


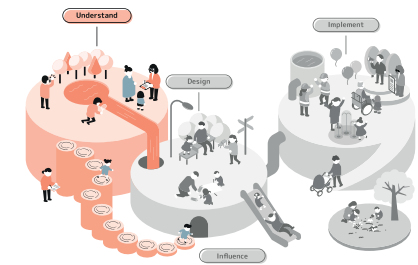


-  **Format**
template
-  **Group size**
individual, small team
-  **Time**
few days - few weeks
-  **Facilitation experience**
high



Personal diary

What is it? This tool can be used to collect momentary data on experienced feelings, thoughts, behaviours, and social context **in real life situations** and **over time**. It is a powerful tool that can be best used to offer insight into the day-to-day life of young children, caregivers and pregnant women.

How to use it? Diary studies can be done by using prepared notebooks with prompts, camcorders, disposable cameras or using digital tools such as Google Forms, WhatsApp, SMS, or specially designed diary apps. The template on the right can help you prepare for a Personal diary study, in whichever media you decide to conduct it. Use your answer to identify the right format, and to formulate research questions.






Keep in mind: Diary studies **take time** to run, and they generate a lot of data for analysis. If you are looking for a rapid assessment tool, this approach might not be for your project.

As this tool requires a lot of time and effort from participants, they need to be **recruited** and **paid** for their time.

It is advisable that you **test your study** first (for example, among your team members over a week). This will allow you to check if your prompts are clear. Otherwise, you risk collecting data that you cannot use.

Digital diary studies are more recommended than the analogue ones, as they allow you to check the data collection, identify low-effort participants or the ones who have misinterpreted the task and need more guidance.

Involve your participants in the analysis by organising a meeting to check your understanding of the initial data analysis.

	<p>Define the purpose of your study What parts of day-to-day life of your participants, their thoughts and routines are important for the project you are working on?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may want to know how specific routines look and feel like, such as commuting, working, getting dressed, self-care, health checks, going to the nursery or school, shopping. • You may want to know what your participants do, think or feel like at certain times of day. • You may want to follow the change in behaviour that your project will bring, by conducting a diary study before, during and after the implementation. 	
	<p>How long to keep a diary? What timeframe will give you the insights you need? Think about the participation burden, and the time you will need to sort and analyse the data you are collecting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before, during and after the installation of a project • Capturing weekdays and weekend • Capturing different weather conditions • Capturing time before and after significant milestones (e.g. giving birth) • Capturing cycles, such as crawling period or a menstrual cycle • Capturing all breastfeeding instances in one week 	
	<p>Who to recruit? Think about fewer participants that will be motivated to take part in documenting their reflections over time. Consider their gender, age, profession, geography, and other identity attributes. The question you are curious about and the context of your project are critical for making these decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five mothers, inputting data based on the observation of her toddlers in different neighbourhoods • Ten mothers that are breastfeeding, selected based on the breastfeeding experience (firstborne child or not, in their first month or not) • Three fathers that pick-up children from the nursery • Five teenage mothers 	
	<p>Define questions/ prompts Take advantage of the momentary decisions or situations that your participants are part of. Think of including structured questions (to ease your analysis and provide quick insight) and open-ended questions (to allow for deeper discovery).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel while breastfeeding? • In a few words, describe the item or service. • What are your thoughts, feelings and experiences when you are shopping with your toddler? • What caught your attention in the new pocket park today? • Film a 10-second video to show us where you are. • Where are you right now (multiple choice question). What makes it difficult to be here with a pram today? (open question) 	
	<p>When to report? How often and when should participants write their diary entries? Have in mind the time burden, whether they would feel comfortable or able to write reflections, and how would the timing of the entry influence their answers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular intervals, such as every three hours • Event-specific moments, such as while breastfeeding, when on a train, in supermarket 	