



Neighborhood Walk



Neighborhood Walks are systematic group walks along a pre-defined path to explore and map environmental and social conditions of a rural or urban area, by observing and discussing.



Information
Ideation
Consultation
Co-Decision



<15 people
15-30 people
30-100 people
100-250 people
> 250 people



Preparation:
1 months for invitations, tool set up etc.
Conduction:
0,5 day
Follow-up:
Couple of days for analysis and documentation



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Depending on event format



At least one person with local expertise & qualitative data collection

The Method: What is it, when to use it and what outcome to expect

During a neighbourhood walk, citizens, decision-makers, and other representatives are invited for a **walk to explore a specific (rural or urban) area and get to know the members of the local community** living there. Such walks offer time and space to learn more about a group and their specific environment, for informal discussions among participants and the community, and for discovering specific spaces in the area. Through this method, you can identify potentials and weaknesses of an area, understand better **the needs of the population** living there and develop ideas how to **improve quality of life** in the area. This method is especially suitable to create an informal exchange with communities that might be difficult to reach in more formal participation processes.

The Process: How to conduct it in an in-person setting or online using a PC/laptop with video option

1. Introduction: Start by clarifying the goal and defining the area of your walk. Define a specific route to walk with, if necessary, pre-identified stations of interests, for instance where participants can meet specific community members. Get in touch with the community members and inform them about the planned walk.. After having settled a meeting time and point, you contextualize the walk and its purpose, and introduce some questions/topics that might lead the observations and discussions during the walk. Please define a code of conduct and norm of respects to be followed during the walk .

2. Walk: You walk with the participants through the specific areas guided, if necessary, by a member of the community/target group. Stress the different stops where participants can observe some places of interest in the area or exchange with members of the local community. Take time to leave participants talk to people. During the walk, make sure that the observations and exchanges remain focused on the questions defined in the previous part

3. Discussion: After the walk, invite participants to talk about their observations and interactions and to share their experiences and feelings with the group. Although informal, you can moderate the exchange in order keep it focused on the guiding question. You need to document the discussed topics and focal points and, if necessary, collect further material collected by the participants during the walk. A summary of the discussion can be used as a basis for further discussions, for instance with stakeholders and sent to the participants as a follow-up

Blended participation

You can adopt the method (with several limitations) for an online or blended format. For an online format, you have to film the places of interests and gather (on video or on tape) the testimonies of some members of the community.

Digital communication

A video exchange can be organised with the interviewed community-members in order to favour a direct interaction with the participants.

Good to know

- Target group: local residents of the area

Limitations:

- It might be difficult to organise an online neighbourhood walk with members of the target community. Mutual interchange of knowledge between participants and locals can suffer from the online format
- The visual focus of the method, which aim of bringing a deep understanding of a place or population might suffer from the online format.
- Online formats might, in some case, undermine the informality of the exchanges expected in such processes.