

DÓCHAS WORLDVIEW WAVE 5

Qualitative report

Image Deep Dive

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dóchas



INTRO AND SAMPLE STRUCTURE



Research objectives

Identify what issues and challenges catch the public imagination and provoke a desire to respond.

Explore consumer reactions to images we have previously identified as more likely to provoke an emotional response.

Examine variations by segment to better understand what can motivate a desire to give to international aid.

Qualitative research amongst:

Empathisers

Global Citizens

Multilateralists

Pragmatists

Disengaged

Approach

- 6 face to face group discussions each with 6-8 participants
- All pre-tasked
- Spontaneous review of global issues that matter
- Then detailed exploration of selected images

Group	Gender	Age/Stage	Social Class	Segment/Other criteria	Location	Date/Exec
1	Mix	20-34 No kids	BC1	Multilateralists	Dublin	24.10.24
2	Mix	20-34 (Stage as falls)	BC1	Global citizens	Dublin	24.10.24
3	Female	31-40 Young family	C2D	Empathisers	Rural	30.10.24
4	Male	35-49 (Stage as falls)	BC1	Disengaged	Cork	29.10.24
5	Mix	41-55 Older family	C1C2	Empathisers	Cork	29.10.24
6	Mix	50+ Empty Nester	F/C1	Pragmatists	Athlone	30.10.24

- All to have above average emotional articulacy (Q8a, Q8b)
- Groups 2, 3 & 5 donate to international charities intermittently (Q6)
- Check segment criteria on all groups (Q 2,3,4 & 5)

All groups moderated by Neil Douglas, Ipsos B&A

Pre task

In preparation for these groups, participants were asked to identify recent international events that moved them deeply where aid is required

1. Something that left you feeling hopeless
2. Something that left you wanting to take action

Issues that matter

(Spontaneous capture)

Recent publicised conflicts tend to be top of mind, with war in Gaza mentioned by many at the time of this research.

Emotional reactions are stronger where **vulnerable people or children** are involved.

- Respondents reference their sense of anger, sadness and despair.

Something which they can **relate to directly** tends to be more likely to catch their attention, for example the expression of a close relationship (mother and child, etc.) deepens their sense of connection.

On the international stage, most mention:

- Gaza, war in Ukraine, climate change (as demonstrated by extreme weather events), but also broader issues such as war, poverty, displacement of people and homelessness are frequently mentioned.



The media landscape is more multi-faceted

Local radio, national TV news, Podcasts, YouTube

But a lot of talk centres on social media:

- TikTok clips shared and reshared
- Links to news sites
- Opinions and discussion from their network
- Posts direct from people in the conflict
 - Victims suffering
 - Soldiers glorifying their actions
 - Observers celebrating bombing
 - People witnessing atrocities.

The landscape is also more 'curated' as comments on one platform influence what you see on another via cookies.

Curated attention

Many note that their exposure to world events come through social media nowadays

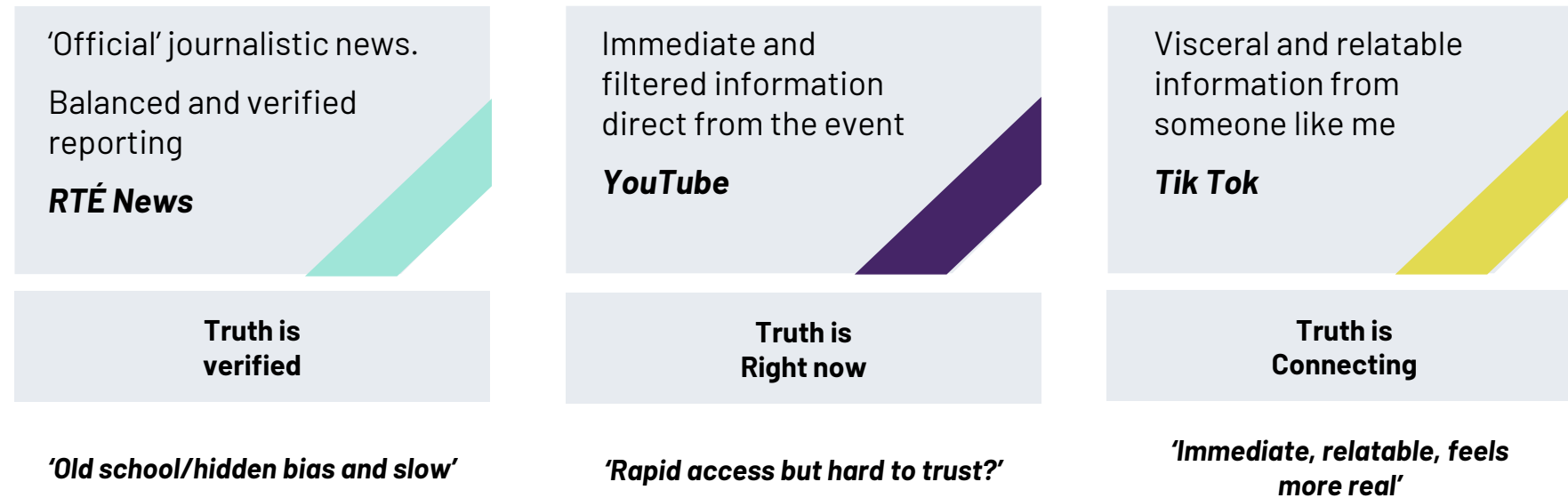
- With much more upsetting and shocking 'unfiltered' images and video all the time
- They recognize that what they see is heavily influenced by an 'algorithm' so they tend to see more similar content.
- Sometimes to the point of becoming 'over-stimulated' and as a result some want to 'tune out'

Effectively this has shifted the mix of issues and how they are experienced **visually** for many people (especially younger respondents).

Long term change in how 'news' is evaluated

There is a longer-term shift in how we select and process information about challenges internationally. News sources are no longer categorised in just one way.

Most use multiple sources with some appearing to be more engaging and used more than others.



Variations by segment

Empathisers often express their reactions to world challenges in terms of how they relate to them

Or how they may impact their children in the future.

Multilateralists mention the same topics but also note how social media has had a numbing effect where the constant barrage of bad news can leave them feeling less able to respond with emotion.

Global citizens stress injustice and suffering in the world and the need for a government response.

Pragmatists mention the same global challenges as other segments but also reference mental health issues for younger people.

Disengaged quickly divert the conversation to national issues regarding the housing crisis, cost of living, healthcare and cynicism about government.

Note, that **social class** and stage in life have an impact on respondent outlook:

- **Social media more influential with younger respondents.**
- **Working class more likely to focus on national concerns like cost of living and homelessness.**

Things that move us most

(Spontaneous capture)

We need to reset our scale of reference: Content experienced visually now includes highly upsetting posts on social media (hospitals burning in Gaza) that cause **huge impact** as well triggering a deep emotional response.

The desire for **'unfiltered content'** heightens sensitivity to anything that appears selected or staged. 'Is it real?' is part of how images are interpreted.

Strongly relatable moments (for example a man reunited with his lost cat in Gaza) have the power to transcend numbed reactions when someone suddenly recognises themselves in the authentic human moment.



Feeling hopeless

Unresolved conflict **going on without end**.

Large scale **human impacts** – lives lost, 1000s displaced etc.

Global scale or extended **long term** climate change demonstrated by major weather events.



Scale of the problem and lack of agency felt in response.

There can also be a sense of feeling **overcome** by the sheer volume and frequency of information to the point where some decide to deliberately 'tune out' rather than feel any desire to act.



Social media, mainstream media, video posts, news items, protests marches, conversations at work can lead to a 'burn out' response for some.

Feeling galvanized to action

Vulnerable children in terrible situations.

Particularly where a specific **problem and solution** are identified and linked.



Clarity about specific (and contained) problem for children with **effective method for expressing support** (for example Sight Savers Trachoma campaign)

There can also be a localized effect where **tangible and proportionate actions** have a viral property.

For example, preparing a shoebox with Christmas gifts. Providing a practical means of participation.



Many express concern about how much of their donation will actually reach the intended recipient. Tangible/local actions (or a **proportionate means of translating their action into benefit**) can be a potent part of the decision to participate.

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT



Criteria for image selection: 'Emotional dumbbells'

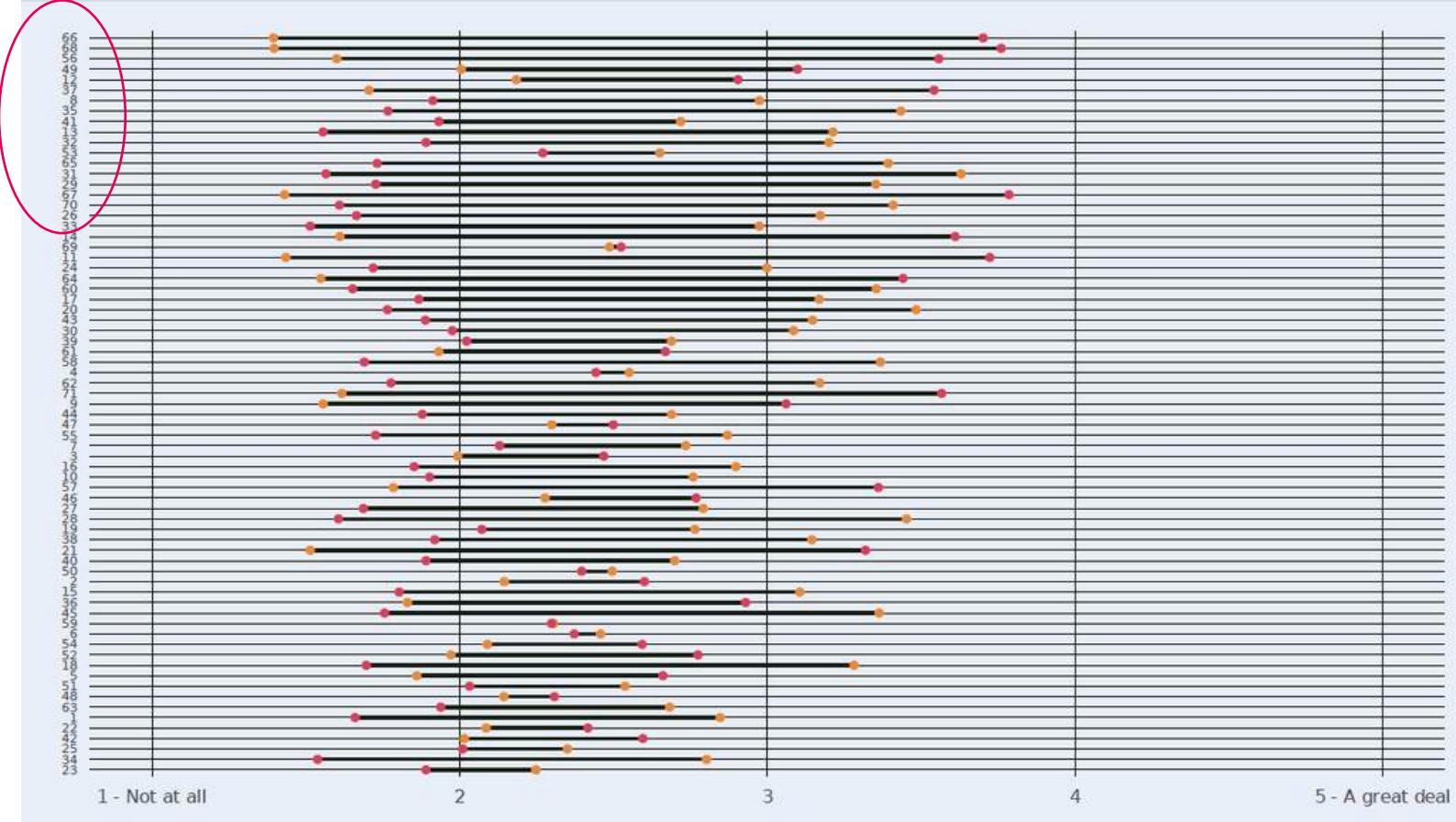
The plot shows the Upset and Happy variables for each image

Upset = red and Happy = gold

The bigger the gap the more extreme an image is, emotionally, one way or the other. If the red is to the right then it's a more negative image and if gold then a more positive image

The images are ordered according to their success in eliciting information seeking

More extreme images get more info seeking (the gap appears to shrink as you go down the plot), and negative ones (red to the right) seem to prevail at the top of the plot



Questions: Looking at the image above, and using the scale where 1 means 'Not at all' and 5 means 'A great deal,' please tell us the extent to which ****you**** feel the following emotions & Imagine you saw the image above in an appeal from an international development charity/NGO. Based on this image, would you want to find out more about the appeal (e.g., by clicking a link to a website where you can find out more information about the appeal, or signing up to the organization's mailing list)? | Base: IRL Adults | Sample size n= 2,504 | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Worldview Overseas Development Aid Survey | Fieldwork by B&A 23 June - 12 August, 2024 | Analysis by the Development Engagement Lab

Group procedure

Before reviewing the selected images, we introduced the Circumplex model (with amended dimensions) to help respondents focus on their emotional responses.

This was left visible during the discussion of images.

Images were introduced in sets corresponding to the Development Engagement Lab feedback (previous slide) on the most:

- Emotionally upsetting (Red set)
- Emotionally happy (Gold set).

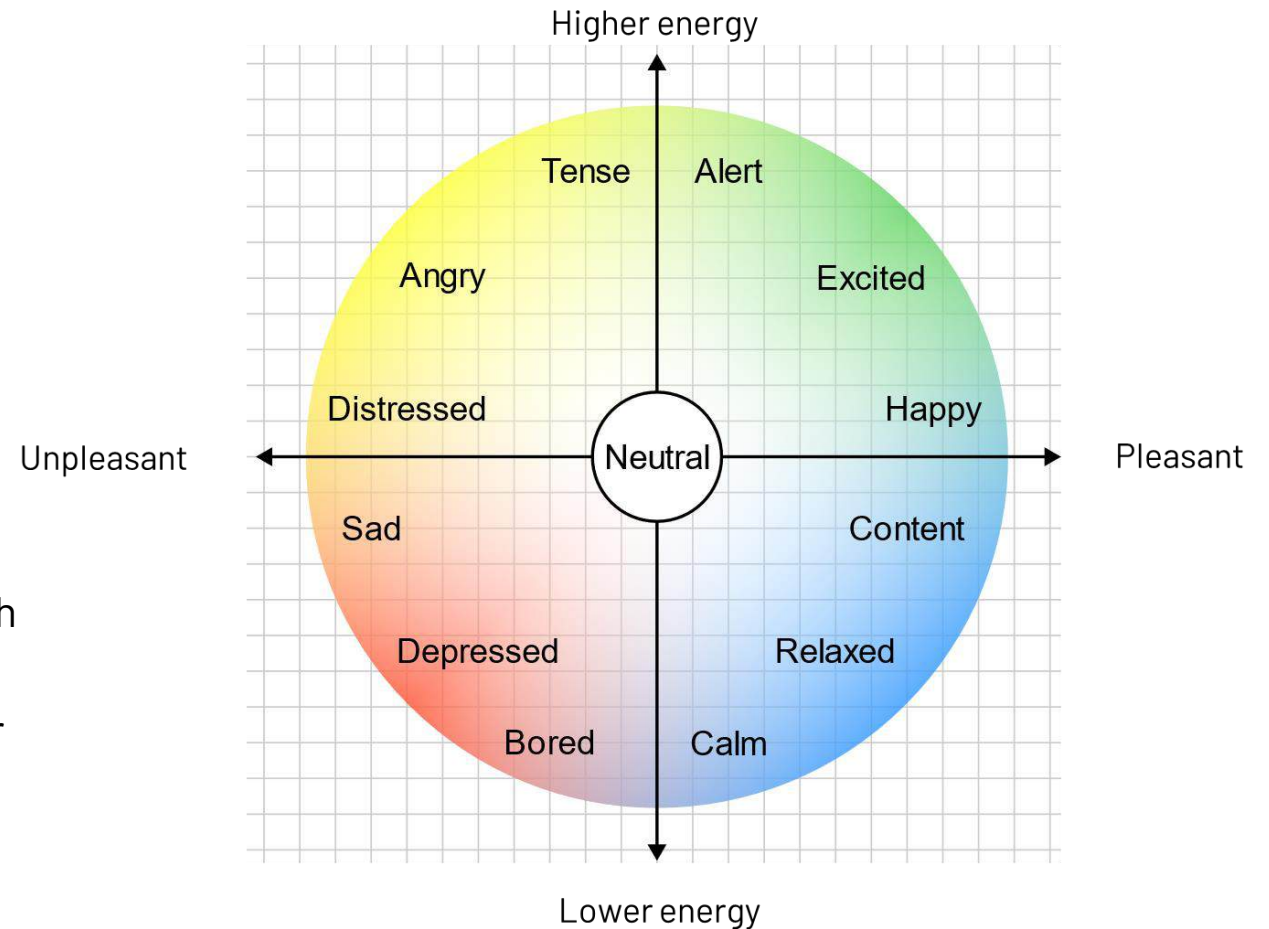
In addition, where we had time, we briefly reviewed images that performed better with specific segments (Blue set) and a few of the weakest performers overall (Green set).

Circumplex model used in groups

With each image, respondents were encouraged to look at the screen and then note down their emotional response **before** discussing their feedback in the group.

Thus, we captured (as far as possible) their 'system one' or gut reactions at a personal level before exploring other layers of reactions and interpretations (system two).

As each group progressed, respondents became more adept at voicing their emotional reactions, although in each session there were often one or two who appeared to both feel their reactions more deeply and/or could express their responses more directly.



Images introduced

	RED SET (Upsetting)	GOLD SET (Happy)	BLUE SET (Segment specific)	GREEN SET (Poor performers)
66	 <i>*Empathisers</i>	8 	28  <i>*Disengaged</i>	23 
68	 <i>*Empathisers</i>	35 	24  <i>*Pragmatists</i>	34 
56	 <i>*Disengaged & Multilateralists</i>	41 	67  <i>*Pragmatists</i>	25 
49	 <i>*Multilateralists</i>	32 	43  <i>*Multilateralists</i>	42 
12	 <i>*Pragmatists & Global Citizens</i>	53 	17  <i>*Global Citizens</i>	11 
37	 <i>Empathisers</i>	65 		7 
		31 		

Factors influencing reactions to images

IMPACT

PHOTOGRAPHIC FIDELITY

PROTAGONIST MEANING



AUTHENTICITY OF SCENARIO

VIEWER CONNECTION

STORYTELLING POWER

Each variable had an influence on responses and a strong or weak performance on any of these could alter overall assessments.

What motivates a stronger emotional reaction?



I think it ties back to what I said at the very beginning because you're seeing so much uncensored stuff online. You know a lot of people aren't living in an ideal situation. But it is good to see... The gold set has people in it. So, the only one from the red set that I thought was good was the eyes. The problem with the red set is, people are too far away even the sad child. The gold set you can all see into their eyes.

Because they're helpless. They're dependent. Kids are dependent. An adult can make his own way as such, a child is vulnerable, so they need a bit of help, guidance, I suppose, whatever you want to call it.

I feel sad for her. I feel like she is having to take her child out onto whatever land it is to work the land because that is the way they have to live. The child should be getting an education but she probably couldn't take him to classes or something. (Image 8)

No one should have to beg for food. Whether she's a child, a teenager, or a young adult.

It is heartbreaking, it is absolutely devastating. I just want to bring them home and give them a room

Anger. It's probably the first picture that kind of struck something with me, to be honest. No kid she'd have to go through that.

Ultimately long term you need to put in place the structures that these cultures can function without being reliant on aid. So helping them to train up their next doctors and engineers and stuff like that. Long term, so you're like it's positive, but then also you're looking at what's there, there's a ton of them in the class. So I'd be thinking that that would be very powerful in terms of you could sponsor this guy who wants to become a doctor and this girl wants to become a doctor.

Sad. A little boy looking for food. Just looks lost in the eyes, you know?

Completely stressed. I see my little boy there if anything ever happened to me, who is going to be there to take care of him.

If you've got kids, and they have kids passing, stuff like that, you can put yourself in their shoes.

31-40 Empathiser Female Athlone; 41-55 Empathisers Cork; Global citizen 20-34 Dublin;
20-34 Multilateralist BC1 Dublin; Over 50 EN Pragmatist Athlone; 35-49 Male Disengaged Cork

Unpacking the key factors

IMPACT

Immediacy of the image in arresting attention can make a big difference to reactions

- Most are exposed to a lot of visual content daily and have become adept at quickly screening out images that do not reach a certain level of impact.

Essentially, impact tends to be generated by the sense of **drama** portrayed in combination with the sense of **novelty** of the image

- Will this image standout from other images?
- Does this image portray something new?



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Unpacking the key factors

PROTAGONIST MEANING

A lot of these images draw attention to an individual protagonist

- Sometimes juxtaposed with others or in a particular relationship with their environment.

Thus, reactions are often largely influenced by perceptions of the protagonist's **situation**, or their **relationship** with others.

In particular, respondents react strongly to a sense of a protagonist's:

- Vulnerability
- Jeopardy
- Emotional state



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Unpacking the key factors

VIEWER CONNECTION

It is clear that some images connect more strongly than others.

At times, respondents almost immediately reference their reactions in terms of similar experiences in their own life.

This **relatability** can operate at an almost unconscious / gut level or can emerge more slowly from consideration and comparison.

The more immediate response tends to be more intense emotionally but the 'considered' form of relatability can be strongly moving too (as more of a 'depth charge' that is revealed over time).

Another aspect of 'viewer connection' comes from the sense that the viewer has a role to play. Does the protagonist need something? Can the viewer do anything to help?

Note, this last aspect of connection can be critical in leveraging a 'call to action' effect.



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Unpacking the key factors

STORY TELLING POWER

As respondents discuss their reactions it is evident that some images 'unfold' with more sense of a background story than others.

Thus, a story that is expressed with **clarity** tends to have more effect (particularly if it can be interpreted as connecting to a current international issue).

In a similar way the 'story' may have a **symbolic meaning** that is more or less engaging (motherhood, sibling care, etc.).

Also, in some cases, there can be a sense of layers to the story where there is more **depth** to the photo as it is considered for longer.



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Unpacking the key factors

AUTHENTICITY OF SCENARIO

Initially, something which respondents 'intuit' is their sense that an image is more or less authentic.

Over time they can pick out elements that undermine or support the credibility of an image.

At the most obvious level is the sense that an image is a '**candid moment**' from someone's life or a more '**staged arrangement**'.

Note, there can also be a rapid negative response when respondents feel there is a deliberate intention to **manipulate** their reaction

- A highly emotive scene that has been engineering for effect.

A perceived link to an active news story also supports a sense of **authenticity** and **recency**.

Keep in mind that people are 'trained' by daily experience to discern the difference between photoshopped/AI generated images and reality.



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Unpacking the key factors

PHOTOGRAPHIC FIDELITY

The simple quality of a photo has an influence on reactions

- Is the protagonist easy or difficult to make out from the background detail?
- Is there dramatic use of colour or a more neutral tone?
- Is the viewer drawn into the scene by the protagonist's eye contact?

The images with more emotional impact are often also simply better quality photos.



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Linking emotions to a bigger issue can help.

However 'Big issues' can actually act as a source of inaction/hopelessness if they are expressed without connection to possible ways to help.

Provocation to support international aid

NEGATIVE EMOTION TRIGGERS

- Emotional connection to protagonist (especially a child) and their experience.
- Clear sense there is a way to help their predicament.
- Linking the problem shown to bigger issue/injustice (and anger about this).

POSITIVE EMOTION TRIGGERS

- Evidence of positive impact of aid (before and after).
- Concrete and proportionate so it is also relatable and authentic (helps diffuse concerns that money will not reach recipient).
- Linked to bigger story (long term resilience etc and sense of hope about this).

Elements that inhibit desire to act

Inauthentic or staged scenario.

No apparent problem or need expressed in the image

- Protagonists seem happy, healthy and/or affluent.

No clear way to make a difference, and/or concern that the donation will not reach recipient.

Something about the image does not ring true or viewer can see no way that they are needed/or can help.

REVIEW OF RED SET



Images review (Red set)

Image 66

A provocative and emotionally engaging image with both powerful impact and immediacy as well as a sense of layers and depth.

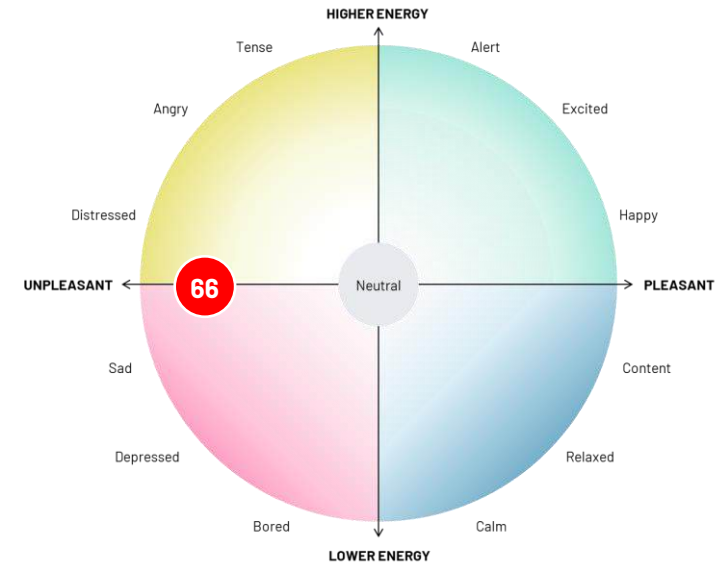
The spotlight focus on the innocent girl draws attention to the contrasts in the image

- Destruction in the background yet the girl is perfectly presented
- A calm and slightly quizzical expression on her face yet she is detached from nearby adults.

The image accentuates her vulnerability, prompting a desire to respond and creating a strong sense of relatability.

In many groups respondents quickly began discussing her story, feeling drawn in by the scenario and her expression. In essence, while the initial story is clear (a recent disaster has occurred) her specific story remains elusive.

This specific image is relatable and emotionally impactful, it has depth and can even work as a symbol of 'humanity' and 'spirit'.



- Excellent ★
- Good ✓
- Queried ?
- Poor ✗

Impact	★
Protagonist	★
Viewer	✓
Story	★
Authentic	★
Photo	✓

Red set: 66



First I thought a bit of devastation because obviously something is after happening. Then I had a sense of appreciation of what I have, when I see that.

It made me feel distressed. I don't know how I would feel if I was just landed in her position there.

It is actually kind of worrying that a child is there on her own amongst all those grown men in an environment like that.

I feel quite sad and low energy in that quadrant. My reasoning is because it's not in my opinion a highly graphic image in comparison to what I've seen. So it's just a bit of a bring me down to earth. I really feel for the young girl.

It is bringing to everything that is going on around them now, not just that.

I think the first girl looking up to the building... Obviously, on a global scale, you'd be looking at Israel and Gaza stuff. Obviously, Ukraine and all that

Sad, I suppose she's probably looking at an apartment that was there in our previous world it's not there. Maybe a family died she's just lost.

Angry, it is nothing to do with the child and yet they are probably suffering the most. That is my initial reaction to it anyway

I just said concerned and curious I don't know the background it could be a weather issue it, could be a war issue I don't know.

It's the extreme nature of that.

I feel the same it's a bit confusing I thought I'd feel more sympathy. To me she looks... I was going to say she's not more confused or curious. She looks well dressed behind the cars are intact. So I'm thinking it has to be some sort of climate thing. Or I don't know if it's a war itself.

31-40 Empathiser Female Athlone; 41-55 Empathisers Cork; Global citizen 20-34 Dublin; 20-34 Multilateralist BC1 Dublin; Over 50 EN Pragmatist Athlone; 35-49 Male Disengaged Cork

Images review (Red set)

Image 68

This image provoked some of the strongest emotional reactions from respondents in these groups.

The isolation of the very young child communicates intense vulnerability combined with a clear sense of his emotional distress (in his expression)

- Some respondents felt a visceral urge to respond, to pick him up and comfort him.

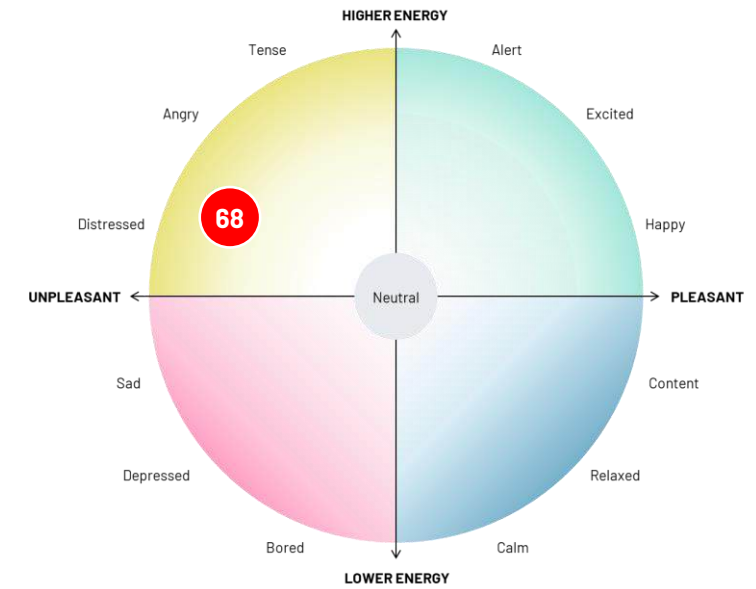
For some respondents, their empathy shifted towards anger that the child was in this predicament

- In one group converting to a suspicion that the photographer had caused (or could alleviate) the child's distress rather than just take a photo of him

The background context amplifies the sense of disrupted living conditions however the rather low contrast to the image can make this less impactful at first.

There is a clear sense of a role for the viewer, yet little sense of a positive outcome for the child.

A few respondents felt this image was a 'classic' aid image designed to express suffering (weakened by overuse), but most found it highly emotive and triggering.



Excellent	
Good	
Queried	
Poor	
Impact	
Protagonist	
Viewer	
Story	
Authentic	
Photo	

Red set: 68



Just sadness again. Just poverty, vulnerable.

Depressing. There didn't seem to be any future for the child.

Completely stressed. I see my little boy there if anything ever happened to me, who is going to be there to take care of him.

I keep imagining a boy jumping in puddles a normal boy his age. The fact that he's just standing there I'm heartbroken for him. I can't see any people around, huts or are rubbish. I just see when you see kids his age in a normal society. Would be messy throwing stones into it. He's just standing there, it's depressing.

I felt more sad at this image than the first one. He just looks...He's only one shoe on and it just looks very dirty around him. I don't think a child at that age should be exposed to such...it looks filthy.

I am depressed myself really. Why do we do this to the children.

Frustrated, there is nothing I can do to help on my own anyway. That is just like my little boy now sitting in that situation, I couldn't imagine my own child being in that situation.

You feel sad and upset for him. I know this is going to sound horrible, but does he not seem more ingrained in that life than the girl in the previous one?

Devastated, like that it just reminds me of everything....like they had had a normal life up until a couple of days ago, now look. I obviously don't know but he looks like he has nobody. It is just upsetting.

I find this one more heartbreaking now, than the first one. He's so young and lost and like, look at his surroundings. It's quite a low energy, I think, that would bring the mood right down.

Sad. A little boy looking for food. Just looks lost in the eyes, you know?

It is a depressing picture, distressing, the attire of the child. You feel if you could protect him in some way or another or help him out in some way.

Sad, hard to think the way things are at the moment. It could have easily been an earthquake or natural disaster

31-40 Empathiser Female Athlone; 41-55 Empathisers Cork; Global citizen 20-34 Dublin;
20-34 Multilateralist BC1 Dublin; Over 50 EN Pragmatist Athlone; 35-49 Male Disengaged Cork

Images review (Red set)

Image 56

One of the weakest images in the main red and gold sets.

Part of the problem is that the text on screen (both in front and behind the protagonist) disrupt how people 'process' the image

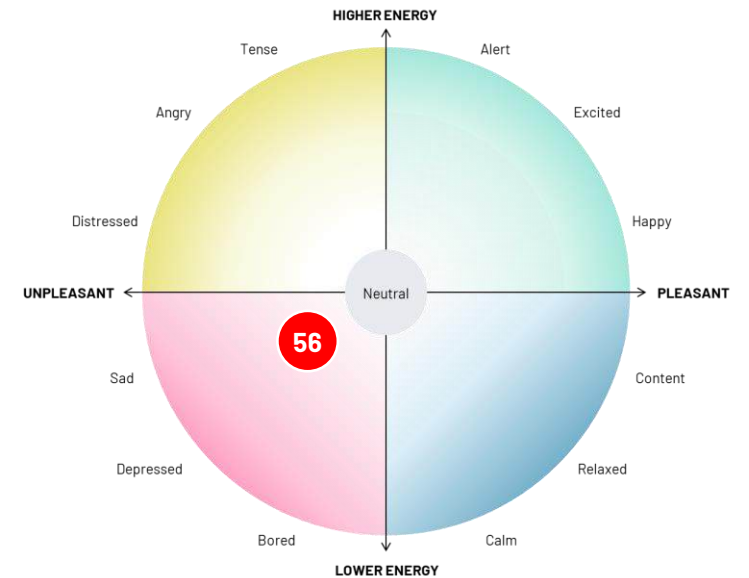
- Most want to look at the person first (to return his direct gaze), but the message is not here as his expression is hard to read AND he is not often recognised (gaelic footballer: Óisín MCConville).


There was limited emotional response to this image although the overall sense is low energy-negative (mainly from his serious expression).

A few respondents began to discussion the stark figures (1 in 6 and 450M) but even here there is a lack of relatability or 'proportionality'

- With such a large scale it can be hard to comprehend the meaning.

In most sessions respondents felt unmoved and slightly annoyed at the difficult to unpack image/text combination.





Excellent	★
Good	✓
Queried	?
Poor	✗

Impact	✓
Protagonist	★
Viewer	?
Story	✓
Authentic	✗
Photo	✗

Red set: 56



I think it's probably because my main focus was on the 450 million behind it. Then when I read the statistics, that's not shocking to me. The one in six living conflict.

Sad because 1 in 6 in the world. I was slightly confused by the 450 million, is that people or money. So confused by the stats and sad.

I suppose international is conflict with wars across multiple countries or parts of the world.

I would say depressed rather than anything else. The statistic, whether it is right or wrong, the statistic of 1 in 6 children. I don't know where the 450 million comes into play but if you were to take a gut reaction, I would say it is a depressing statistic.

Nothing. Neutral, yeah.

When I see those adverts, neutral.

It is sad. It is nearly hopeless because how do you solve the problem.

I said shocked, but I also have more detached. So, it didn't hit me in the same immediate way. But, I think the way that that is presented is quite stark and it's quite effective and it does make you kind of pay attention, but, I suppose, it takes you that extra second to sort of process you know.

Like 450 million, like that's. Oh my God

He looks like a professional beggar for a charity. Crazy.

Conflicted because all I can see is nothing else on the page catches you.

31-40 Empathiser Female Athlone; 41-55 Empathisers Cork; Global citizen 20-34 Dublin; 20-34 Multilateralist BC1 Dublin; Over 50 EN Pragmatist Athlone; 35-49 Male Disengaged Cork

Images review (Red set)

Image 49

While this is considered a quality image it seems to lack much emotional impact and meaning

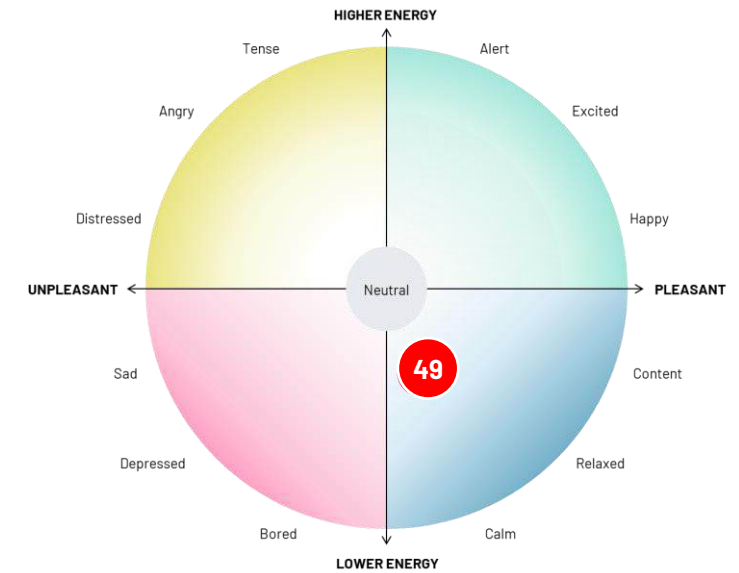
- The protagonist appears calm
- Her environment seems culturally relevant and benign
- There is little sense of vulnerability.

Respondents struggle to relate to the image and cannot access either her emotional state nor her back story.

On some levels, this is a good image

- Culturally different
- Strong colours.

But is more typical of National Geographic than an aid campaign.



- Excellent ★
- Good ✓
- Queried ?
- Poor ✗

Impact	?
Protagonist	?
Viewer	?
Story	✗
Authentic	✓
Photo	✓

Red set: 49



It is like she is looking at loads of kids playing or something, she is not involved or something with them.

She doesn't look like she needs help. It looks like her normal childhood setting. From what you can see in the picture, it looks like a nice area.

Firstly, I think it's clean and simple in the sense that everything at the front is in focus and the background isn't. I like that. It's kind of weirdly calm and I feel for the situation versus in the other images I was maybe upset and I was curious but this is just plain and simple.

I get a bit of a sense of loneliness from her. She just looks like she is watching something there

Documenting where they're living, I don't know if that's her house beside her I don't know what you call them.

First thing I thought when I saw that was National Geographic. It looks like one of those pictures that would be on the cover of the magazine.

I'm confused, I don't know whether she's content, or not content, whether that's her natural living area. I'm confused.

It makes you feel a bit down because she looks a bit depressed or something.

My reaction to that would be fairly neutral. It is a really nice photograph like a million others that I have seen down through the years. Nothing in particular stands out about it, it is just a nice photograph

It's kind of weirdly calm and I feel for the situation versus in the other images I was maybe upset and I was curious but this is just plain and simple.

I don't know whether that's here village and somebody just came in and took a photograph up against this

I don't feel any emotion, until you kind of read it, but seeing it compared to the other images, like I don't find this distressing, yes, it's a heartbreaking statement. But it wouldn't catch my attention, like the others would. I wouldn't pay as much attention to it.

31-40 Empathiser Female Athlone; 41-55 Empathisers Cork; Global citizen 20-34 Dublin;
20-34 Multilateralist BC1 Dublin; Over 50 EN Pragmatist Athlone; 35-49 Male Disengaged Cork

Images review (Red set)

Image 12

Undoubtedly one of the strongest images in terms of the engaged and emotional response we saw from respondents.

There is immediate impact and clarity about the protagonist's emotional state AND the story linked to her experience.

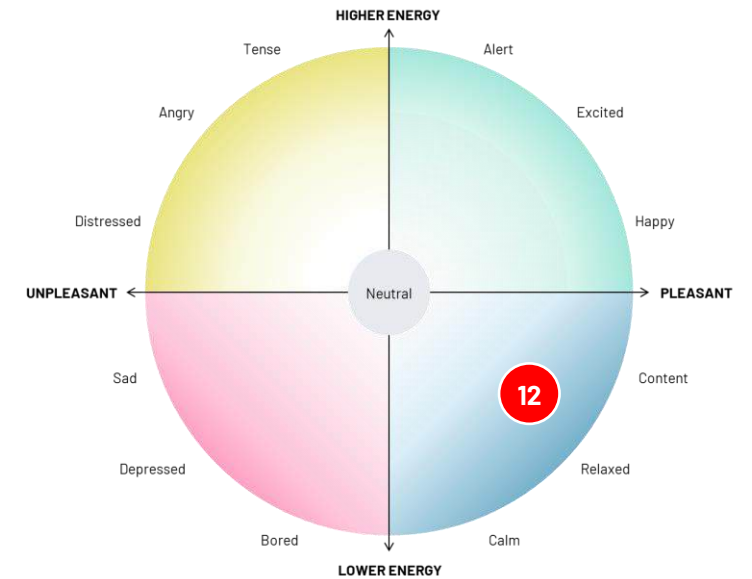
For some this is highly relatable:

- They share her dislike for a shot
- Including some sense of humour at her reaction (over the top expression of pain).

Details are noted with interest

- Professionalism of the healthcare worker
- Affluence suggested by protagonist's jewellery
- Bright colours are impactful.

There is less sense of a need to act in response to this image (to solve a problem) but there is strong appreciation that the image could represent the positive impact of aid.



- Excellent ★
- Good ✓
- Queried ?
- Poor ✗

Impact	★
Protagonist	★
Viewer	★
Story	★
Authentic	★
Photo	✓

Red set: 12



I thought it was a great picture, there was great expression, it's very human, it's very relatable, yeah, it brings in the kind of public health stuff and I do feel positive, and it kind of makes me want to support those kind of initiatives, it's a bit inspiring in a way, oh it's good, it's good that it's happening, that kind of

I would be fairly neutral. It is an excellent photograph but if it is being used to support a campaign for a vaccination programme, it probably wouldn't be the best one to use. I feel neutral, something you mentioned earlier - it is a programme in place that people are being vaccinated, that is a good thing.

I just feel like it's calm again, I just think that her reaction is about needles. But she looks healthy like, you know.

For me, it is not too strong but it is a positive reaction at the same time. I suppose I am thinking realistically this should be a thing that has to be done.

We've all been there. We've all had vaccinations. So it's for your own good. So we've all done it.

Very direct. You see her pain and you could see if god forbid, you are me in that situation it would be the same feeling of pain and hurt and you could relate to it as a mother.

I feel her pain, I hate getting a needle. I know what she is going through. Then I am like - what is she getting, what is it? I would like to know what the needle is.

It's actually a neutral. It looks like it could be happening in their city hall over there. Same as Park City Hall, getting the injection centre at the team. Just the same.

31-40 Empathiser Female Athlone; 41-55 Empathisers Cork; Global citizen 20-34 Dublin;
20-34 Multilateralist BC1 Dublin; Over 50 EN Pragmatist Athlone; 35-49 Male Disengaged Cork

Images review (Red set)

Image 37

Direct eye contact with the young girl in this image of a potent element that generate impact

- Her emotional state is quite calm and while her expression is hard to read it is considered **authentic and disarming**.

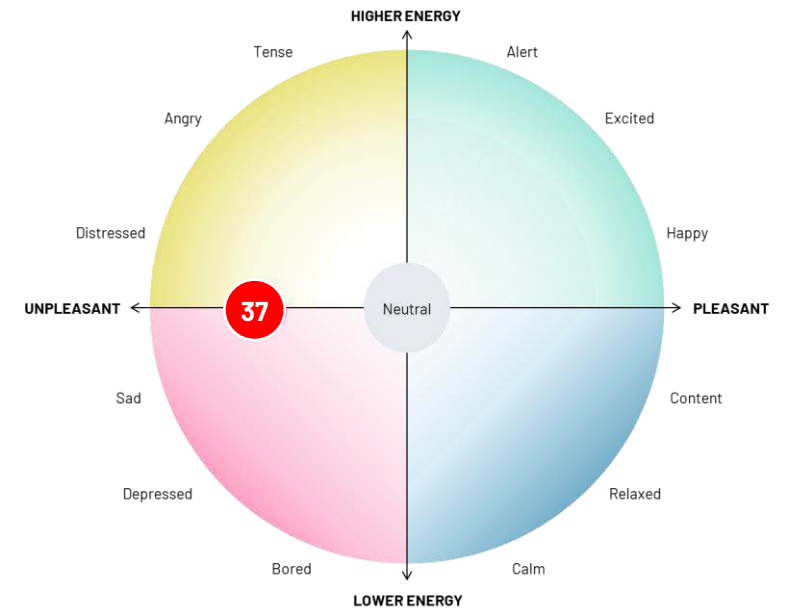
There is also a lot of depth to the image with a sense of a larger story that is not fully expressed

- Most interpret that she is cared for by her brother
- But still demonstrates vulnerability.

There is some ambiguity in this image which draws interest

- Where are these children?
- Who is the hooded figure?

This can inhibit a desire to act in response from some respondents but also suggests an image that bears repeat viewing.



- Excellent ★
- Good ✓
- Queried ?
- Poor ✗

Impact	✓
Protagonist	★
Viewer	★
Story	✓
Authentic	★
Photo	✓

Red set: 37



I said sad and angry. I think her eyes drew me in first. Because they do look well dressed, but when you look in the back, you know, they've obviously lost their home and they look like they're adapting to this new life, I guess, that's there and it's just angry, like it makes me angry that they, you know, have to live like this.

I am neutral. And the reason I'm saying this is because the child's eyes actually look happy to me. And I don't think that child is of an age where she knows anything else.

It makes me sad and worried because it is clearly her brother who is carrying her. Where is the rest of the family?

With this, again, what came up for me straightaway was it's just depressing like. The child is filthy, I suppose they're living in poverty obviously like, but like, again, it makes us question what's going on there like, but straightaway, depressing like, sad.

It makes me sad. It is a child in a refugee camp somewhere in the world. The child possibly has no future because of conditions that are created by generals or politicians or whatever. A child whose life is probably limited and brutal and hungry, so it makes me sad.

I just feel like the close up on her eyes, they just look really powerful, and for me I wrote down sad...I don't know, it just felt like she's almost like she's just kind of like resigned to her life, but kind of looking at you.

It is heartbreaking, it is absolutely devastating. I just want to bring them home and give them a room. That is all I want to do.










































I feel negative, I feel extremely sorry for that child. I would feel sad looking at that picture

I felt sad, but also a sense of care. It was quite similar here, with like kind of, like I don't know if it is a brother or whatever, but there was a sense of like, he has to protect her and like save her from all of this. But, yeah, just a bit of a sadness.







31-40 Empathiser Female Athlone; 41-55 Empathisers Cork; Global citizen 20-34 Dublin;
20-34 Multilateralist BC1 Dublin; Over 50 EN Pragmatist Athlone; 35-49 Male Disengaged Cork

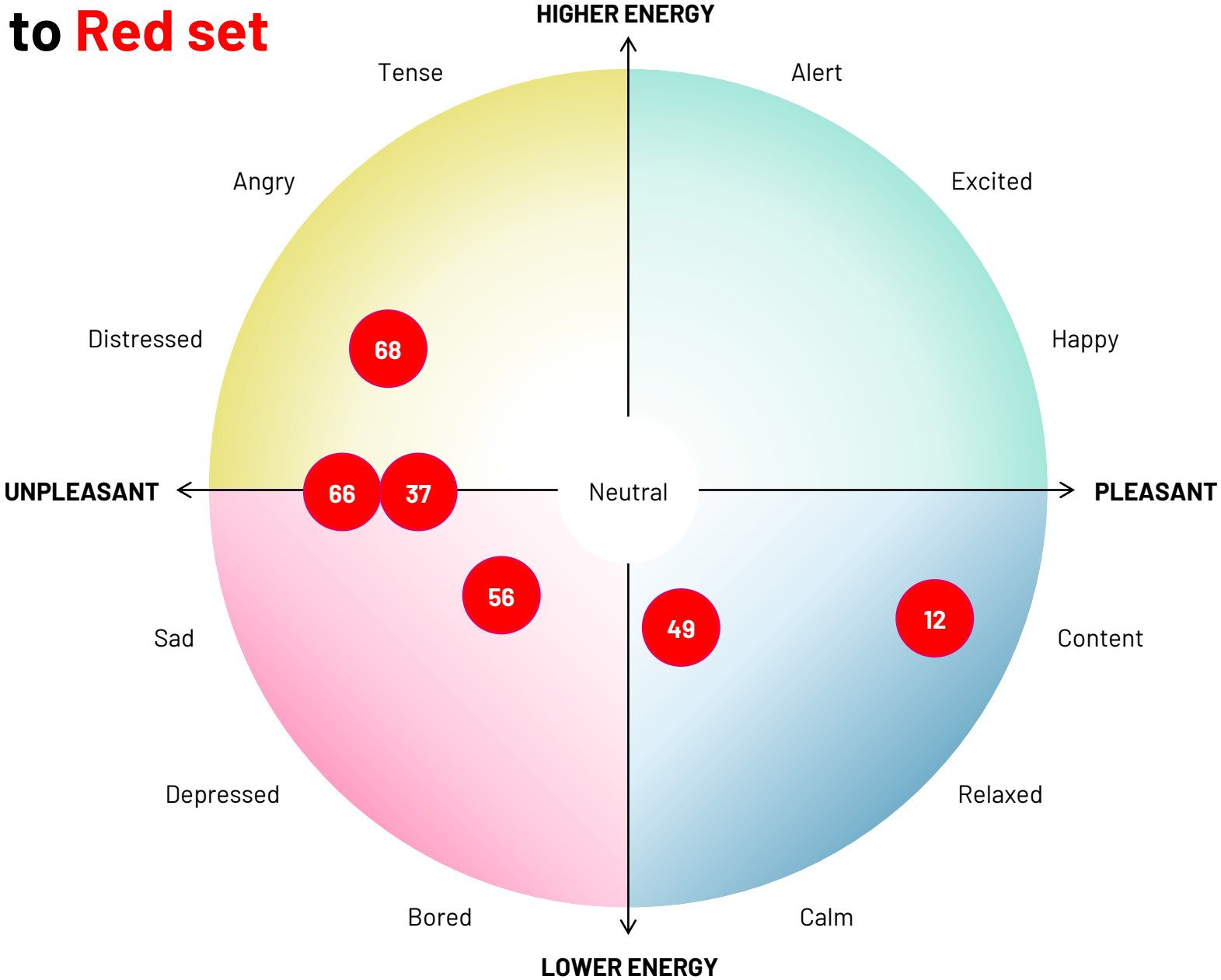
Summary assessment (Red set)

Excellent	
Good	
Queried	
Poor	

	66 	68 	56 	49 	12 	37 
Impact						
Protagonist meaning						
Viewer connection						
Storytelling power						
Authenticity of scenario						
Photographic fidelity						

Emotional responses to Red set

- RED SET
66

 Empathisers
- 68

 Empathisers
- 56

 Disengaged
Multilateralists
- 49

 Multilateralists
- 12

 Pragmatists
Global Citizens
- 37

 Empathisers



REVIEW OF GOLD SET



Images review (Gold set)

Image 8

A positive scene evoking a strong sense of positivity

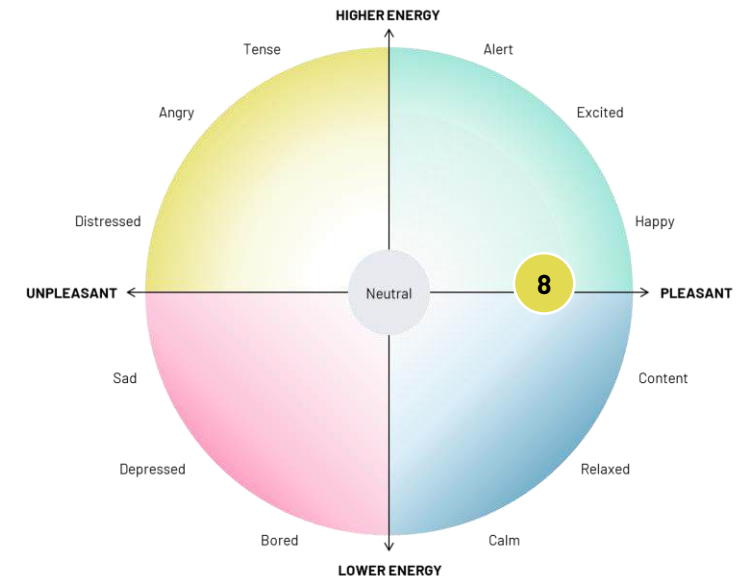
- The happy faces and bright colours are a key part of this but in fact it is the relationship that drives emotional reactions.


This is an almost symbolic illustration a mother and her child.

In addition, there are layers of meaning quickly accessed by some respondents

- A mischievous child: full eye contact with viewer.
- A hard-working mum: working in the field?

However, there is little sense of vulnerability nor clarity around the benefit of providing aid (contributing to the positive relationship portrayed).





Excellent	★
Good	✓
Queried	?
Poor	✗

Impact	✓
Protagonist	★
Viewer	★
Story	✓
Authentic	✓
Photo	★

Gold set: 8



There's eye contact again, yeah, I think the little boy... The little boy is looking at us. But the environment of his relationship with his mother, presumably, is somewhat different than the previous one, where the girl is looking at us, but we didn't see who she was with.

That's probably the happiest one we've looked at. The little fella, yeah, it looks like his mother, having a joke, laughing with her. She's quite relaxed as well.

It's natural yeah Natural. Natural yeah.

I smiled when I saw it because he reminds me of my little boy. She seems to be clearly minding him and watching over him.

It's got that family feeling. It makes me feel happy. It makes me feel like the cheeky smile from the child behind and the mother, there's a lot of love there.

I just think love. The love of mother and child. I didn't really see much else...Warm inside, happy I suppose.

They look content. I know they are in a field and they are probably after doing a hard day's work or something. I can see dirt on the child's knee and the mother has probably been working in the field I would say all day.

31-40 Empathiser Female Athlone; 41-55 Empathisers Cork; Global citizen 20-34 Dublin;
20-34 Multilateralist BC1 Dublin; Over 50 EN Pragmatist Athlone; 35-49 Male Disengaged Cork

Images review (Gold set)

Image 35

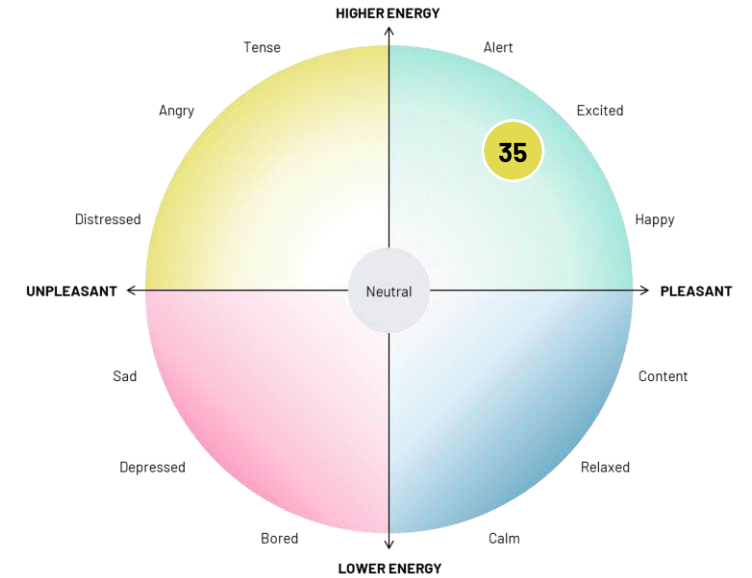
This is one of the most candid shots and many respondents immediately compare this image to their own children as it comes across as entirely in-the-moment and natural.

There is a strong sense of fun and playfulness with enough contextual reference to suggest a specific story.

Respondents did not necessarily **experience** the emotions portrayed but certainly pick up the high energy and positivity.

As with other positive images in this set, most struggle to see how (or why) they should respond

- This may be an image of a festival and generates **cultural interest**
- Good
- But there is no sense of being staged, no sense of threat nor obvious benefit from past aid.



- Excellent ★
- Good ✓
- Queried ?
- Poor ✗

Impact	✓
Protagonist	★
Viewer	✓
Story	✓
Authentic	★
Photo	✓

Gold set: 35



I said, fun, chaotic, and evocative, like you can almost hear it... Especially if they're a similar age to your kids, or there's some similarities to you, you know. You identify yourself in them maybe a little bit more.

I suppose, it's joyful. The picture is joyful, the kids look happy and having a good time and they're obviously messing with clay or whatever, do you know, they're throwing clay, I think first of all, a lovely smile in the front, but, she's throwing that white stuff, whatever it is, flour or something, maybe. I don't know. They're enjoying themselves anyway.

Again it is a happy image and I am happy for them. They are obviously schoolchildren, shy maybe in front of strangers or whoever was taking the photograph. They are happy and content, so I would be happy for them.

It reminds me of my own childhood and being happy running out of school. They seem quite content in a similar situation as they seem to be getting their education.

Yeah, it looks like a happy childhood, kids all look happy playing with each other, seem to be friends and kind of sand or paint, I don't know. But it looks like a happy image.

It is just happy, there is nothing more to say about it. You just feel happy

She's smiling, he's smiling. Obviously they're happy. They don't look like they have a problem.

Again, just happy, lots of energy in the picture, the kids are all excited, so yeah

It kind of reminds me, is it India they have that colour festival where they throw all the colours. It kind of brings back some sort of happy kind of...

31-40 Empathiser Female Athlone; 41-55 Empathisers Cork; Global citizen 20-34 Dublin; 20-34 Multilateralist BC1 Dublin; Over 50 EN Pragmatist Athlone; 35-49 Male Disengaged Cork

Images review (Gold set)

Image 41

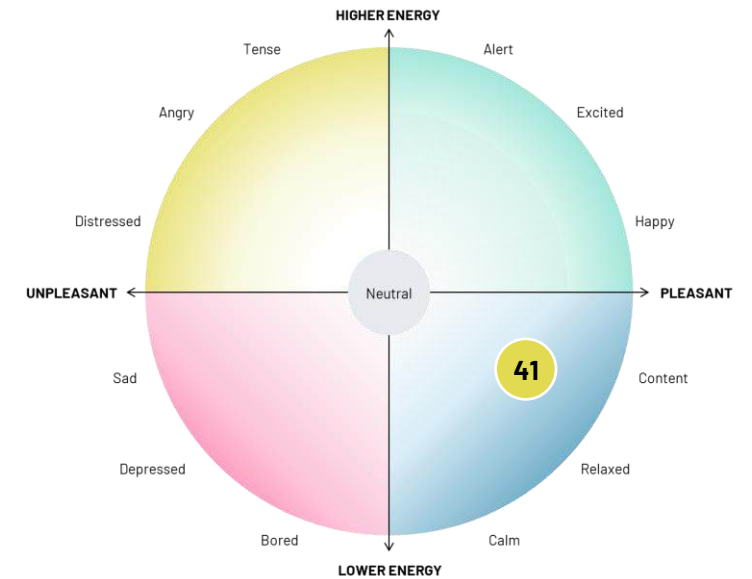
The overall effect of this image is quite muted

- Partly reflecting the quiet calm and self-contained demeanor of the main protagonist.

Some of the detail suggests health, success and positivity, other elements are less clear.

- Direct eye contact, nice clothing, modern bag all communicate a positive environment for the children.
- However, the pillar includes graffiti and the background is unclear.

As with many Gold set images, there is a weaker emotional reaction and less sense that the viewer needs to do something in response.



- Excellent ★
- Good ✓
- Queried ?
- Poor ✗

Impact	✓
Protagonist	✓
Viewer	?
Story	?
Authentic	?
Photo	✓

Gold set: 41



I like the smile, I think it's lower energy than the other one, but it feels more like chilled out, rather than down, and yeah, I love the little smile, you're getting two different kinds of eye contact, one is kind of very calm and the other one's kind of cheeky.

I think it's happy, I see the main girl as being a little bit shy, and you know, she seems a little bit slow to smile, but the girl behind then is full of beans.

Kids smiling. Probably in some sort of a school shed, or something like that, but..They don't seem sad, like... You know what I mean?

Initially I was saying sad but then I am saying why am I saying that. It does hit you for being sad for some reason, I don't know what it is. The fact that it is probably the first child that is not really smiling. I am not sure, I haven't got to it yet

I would say content. The kids look content, they look healthy. She has a backpack on and she is well dressed. I would say content. They are happy in whatever their environment is.

Happiness. Like, they're probably, joking, messing, playing, from behind the pillar, or whatever it is, you know you can see they're kind of having fun.

I am happy for them purely because of the way the children are dressed and the fact she has a backpack on is a good sign. It means she is not picking in the field because she has a school bag on.

31-40 Empathiser Female Athlone; 41-55 Empathisers Cork; Global citizen 20-34 Dublin;
20-34 Multilateralist BC1 Dublin; Over 50 EN Pragmatist Athlone; 35-49 Male Disengaged Cork

Images review (Gold set)

Image 13

Highly impactful and strongly evocative image

Positive sense of protagonist's life (and mood).

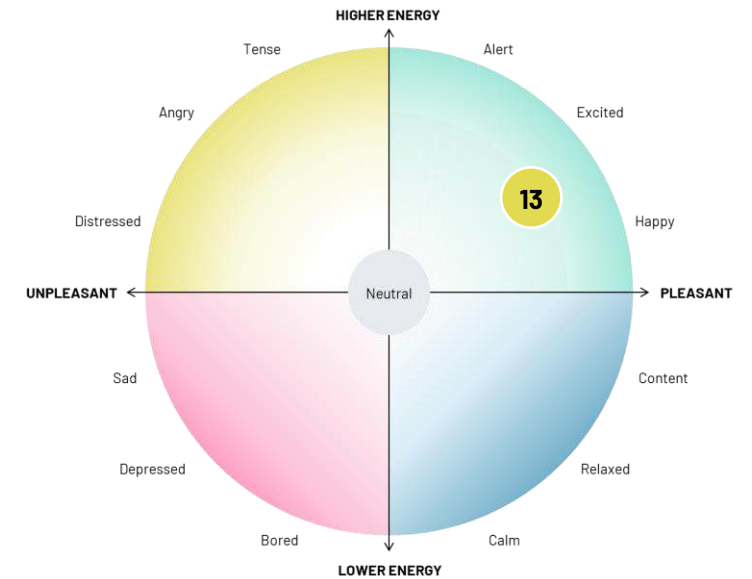
Close relationship with cow divides opinions:

- Most see this as an endearing pet-like connection
- Some interpret it as a reference to status for the farmer (and potential slaughter of the cow in the near future!).

This image has a **quirky quality** that makes it both eye-catching and memorable.

Both the emotional state of the protagonist, the health of the cow and the green backdrop all signal a positive context

- Not an expression of vulnerability or need
- But potentially an illustration of the positive effect of aid.



- Excellent ★
- Good ✓
- Queried ?
- Poor ✗

Impact	✓
Protagonist	★
Viewer	✓
Story	★
Authentic	✓
Photo	✓

Gold set: 13



I think there's a lot of humanity to it. Like, you know. It's, again, it's the kind of relationship that we have animals

It's positive, it's bright, the sun is shining and the blue sky, nice green trees, it just seems it would be a nice area, and again, it's probably Third World country, but they seem to be happy enough like, do you know.

There is a lot of potential and I feel like there is a bit of hope in that and happiness.

Self-sufficient farmer. He's feeding the cow off the land, and then the cow was helping to feed him and his family.

It's more like a hopeful, yeah, nice photo

He's willing to go right up close and scratch him on his neck and everything. So, he's very close with the animal.

I feel happy, it is a happy photo but I feel bad for the cow. he is probably going to eat it.

It is a happy image. If you were flicking through the National Geographic and came across that image, if you were in a bit of a hurry and looking at the photos, you would say that is a really nice photo. You wouldn't necessarily read the story, you might come back to it.

Probably a year ago they had the bare minimum whereas now they have livestock. That livestock is not going to just supply meat, it is going to supply milk as well or dairy or something. I just feel happy

Content to neutral. He seems happy. You'd hope he's self-sufficient

I really like it, it's kind of, it's kind of loving and caring, it's kind of like, almost, you rub a dog under it's chin. That look

I get the impression that it mightn't always have been like this. I get the impression that this cow was provided to him, maybe, I think, rather than being excited, I can feel, he's excited. You know and it's high energy positive for him, because he has this. And so like, given the context in which the image was used, it could make me want to help provide cattle to people.

31-40 Empathiser Female Athlone; 41-55 Empathisers Cork; Global citizen 20-34 Dublin; 20-34 Multilateralist BC1 Dublin; Over 50 EN Pragmatist Athlone; 35-49 Male Disengaged Cork

Images review (Gold set)

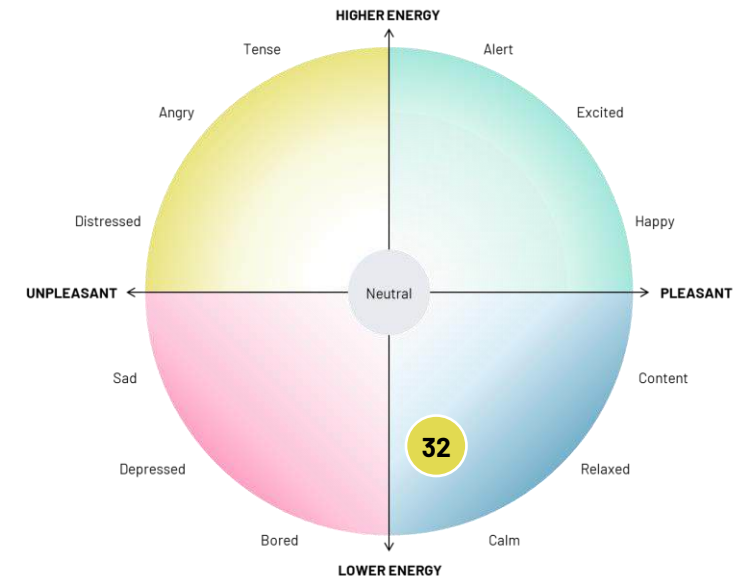
Image 32

Despite the impactful and colourful image with strong eye contact and a clear relationship between the two, most feel little emotion in response.

The image feels staged (static, slightly forced smiles and an obviously prepared backdrop).

There is little sense of connection to the protagonist nor any feeling of vulnerability or jeopardy.

Critical to this response, is the sense that there is a lack of authenticity and limited depth or back story.



- Excellent ★
- Good ✓
- Queried ?
- Poor ✗

Impact	✓
Protagonist	?
Viewer	?
Story	★
Authentic	★
Photo	✓

Gold set: 32



Vivid colors were striking and made it stand out. But the women's expressions seemed less natural and engaging than in other portraits.

I just think it's lovely. They've put kind of a backdrop to cover whatever is behind that and it's a staged photo

They are not under threat. They are happy and relaxed, therefore I am happy and relaxed in reaction to that.

It's like they're happy, they're smiling, it's genuine.

I feel calm when I see it but then when I look at it....only because I know the background, I just feel like it is a fake sense of happiness.

Nothing special. Nothing to see, move on, is it?

They seem to be happy to see something....they are looking at something different, they are happy to see that

I feel happy as the mother and child are kept together. They clearly have a good bond.

31-40 Empathiser Female Athlone; 41-55 Empathisers Cork; Global citizen 20-34 Dublin; 20-34 Multilateralist BC1 Dublin; Over 50 EN Pragmatist Athlone; 35-49 Male Disengaged Cork

Images review (Gold set)

Image 53

This image generated effective impact and communicated a clear story

- Largely about the benefit of aid.

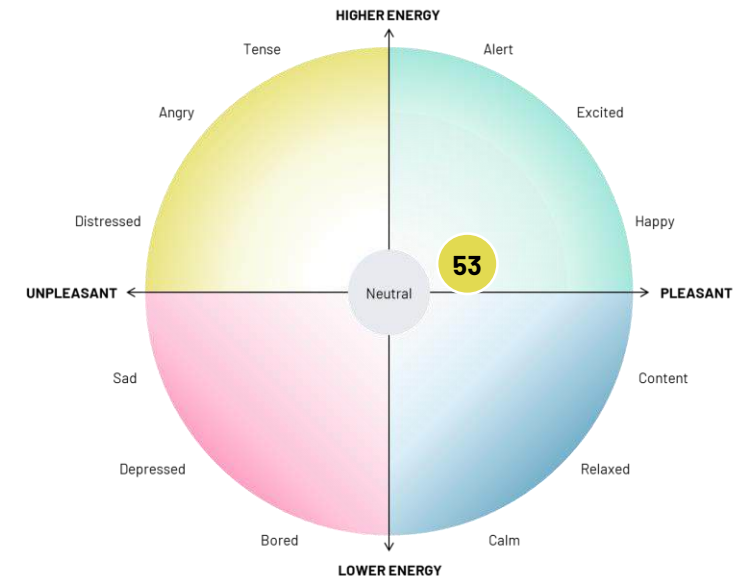
Some details suggest vulnerability

- Children have to collect the water
- They have no shoes.

But other elements undermine the desire to respond:

- Lush green backdrop suggests there is enough water locally
- The image of another camera (on the left) signals a staged image not a real one.

While most feel that positive images are effective as a trigger to respond, in fact they rarely prompt as strong an urge to do something in the way achieved by vulnerable child images.



- Excellent ★
- Good ✓
- Queried ?
- Poor ✗

Impact	✓
Protagonist	✓
Viewer	?
Story	★
Authentic	✗
Photo	✓

Gold set: 53



It's a nice image I didn't really feel happy or sad looking at it obviously it's strange to see we can just turn on the tap and get water. It's interesting that the children are going to fetch the water as well which is...I don't know if it says a lot in itself but the kids have to do errands like that they can't enjoy their childhood.

This one's a bit difficult maybe, a bit distressed, but then that's ? like, they have access to water like, obviously, it's hard to get it.

Obviously, there was a well it was paid for, get clean drinking water.

To me it looks again, like a lot of hard work.

It looks like they were probably suffering previously, but the contributions have helped resolve it somewhat. Still look a bit poverty-stricken, and the clothes were donated and stuff, but it looks like they were getting their own things done.

I actually feel hopeful because from lots of advertising I have seen through the years, they didn't have clean water flowing through a pump. They had to go to the rivers or whatever and drink contaminated water, carry that for even longer on their heads.

I would be happy because I think there is a sense of achievement in somehow getting that water. I think it is just a sense of achievement. I would be happy for the people there

31-40 Empathiser Female Athlone; 41-55 Empathisers Cork; Global citizen 20-34 Dublin;
20-34 Multilateralist BC1 Dublin; Over 50 EN Pragmatist Athlone; 35-49 Male Disengaged Cork

Images review (Gold set)

Image 65

Highly impactful and strongly emotional image.

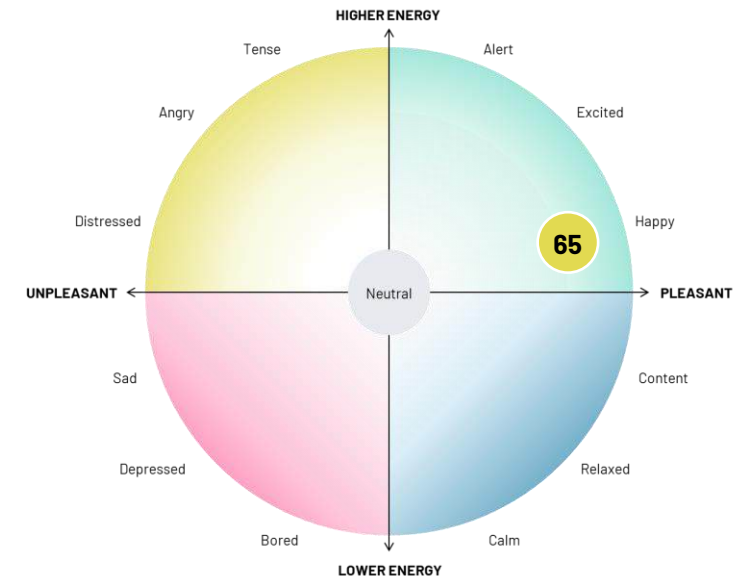
The smiles and laughter shown are infectious and most simply **reflect** the emotional state of the two protagonists, feeling positive themselves.

While both are healthy, there is a deeper meaning discerned by most eventually when they notice what the child is eating

- Suggestive of international food aid rather than a simple treat consumed by a child
- Nevertheless, showing **comfort and security**.

The image has a sense of **intimacy** and **relationship** between the mother and her child which can also help establish a stronger sense of relatability.

Most interpret they can have a role in helping deliver this kind of aid.



- Excellent ★
- Good ✓
- Queried ?
- Poor ✗

Impact	★
Protagonist	★
Viewer	✓
Story	★
Authentic	✓
Photo	★

Gold set: 65



I think it's positive, it's happy, it's hopeful. You know, I suppose it's not hopeless, you know, you feel this is good, you feel that constructive things are happening, useful, you know. The little kid is having a snack, you know, and nice bright colours and nice happy expressions

They're happy overall, they're caught in a moment from maybe somebody making a joke or something, you know

Warm. They seem happy. You can imagine though they are poverty stricken but they seem happy.

I think they're happy, but they're poor, you can see they're eating that high protein food, do you know, so, but, at least they have that food I guess

I just feel good. It is a sunny day. It just feels like a picture to me, I am not getting anything from it. I don't know where she is.

It is the happiest photo I have ever seen

It's telling a full story from the picture and they're really showing what they want you to see at the time.

I feel a bit of sadness as well because obviously they had to have rations of food. It is not in supply. They are happy, they are delighted with it.

My first reaction, I smiled. I think it's a lovely photo, I think the little boy has a lovely little cheeky smile, she looks quite happy and content, like, you know, it's colourful, it's a nice photo.

31-40 Empathiser Female Athlone; 41-55 Empathisers Cork; Global citizen 20-34 Dublin; 20-34 Multilateralist BC1 Dublin; Over 50 EN Pragmatist Athlone; 35-49 Male Disengaged Cork

Images review (Gold set)

Image 31

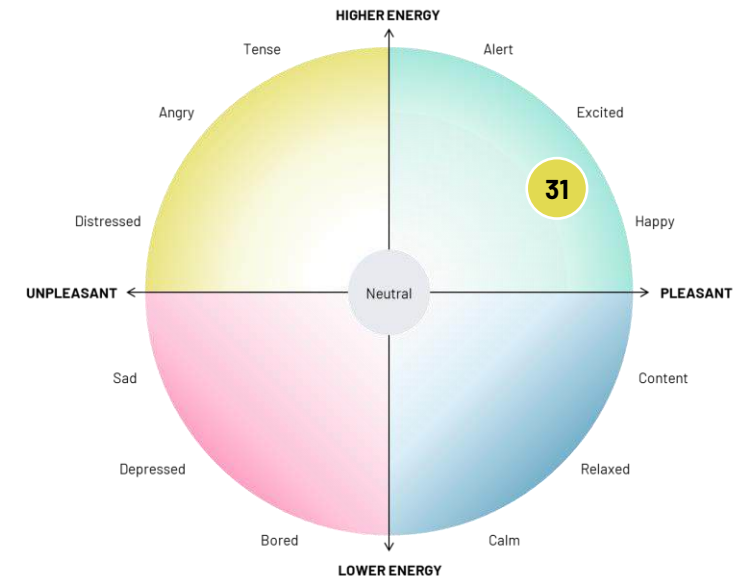
Again, viewed as a positive image

- Happy protagonist
- Successful environment (in uniform, indoors)

Some interpret a potential story about the benefit of building long term resilience through education but this not specifically **evident** in the image.

Most struggle to connect the image with an urge to contribute.

Again, the sense of success and happiness can get in the way of a more motivated (and emotional) response.



- Excellent ★
- Good ✓
- Queried ?
- Poor ✗

Impact	✓
Protagonist	?
Viewer	?
Story	?
Authentic	✓
Photo	✓

Gold set: 31



I think it's a really happy and hopeful image. Again, like they're well dressed in their uniforms, they all look really happy and content, so it feels like a step in the right direction

Happiness, they all seem to be quite happy and they're clean, they've uniforms on, they're in school, they're learning, so

Same, I am happy and hopeful. They have a decent building, there are actual windows. They are all in uniforms, so there is funding going here to make improvements.

Happy that they are getting on with their normal lives as children. They have a structure, school, go home and play and food.

And they're definitely well looked after, well cared for.

Excited. They are getting an education, it is giving them opportunities. They can have good careers in the future. So it is what is needed, without children there is no future. It is giving them a chance to do it.

I'd say either of the school group ones, because there were positive images and you were saying that you were getting education.

Yes. The thing is children don't fake happy or sad, they are either happy or sad. They are obviously happy, so that makes me happy as well. Again they are getting an education and they are obviously well fed, well-nourished and well looked after. They are not in a war zone by the looks of things. Happy image

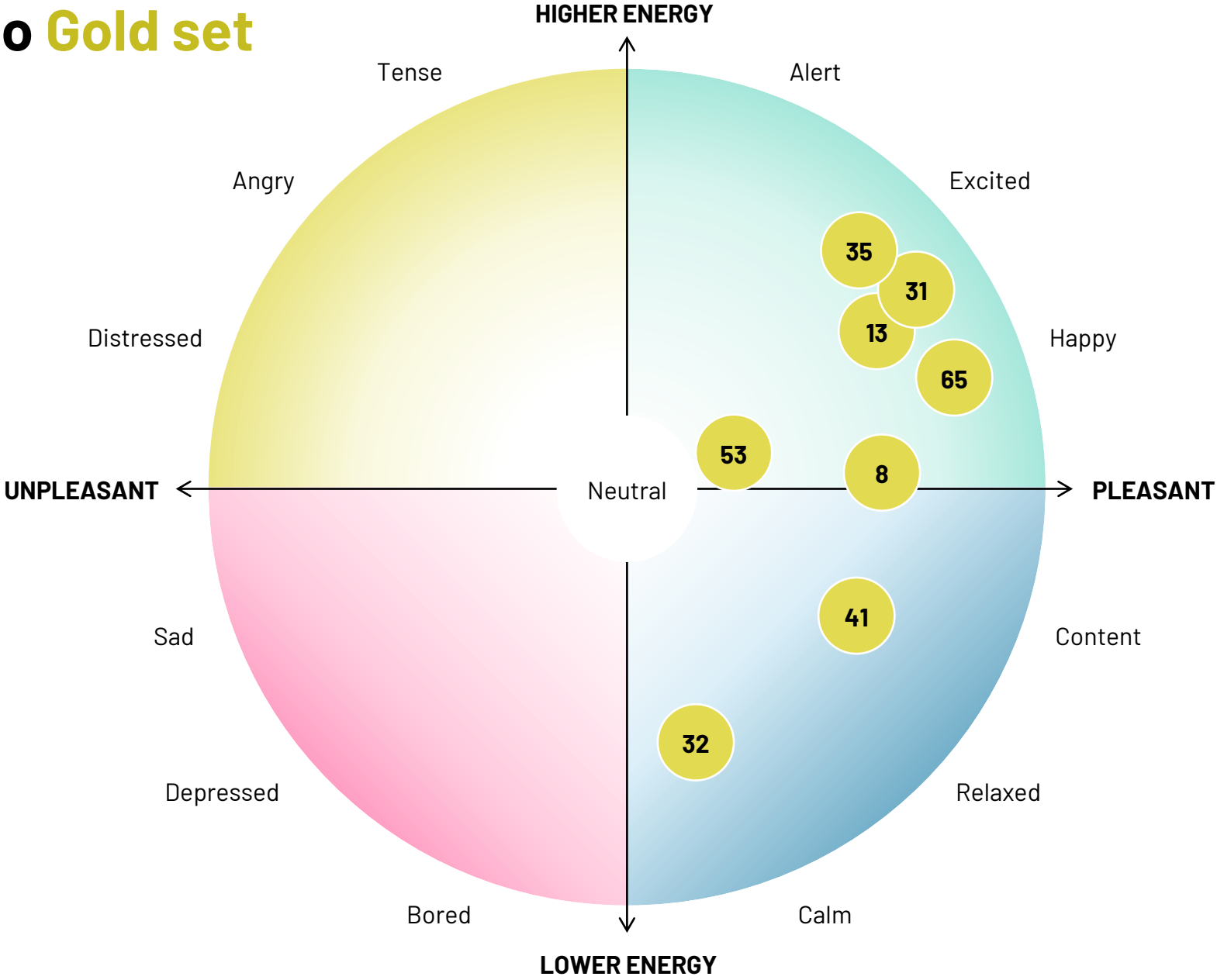
31-40 Empathiser Female Athlone; 41-55 Empathisers Cork; Global citizen 20-34 Dublin;
20-34 Multilateralist BC1 Dublin; Over 50 EN Pragmatist Athlone; 35-49 Male Disengaged Cork

Summary assessment (gold set)

Excellent	
Good	
Queried	
Poor	

	8	35	41	13	32	53	65	31
Impact								
Protagonist meaning								
Viewer connection								
Storytelling power								
Authenticity of scenario								
Photographic fidelity								

Emotional response to Gold set



GOLD SET

- 8 
- 35 
- 41 
- 13 
- 32 
- 53 
- 65 
- 31 

REVIEW OF BLUE & GREEN SETS



Review of blue and green set

Key highlights

Not all of the groups reviewed every image in these sets and the amount of time spent on these images was, by necessity, fairly brief. However, we can identify some key insights from the review.

67



This image proved to be one of the most emotionally provocative when shown.

It was rated as similar – in terms of impact and negative emotion – as image 66 and 68 in the Red set or as strongly storytelling as image 65 in the Gold set.

The image is taken as communicating a clear protagonist need (and emotional state) and also a clear responsibility for the viewer (observing a vulnerable child).

It also resonates as an authentic image with a photographic finesse (well lit, spotlighting the protagonist, clear message).

Review of blue and green set

Key highlights

Many of the other blue set images fail to communicate a meaningful need (for the protagonist, nor a connection with the viewer).

There is sometimes more sense of positive emotion for the protagonist, but the viewer feels unmoved and sees little need for their involvement.

At best, some work as 'cultural illustrations' like images from National Geographic, rather than part of a communication relating to international aid.

Review of blue and green set

Key highlights



































Many of the Green set fail to 'move the dial' of an emotional response with the typical feedback much more neutral.

This is partly to do with a lack of clarity/low impact and weak photography, but is mainly influenced by a weak sense of what the image means to the protagonist **or** the viewer.

In most cases respondents claimed these images would not arrest their attention in the first place, and then did not reveal a clear message (or emotion) if they attempted to unpack the image

Summary assessment (Blue set)

Excellent	
Good	
Queried	
Poor	

	28 	24 	67 	43 	17 
Impact					
Protagonist meaning					
Viewer connection					
Storytelling power					
Authenticity of scenario					
Photographic fidelity					

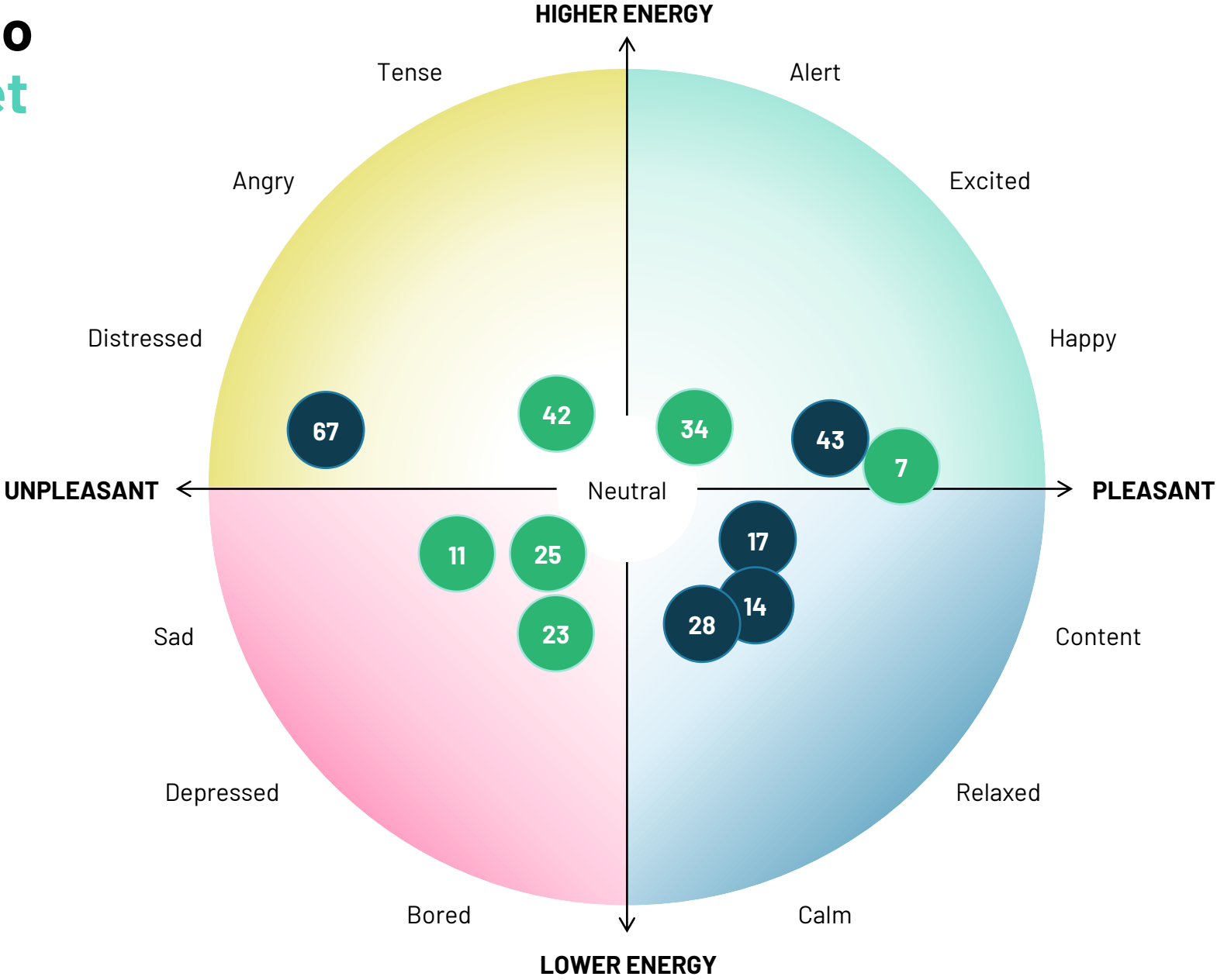
Summary assessment (Green set)

Excellent	
Good	
Queried	
Poor	

	23	34	25	42	11	7
Impact						
Protagonist meaning						
Viewer connection						
Storytelling power						
Authenticity of scenario						
Photographic fidelity						

Emotional response to Blue set and Green set

	BLUE SET	GREEN SET
28	Disengaged	23
24	Pragmatists	34
67	Pragmatists	25
43	Multilateralists	42
17	Global Citizens	11
		7



CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



Conclusions: Effective images include

1

Direct eye contact

2

Immediate sense of vulnerability of protagonist

3

Clarity to story, but also some depth to unpack

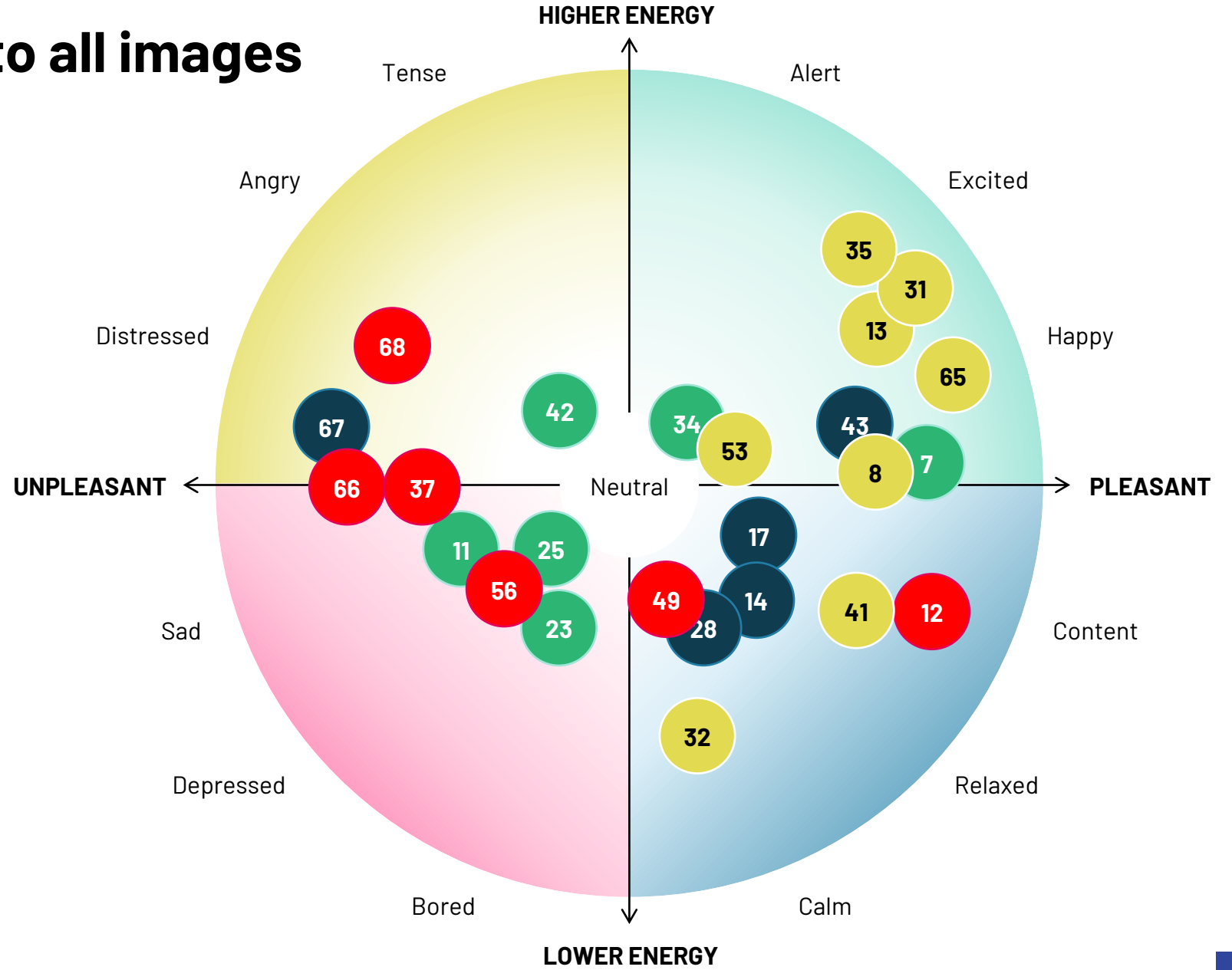
4

Connection to contemporary narrative

5

Clear role for viewer – a need for a response

Emotional responses to all images



Management summary

Effective emotional triggers

- Vulnerability (especially children).
- Direct eye contact.
- Deeper layers of meaningful and unresolved elements.
- A single-minded focus on an individual.
- Backstory coherence and topicality.
- Role for viewer.
- A sense of an authentic and relatable moment, mood or relationship.
- Tangible results of aid (but care is needed to avoid signalling no longer any need for support).
- Open expressions, whether expressing calm or a puzzled mind can be effective.



Target real human experience expressed with emotion

Inhibitors to engagement

- Complexity of image and text elements interferes with direct strong response.
- Staged images fail to connect.
- Closed expressions can put off viewers as they do not feel drawn in.
- No clear route to helping
 - Scale of problem seems hopeless.
 - Protagonist seems self reliant.



Avoid tropes and stereotypes we need arresting **fresh imagery.**

Recommendations

Emotional resonance is key. The images that drew the strongest reactions sparked feelings of

- Connection
 - Empathy
 - Curiosity
 - Concern
 - Hope
- There is a sense of connectivity with the humanity of another person's predicament*

We need single-minded, human-centred images that are candid, close-up shots with strong colours, ideally that speak to real relationships and vulnerability.

Balance urgency with agency. Motivating images do not just evoke pity but make viewers feel they can support in meaningful way.

Simplify our message (and images) to avoid unintended and distracting elements. Above all our focus should be on the individual and their experience.

THANK YOU



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