

### Option 3: Interviews and personas

#### Definition



If youngsters want to have an understanding of the needs from the community, it can be meaningful to conduct some interviews. During an interview, one or two youngsters have a conversation with one member of the community. That way, they get a more detailed view of the personal situation of one of the people in the community. They can use a questionnaire as a guideline for the interviews.

When a certain number of interviews is reached, the youngsters can gather all the data from the interviews and put it in a spreadsheet or a text file. Based on the information collected, it can be interesting to let youngsters create personas representing the people from the community. Personas is a technique used in HCD to force developers to always keep their end user in mind. A persona is a fictional user of your product (or in this case a fictional person living in the community) that represents a group living in the community with his own characteristics and problems. You can create some kind of passport of that persona where you line up all the relevant information of that fictional character. Creating personas can help you to think about the needs of each group living in the community and forces you to always keep the potential end users in mind when developing a product or service.

#### Preparation

The first step is deciding which approach to use in order to reach people from the community. It is best to avoid that each group of youngsters will interview the same people.

There are a few approaches youngsters could use:

- If you already have contact details, you can get in touch with people from the community and invite them to come to the schools or the hubs.
- You can pick a place in the neighbourhood where there are lots of people passing by and make some kind of exhibition stand. You can tell the people who stop a little bit about the project and ask them whether or not they want to participate. If they are willing to be interviewed, you can immediately do the interview there.
- You can go to people's houses in the neighbourhood. Because it is important that not every group goes to the same house, you can use a technique that is called a 'random walk'. You have to determine (preferably by chance) the routing of your walk (heads or tails for example), you can count houses and decide that you go to each fifth house (for example) or each house that has a house number ending on a four (for example). You can use a random number generator ([https://www.mathgoodies.com/calculators/random\\_no\\_custom](https://www.mathgoodies.com/calculators/random_no_custom)) to determine your random walk.
- You can use a technique that is called 'hopper'. If you want to 'hop', you pick one house to start with. After you have found one person who is willing to be interviewed, you ask them at the end of the interview if they could direct you to someone living in the community that they know and would likely be interested to be interviewed also. You then go to the house of that person and you repeat the process.
- You can use any other technique of your own choosing, as long as you can avoid that every group interviews the same persons.

The second step is to prepare an interview guide that you can use for the interviews. It has to contain all the question you want to ask. It is best to keep a small brainstorm in group in order to line up all the important questions to ask. When you have an overview of ~~the~~ all the questions you want to ask, you can make some kind of form that you can fill in during your interviews. At the end of this document, you will find an example of an interview guide that you can adjust. It can also be interesting to think about possible sub-questions in advance. Please be aware that when you use 'hoppen' as technique, you have to add a question.

## Execution

- Do the interview. It is advisable to do the interviews with two people. One can ask the questions and the other one can take notes. Try to be as friendly and open minded as possible. Try not to push the respondents in a certain direction (if you for example already have a business idea in mind it is tempting to guide the respondents in that direction). If someone gives superficial answers, try to dig deeper by asking sub-questions.
- When you have done some interviews, it is important to write out the information as soon as possible. You can put all the information in an Excel sheet, or you can simply make a text about each topic (= each question) and write down all the answers there. It is important to number all the interviews and refer to that number when analysing your data (otherwise you can lose track of who said what).
- Divide the work between yourselves. It can be handy if each person picks some topics or questions to analyse. They then can analyse the information for each topic, try to synthesize it and subsequently present it to the other group members. What are the most frequently mentioned problems in the neighbourhood? What businesses is the neighbourhood missing?
- Try to organize a brainstorm with every group member who did the interviews. You can use the original forms as a tool. Can you group some of them together? Think about the problems their facing and the businesses they use. Do you see some important similarities between different respondents? What are the big differences? Try to put all the respondent in a group. Try to limit yourself to five groups. Make a brief description for each group: what are the most significant elements from this group? Why did you place them together?
- Try to make a persona. Making personas is a method that can be used to focus more on the user of your product (instead of the product itself). The persona has to be as good as a representation of each group as possible. A persona has to be specific, clear and very visual. A persona is a fictional character that you create (with a name, a picture, problems, a story...) that has to represent each group. It is best to pick a few respondents in each group that best represent the group and bring them together into one fictional character. You can create one persona for each group within the community (for example one elderly person, one young family, ...).

By using personas, you will get a more in dept understanding of the needs of the people from the community. It is a tool to be more empathic to the people from within the community. It is important for further steps that you stay aware of your personas and you always have to keep in mind that they are the people who will have to use or buy your product or service. You can find lots of examples on internet of how a persona should look like. Be aware that you have to determine what you find a relevant attribute of each group. You can keep it simple and make the persona on a large poster, but you can also be very creative and use video or drawings.

### Possible variations and tips:



- It can be interesting to make the personas in cocreation with the people from the community. You can invite a few people over and have some kind of group discussion about the different groups of people living in the community (based on the interviews) and subsequently create the personas together.
- It is strongly encouraged to be as creative as possible. Use audio, video, pictures,... in order to create your persona. Sometimes even life-size cardboard personas are created.
- If you don't like the idea of creating persona's, an alternative can be creating an empathy map. It is a tool that can be useful for gathering insights. There is a template attached at the end of this document.
- It is advisable to make a spreadsheet of all the information you collect about the respondents. It is certainly very recommendable to make a list of all the respondents who are willing to be contacted again because finding people to participate in research can often be a challenge. Doing the interviews can really be an opportunity to motivate people from the community to become active contributors to the SYU-project.
- A template for creating persona's you can use is attached at the end of this module. However, on the internet you can find numerous other templates that can also be useful.

### Material:



- Printed questionnaires to fill out
- PC (spreadsheet or text) for analysis of collected data
- Material to make the personas at your own choosing: markers, cardboards, ...

### Timeframe:



Preparation will be half a day.

The timeframe of conducting the interviews and analysing the data depends on how many interviews you want to do.

Making personas can be done in one day (also depending on how you want to create them).

### Do the youngsters have to be in group or can this method be conducted alone:



Preferably in group. Otherwise it will be too time consuming for one person to do.

## Sources and more information:



### Interviews

<https://www.designkit.org/methods/interview>

Entrepreneurship: The Practice and Mindset, Neck, H., Neck, C., 2017, Inc Sage Publications

### Hoppen

<https://www.participatiewordtgesmaakt.be/websites/52/uploads/file/Participatiekofffer%20-%20Handvatten.pdf> (Dutch)

### Persona's

Beysen, A., De Lameillieure, M., Cecilia's keuze, Ontwerpen met meerwaarde op basis van gebruikersinzichten, Lannoo Uitgeverij (Dutch)

Template: <https://raw.githubusercontent.com/open-design-kit/opendesigkit/master/resource-materials/persona-worksheet.png>

About personas and how to create them

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNvLpfXCge8> (English)

## Interview guide for people from the community

*Introduction: present yourself and tell a little bit about the SYU-project.*

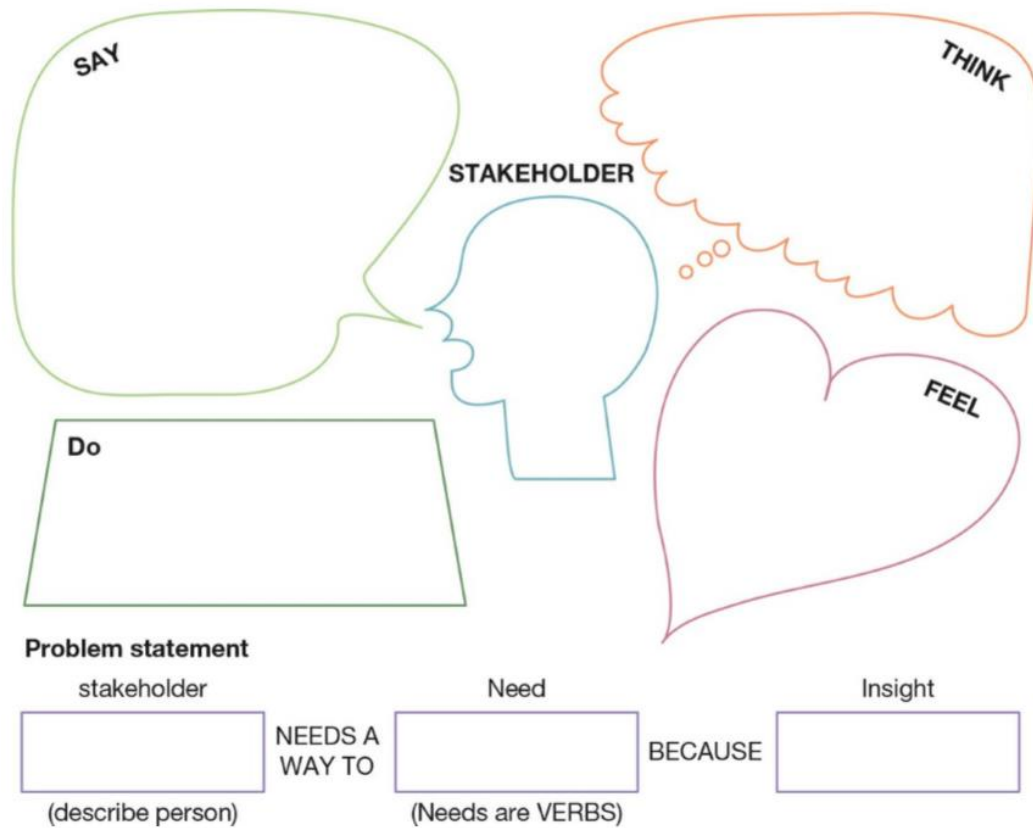
Number of interview:

1. Name:
2. Address:
3. Age:
4. Are you living alone or with other people?
5. Do you work in the neighbourhood?
6. How long have you been living here in the neighbourhood?
7. What do you like about the neighbourhood?
8. What do you dislike about the neighbourhood?
9. What kind of businesses from the neighbourhood do you visit often?
10. What kind of businesses do you think the neighbourhood is missing?
11. Are you facing any problems at the moment that you haven't found a suitable solution for in the neighbourhood?
12. We want to open a pop-up that is community oriented. Could you give us any advice?
13. Can we contact you again to participate in further research phases or to present our pop-up idea?

If yes: can you give us your contact data (preferably e-mail address)?

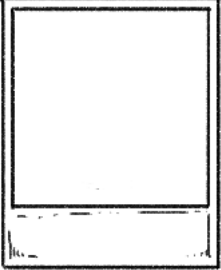
*Conclusion: ask the respondent if they have any remarks they want to add. Thank them for participating.*

Template empathy map



Source: Entrepreneurship: The Practice and Mindset, Neck, H., Neck, C., 2017, Inc Sage Publications

### Template persona

	interests:	Powers:
QUOTE:		
name:	Goals:	daily routine:
age:		
Profession:		
Bio:	likes/dislikes:	motivation:



Source: <https://raw.githubusercontent.com/open-design-kit/opendesignkit/master/resource-materials/persona-worksheet.png>