# Observation

# template

## part 1: objectives and target groups

*(Describe each target group and what you want to find out)*

(Examples are in grey)

### Objective

The city wants to support meaningful leisure activities of teenagers.

**What do we want to find out?**

*(Formulate a number of hypotheses that came out of the framing workshop after analysing the problem)*

* Problem: there are many loitering teenagers in the city

Hypotheses:

* Young people are bored because not enough activities are available to them.
* Young people need places where they can hang around, and our city does not have enough of these spaces.
* Young people are anxious to be part of the “adult” life, but little is done to make this possible.

**Key question**

How can the city support the leisure experience of teenagers?

### Target group

*(Think in depth on the variables that will help you define your target group, and also to define types or segments within the broad target. Do not hesitate to split your target group in sub-groups to be sure you collect relevant information from all segments of your target.)*

### Main target group: Teenagers

* Girls and boys
* Mix of younger teenagers (< 14 years old) en older teenagers (14 – 17)
* Boys and girls from different social class

***Sub target Group 1***: autochthonous teenagers

***Sub target Group 2***: immigrant teenagers

*It can make sense to work with a grid:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | *< 14 years old* | *14 – 17 years old* |
| *Autochthonous teenagers* | *50% boys / 50% girls* | *50% boys / 50% girls* |
| *Immigrant teenagers* | *50% boys / 50% girls* | *50% boys / 50% girls* |

## PART 2: SAMPLE AND OBSERVATION SCHEDULING

*(It is best to select persons and do the observations in the real environment where the service or where the type of problems you want to address is taking place)*

Who do we want to observe (sample)  
*(Define your sample based on the sub-target groups and types of customers/users)*

Make sure to mix:

* Sex: it is a basic rule to observe as many women as men. You need good reasons to go for another spread between both sexes.
* Socio-cultural background: social class, local vs. immigrant, professionally active or not …
* Ages: if you are targeting e.g. teenagers, it does make sense to split in different groups (<14; 14-17; >17)
* Family situation if relevant
* Any other relevant criterion

For each relevant group, make sure to plan enough observations and to decide how you will select respondents.

### Observation location 1: where loitering takes place – the square

*(Describe what can be of importance or relevant to look for in the surroundings. This can be the attractiveness of the space, what is near the place like a bus stop, or a shop…)*

**Date and timing**

*(Make sure to choose a sufficient diversity of timings to have a clear picture of the situation: day vs. evening; weekday vs. weekend…)*

Wednesday: 16.00 – 18.00

Thursday: 20.00 – 22.00

Saturday: 20.00 – 23.00

### Observation location 2: Swimming pool (outside)

**Date and timing**

### Observation location 3: The park

**Date and timing**

## part 3: OBSERVATIon questions

(Define beforehand what you want to observe)

### Pathway

*(Formulate the questions taking the different steps of the path into account.)*

* Do they arrive as a group? or individually?
* How and how late do the youth arrive at the square?
* Where do they get together?
* Do they move around? Are they staying on the square?
* When do they leave? together?
* ….

### User

*(Define the characteristics of the persons that you want to be noted down: sex, age group, clothing, striking features, company, socio-cultural identity, …)*

### Behaviour

*(Write down a list of the behaviour you want to see observed: examples can be courtesy, friendliness, showing respect for others, taking up responsibility, specific actions, …)*

* Do the youngsters bother other people who pass by?
* Do they make a lot of noise?
* Do they have something with them? Do they use these?
* Do they leave residues behind (illegal dumping)?
* Do they smoke?
* What else do they do? What don’t they do?
* …

## part 4: reporting

Make a choice regarding the form of reporting:

### Descriptive reporting

*(a description of everything that is noticed in a written form)*

### Observation scheme

*(make a checklist of all the elements that deserve attention and tick the “yes” or “no” box. An alternative is to work with a scale from 1 (negative) to 5 (positive). The observer can also add comments.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Checklist - Questions | Yes | No | comments |
| Do they arrive as a group? |  |  |  |
| Do they smoke? |  |  |  |
| … |  |  |  |

Guidelines for the preparation:

### Before the observation

If you wish to make pictures, you should explain why you will do this and ask for permission.

### The observation itself

Position yourself in a way that is non intrusive. If you want to combine observation with interviewing, then you should do the observation first.

During the observation, pay attention not only to actions but also to body language.

Note down not only the behaviour you observe but also the frequency (how often is this happening?), the duration (how long does the behaviour last?) and the intensity (how strong/much/bad is this?).

### After the observation

Thank those observed for their cooperation.

If possible, offer the possibility to those observed to be kept informed on the results of the research. One of the possibilities to do this is to leave a document in a place where they can write down their name and contact details.