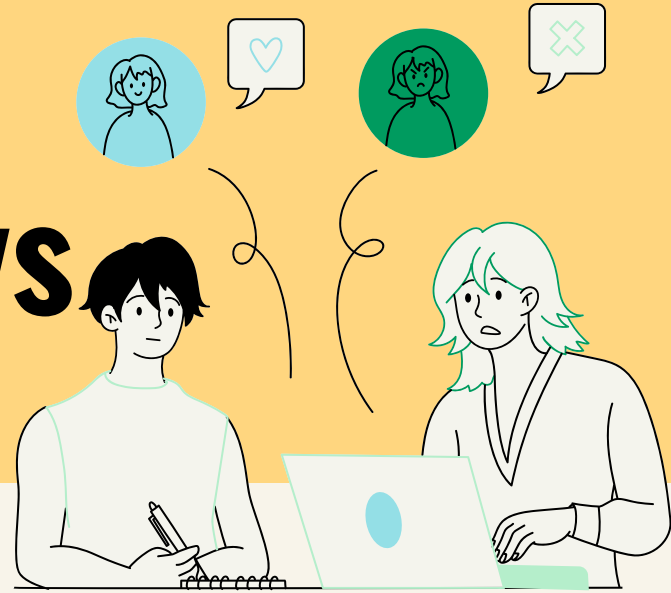


A Guide to Street Surveys

LESSONS FROM LA PROSPERITAT,
BARCELONA



THE PROJECT

In 2022, members from BCNUEJ undertook a comprehensive survey initiative in La Prosperitat, a culturally diverse working-class neighbourhood of Barcelona. Our mission: to collect 380 surveys on everyday experiences of climate change and coping mechanisms from the local population.



THE FIELDWORK

Over the months of February to June, a team of 7 international students engaged in fieldwork, striving to mirror as much as possible the local demographic profile in terms of gender, age, and country of origin.



SHARING IS CARING

We faced challenges, learned valuable lessons, and devised creative strategies to gather the responses we needed. In this manual, we share our experiences and insights, with the aim of assisting fellow researchers in navigating street surveys in diverse neighbourhoods.



PRACTICAL NOTES

- The survey was anonymous and confidential, and only a verbal consent was needed.
- The survey had 37 questions and could be done in around 10 minutes.
- In-person surveys were collected on tablets. We also had an online version.
- The survey was available in Spanish, Catalan, and English.
- Our team was composed of seven people from 5 different countries (Brazil, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK). All team members were fluent in Spanish and English and some could speak Catalan as well.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide was written by Ana Terra Amorim-Maia, Alicia Vollmer, and Luiza Tamas. The surveys were part of Ana's PhD project assessing intersecting vulnerabilities and coping mechanisms in Barcelona. The results were published in [this scientific article](#). All efforts were supported by the [Barcelona Lab for Urban Environmental Justice and Sustainability](#) (BCNUEJ) of the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain (ICTA-UAB).

BCNUEJ Barcelona Laboratory for Urban Environmental Justice and Sustainability

 **ICTA-UAB**

Gathering Responses



PROVIDING INCENTIVES

To enhance participation, we offered a reward system, inviting residents to join a raffle for 10 vouchers each valued at 15 Euros, redeemable at a local stationary store.

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DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

We strategically placed QR-coded flyers pointing to the online version of the survey in high-traffic areas, including metro stations, squares, and various commercial establishments. We also handed out QR-coded flyers to passersby at the exit of stations, in public squares and in the civic centre.



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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Collaboration with educational institutions and local associations proved instrumental. Additionally, fostering connections with neighbourhood associations contributed significantly to both the offline and online dissemination of the survey.



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EVENT ORGANIZATION

To enhance engagement, we set up tables in the main square with informational banners and posters as “survey stations”. To further encourage participation, we often offered incentives such as complimentary coffee and/or cake.

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JOINING THE PARTY

Moreover, we joined events, concerts, and other cultural gatherings organised by the local civic centre, which provided great opportunities to gather survey responses (and make local friends).

Logistics



TEAM DYNAMICS

We divided ourselves into groups of 2 or 3 and roamed the neighbourhoods for shifts of about 3-4 hours.

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PLACE CONSIDERATIONS

We noticed that some places were better suited than others for conducting surveys. For example, squares and parks are good because people often come to them with time to spare and in a communicative mood. In contrast, shopping streets might not be as suitable.



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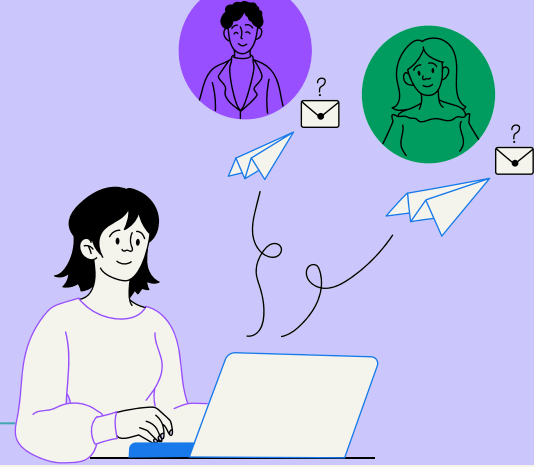
TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

We noticed that different people use the neighbourhood at different times of the day. In our case, this was the general pattern:



- Early mornings (between 8 and 10) are good for talking with older adults.
- Mid-afternoons (between 2pm and 4pm) are rather dead, as many Spanish people respect *siesta* time, even in the colder months.
- Late afternoons (between 4 and 6) are good for talking with parents (mostly mothers, in our case) and caretakers, because it was the time when children leave school.
- We did not conduct surveys at night.

Approaching people



1 INTRODUCING OURSELVES

We realised residents were more welcoming and open if we presented ourselves as students from the local university engaged in a project about their neighbourhood, rather than researchers, research assistants, or interns.

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2 NO CITY COUNCIL TIES

Clarifying our non-affiliation with the City Council or any governmental agency was also crucial to alleviate initial suspicions, as many residents were wary of official bodies.



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3 NO CONTACT DETAILS

It was also important to clarify that we did not need any personal contact information, only optional anonymous demographic information.



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4 GENDER MATTERS

We noticed residents were more willing to engage with women interviewees, while our male colleague encountered comparatively more difficulty in collecting responses from both men and women.



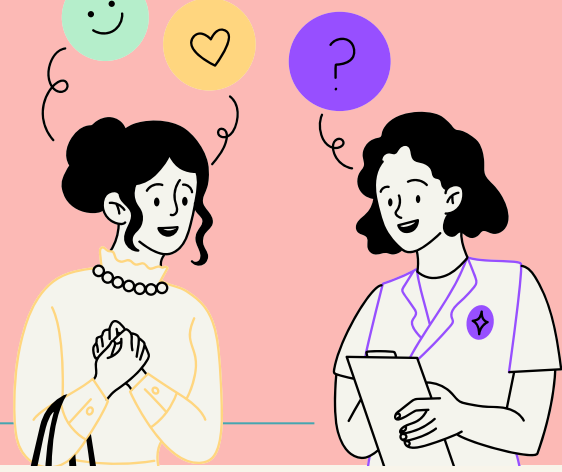
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5 ENSURING SAFETY

Dealing with inappropriate behaviour and harassment during interviews: The interview should be stopped immediately if the interviewer feels uncomfortable. To provide more security, it may be useful to remain near another one of the group members at all times.

Crafting the conversation



NAVIGATING TOPICS

Mentioning overarching themes such as "climate change" tended to put some people off. As a workaround, we introduced the survey as something more tangible and relatable. Adapting language to the residents' experiences, such as "how you experience extreme heat in your home" or "changes in weather," proved to be an effective strategy to encourage participation.

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COMMUNICATION APPROACH

We found it beneficial to prepare a short speech explaining in simple terms the potential tangible implications of our research ("i.e., our study will raise the attention of the public authorities to the need for more green areas in the neighbourhood"). People were happy to dedicate 10 minutes of their time once they heard of potential tangible benefits to their neighbourhood.



CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

In this culturally diverse neighbourhood, our team's cultural diversity proved advantageous. Being foreigners or not speaking perfect Spanish or Catalan posed no hindrance, and residents welcomed us with kindness. This might not be the case in neighbourhoods with different demographics or historical backgrounds.

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CULTIVATING PATIENCE

Be available to listen to the interviewee, even if they deviate a bit from the topic. Being patient helps people to feel more comfortable and sometimes share very interesting information that they probably would not have shared otherwise, if they hadn't had the extra space and time.

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CONCLUSION

By remaining adaptive, creative, and culturally sensitive, we managed to collect all 380 surveys and have a good time in the field. We hope the strategies and lessons shared above can help other researchers develop surveys and interviews and culturally and socially diverse urban areas.

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