

## Concept paper: Personal Narratives

One of the most common ways human express and communicate their thoughts is by means of narratives. This makes narratives an efficient way to capture the personal and human dimensions of an experience. A personal narrative is a reconstruction of a person's experience and thereby a useful tool to capture the reality as remembered and understood by the person.

Highlighting and paying attention to the narratives of people is a way of building trust and collaborating.

What methods/other tools/ techniques can be used while implementing the tool?	Main aims while using the tool
Workshop, deliberative mapping, focus group, etc.	Personal narratives help to get an idea of how the past, present and future is remembered, experienced and imagined – this in relation to mobility.
<b>How can the tool be used in each phase of the process</b> (when developing age-friendlier and green mobility solutions)?	
<p><b>Planning stage</b> – planning for concrete interventions in the community. Using personal narratives to create a storyline of a person's experience, e.g. while using public transport, helps identify problems they experienced and understand their perception of mobility. This tool would be very good for this purpose as the user group is getting a platform for talking in depth about their mobility demands.</p> <p><b>Development stage</b> – The list of destinations and how to reach them (or barriers for reaching them) will be the focus in the project interventions. The development of the interventions will be based on the analysis of mobility demands identified in the personal narrative.</p> <p><b>Implementation stage</b> – The list of project interventions identified in the analysis phase will guide the progress of the planned developments.</p> <p><b>Evaluation stage</b> – Re-creating a personal narrative after the intervention has been implemented and comparing the new storyline with the old, may help understand the impact of the new intervention.</p> <p><b>Feedback</b> – As not all demands can or will be met within the project, the personal narratives will be used as feedback to the municipality and the public transport authority for future planning purposes.</p>	
<b>What is the aim of engagement with this tool?</b>	
<p>The tool is not that suitable for informing, collaborating and empowering, although it can contribute to these aims (e.g. if the public authorities address the mobility barriers highlighted in the personal narratives).</p> <p><b>Consult</b> – The list of destinations and how to reach them (or barriers for reaching them) will be the focus in the project interventions.</p>	
For how many people and how is the tool suitable (for one-time use)?	How much effort is required from the participant and what influences that?
<b>1-5:</b> It is a very individual exercise and can be done by a single person. However, it might be good for a smaller group in the community to	<b>Some effort required</b> – The participants will need to create their personal narratives/stories. As the tool is best used in person to capture

hear each other's narratives, memories and wishes. The narratives, in terms of storylines, could be merged and compared, but keeping the storytelling of the individual in mind.	emotions, moods and atmosphere, there may be also travel time and costs spent to reach the venue.
<b>Time needed to <u>prepare</u> using the tool and what influences the time needed?</b>	<b>Time needed to <u>implement</u> the tool and what influences the time needed?</b>
<b>Some preparation required</b> – In order to create personal narratives, preparation in form of preparing start-up questions, as well as setting up face-to-face meetings with the members of the community, will be needed.	<b>Some time needed</b> – In case of a group setting, depending on the number of people and length of stories, each session will be estimated to last around 60-90 minutes. In case of a single participant, as little as 5 minutes.
<b>Time needed to <u>summarize</u> using the tool and what influences the time needed?</b>	<b>Price for the user of the tool and what influences the price</b>
<b>Some summarizing required</b> – The data gathered is semi-qualitative and will require some analysing.	No price foreseen.
<b>SWOT on using the tool</b>	
<b>STRENGTHS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By remembering past experiences, it combines the past, present and future, which gives a certain dynamic and liveliness to the given problem/situation told in the narrative</li> <li>• A way to capture any potential unnoticed or underlying structure, e.g. needs, desires, demands</li> <li>• By being a reconstruction of a given experience, it becomes an effective tool to capture the actual world/ everyday as it is experienced by the people living it</li> </ul>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires trust: To create personal narratives, it requires/depends on a trustful relationship between you and the participant</li> <li>• Small Groups/Dataset: Because each narrative should be addressed separately, it becomes a relatively individual exercise which generates a small dataset</li> <li>• Data processing/analyzing: Analyzing is required because the generated data is qualitative. Furthermore, by being rich on narrative descriptions, it also limits the possibility of applying a systematic coding process</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves people on a personal level and can offer much greater insight than many other similar approaches</li> <li>• Interest in well-being: The need for knowledge about subjective well-being gives a personal touch to the tool</li> </ul>	<b>THREATS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May instigate quick results rather than long-time investments</li> </ul>
<b>How to use the tool?</b>	
<b>How to prepare using the tool?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make contact with the people you want to talk to.</li> <li>• Arrange a time, place and date.</li> <li>• Consider which questions you can use to get the participants starting on their narratives.</li> </ul>	

### How to implement the tool?

- Explain the purpose of conducting their narratives
- In case of a group setting, let each resident tell their narrative at a time – in this way you get their stories “unbroken”. Consider recording these stories or writing them down.
- Pay attention to their words: What do they say, in which order, which episodes, words or feelings they highlight and pay most attention to etc.
- After the narrative session has taken place, collect all the small pieces from the narratives to one storyline and make an overview of how mobility is remembered, experienced and imagined.

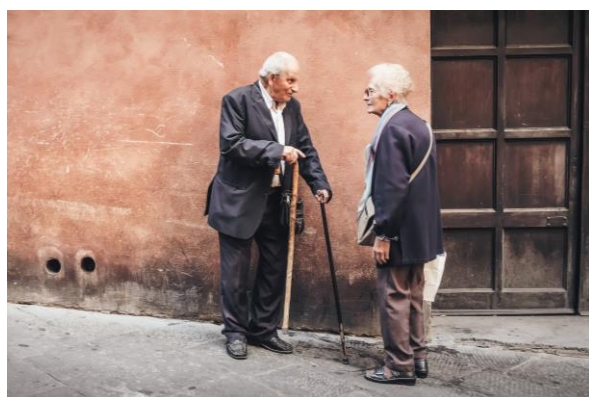
### How to follow-up using the tool?

- Let the narratives be the guideline for interventions: Where, when and how do mobility problems occur, what changes have there been – is there a pattern?
- Talk to the same people after interventions to get feedback to evaluate using the tool and to compare the storylines.

### Tips and hints for using the tool with people in silver age

- **Using emplotment** – emplotment means assembling a series of historical events into a coherent plot. This is an approach that can help bring the narrative together and create one consecutive story. It transforms the narrative into a storyline and makes the personal narratives comparable: comparing storylines help understand the experiences of both between people but also during different times (e.g. before and after an intervention).
- **Personal vs impersonal approach** – although personal narratives are best conducted face-to-face, when you can see, hear and observe the people creating them, other mediums are also possible, e.g. collecting narratives online or via the phone. This will reduce the ‘personal touch’ and may limit some understanding regarding the experience of the people (what is their body language, facial expressions, emotional response etc.), but it may be possible if circumstances require it.

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