



Created by Cuputo
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Regenerative Economics

INTERVIEWS

Interviews give you qualitative data for your project. You should use information from interviews with other sources to draw conclusions about a situation. The interviewer is the person conducting the interview (you) and the interviewee is the person you are interviewing.

Preparing for an interview:

Interviews need good preparation to be successful. Here's how to get ready:

1. **Contact the interviewee early:** Reach out to the person you will interview early to arrange a time and place. Remember that people often have busy schedules, so the earlier you contact them the more likely they can participate. The interviewee should complete a [consent form](#) to have the information included in your research.
2. **Get a helper:** Have another person assist you during the interview. One of you should ask questions, listen carefully, and respond to the interviewee. The other should focus on recording the interview using notes, video, or audio. Using more than one method helps you capture all the information.
3. **Choose the right location:** Try to do the interview in the interviewee's own environment, or where the issue or problem you're researching takes place. This can make the interviewee more comfortable and provide useful context.
4. **Write thoughtful questions:** Carefully write your questions and ask for feedback to make them even better. Use open-ended questions instead of yes-no questions. Plan for a semi-structured interview where you have prepared questions, but can ask spontaneous follow-up questions based on the interviewee's responses. Avoid leading questions that might influence the interviewee's answers, and don't ask two questions at once. Use clear and simple language.

5. **Use prompts:** Consider using prompts, like pictures or drawings, to engage the interviewee. They can explain their thoughts and feelings as they interact with these prompts, which could stimulate their thinking.

Conducting the Interview

Here are some strategies to get the most out of your interview:

- **Build trust:** Introduce yourself and anyone helping you. Start with small talk to help make the interviewee more comfortable.
- **Listen carefully:** Pay close attention to the interviewee's responses. Allowing for some silent time between questions can encourage them to say more.
- **Paraphrase:** Repeat what the interviewee says in your own words. This shows you understand them and helps them feel listened to. Paraphrasing also gives the interviewee a chance to elaborate.
- **Use prompts to get more information:**
 - **5 Whys prompt:** After an answer, ask "Why?" up to five times to dig deeper into the root causes or mental models. Don't overdo it, though, as this can also be annoying for the interviewee.
 - **'What makes you say that?' prompt:** This prompt encourages the interviewee to provide evidence for their thinking, leading to deeper conversations.
 - **'Tell Me More' prompt:** This prompt invites the interviewee to expand on their thoughts or the situation, providing more depth and detail.