### Outdoors



**Sunny day:** Direct sunlight makes subjects squint and casts harsh shadows on their face. If you can't shoot in a shady spot, wait for a cloud to pass over the sun. Or have your subject look off to the side – no squints, and it will look like a more natural moment.



**Overcast day:** When the sun is behind clouds, a soft and more even light is cast across your subject and the whole background. Skin tones look more flattering and there are no harsh shadows – the perfect day for photography!

### Indoors



Look for soft, natural lighting sources. Standing next to a frosted window, or a window with light curtains is a great idea. Position your subject with the window on one of their sides. This will allow even, natural light to spill in and across your subject's face.

A reflector is a large white surface which bounces light onto your subject. This casts a softer, more even light. A reflector can be a white bed sheet, a whiteboard, or a large piece of white cardboard. Position it just out of your photo. If the lighting is overhead, angle the reflector underneath the subject's face.



*Australian volunteer Zoe took this portrait of her landlord Esther in Solomon Islands: 'When she's not improving her community she's working her garden and caring for her home. Feeling thankful she let me take her photograph in that space.'*



*Australian volunteer Jaclyn at work in Chuuk, in the Federated States of Micronesia. Lovely indoor lighting!*

## Drawing your audience's eye

What do you want your audience to see first in the photo?  
How will you draw their attention to this?



**Size:** Larger objects feel more important than smaller objects because they take up more space, and naturally draw the eye.

**Placement:** Our eye is also drawn to objects positioned away from the centre of an image. It can be helpful to counterbalance the image with something on the opposite side.

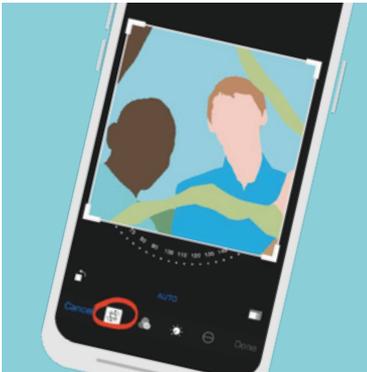
**Contrast:** Having one object or an area that clearly stands out against the rest of the image will draw attention first.



*'Went to the market for fresh fruit and veggies, came back with sugar filled treats!' – We love this simple and effective photo by Australian volunteer Shauna in Fiji.*

## Cropping

Smartphones come with great photo editing tools. One tool is cropping, allowing you to better frame your subject.



### Try these tips:

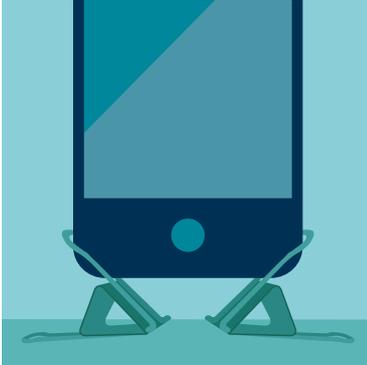
- Go to your image and select 'edit'. Then find and select the cropping tool. Use the gridlines to reposition your subject.
- Crop out elements that do not add anything to your story, such as blank spaces, rubbish or cars.
- Rotate photos to re-adjust horizons to be level.



*Australian volunteer Jacinta captured an umu in action: a traditional Samoan style of oven cooking.*

## DIY tripod

Don't have anyone to take your photo? If you don't feel like doing a selfie, you can use two bulldog clips to make an easy tripod.



You can also plug in your smartphone headphones and use the central button or volume buttons to trigger the camera to take a photo.



*A wonderful portrait of Australian volunteer Dr Aung on assignment in Timor-Leste.*

## Want more?

Make sure you look out for the Stories for Home briefs which will appear in your inboxes every couple of months or so. These often include specific photography tips for social media.

For more information about anything in this guide, please email [media@australianvolunteers.com](mailto:media@australianvolunteers.com)



We would love you to share your favourite photos from your assignment and day-to-day life on your social media pages. Remember to tag @AusVols on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

For more on this, see our **social media guide** in your online resources.