First: the diagnosis

The guide to the tools for research of youth in the migrant communities
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Introduction

The publication *First: the diagnosis* is the result of the project carried out by the School for Leaders Foundation as part of a strategic partnership in the sector of youth, which forms part of the Erasmus+ Program. The partners and the co-creators of this publication are the organizations run by the Alumni of the Programs of the School for Leaders for the Polish Community Abroad.
1. The Polonia Nova Cultural Association from Hungary,
2. ProjektPolska.is from Iceland,
3. Polish Cultural Festival Association from Scotland.

The aim of the project “Leaders in a minority organization. Raising the standards of activity of the organizations that work on behalf of the mobilization of young representatives of Polish communities” is to reinforce the potential of the Polish community organizations that act on behalf of civil education of the young representatives of the Polish community (aged 18-30) in the EU countries. The reinforcement of the potential is carried out by means of exchange of good practices, common training sessions for the organizations’ personnel and the elaboration of the new solutions that support the work of those organizations. As a result of the planned activities the new tools will be elaborated to increase the civil activity of young people.
The first of such tools is the publication *First: the diagnosis* that we are pleased to present. It was elaborated with the funds of the European Commission as part of the Erasmus+ Program and its content reflects solely the views of the authors. The European Commission and the National Agency (the Foundation of Development of Education System) are not responsible for any use of the presented data.

This publication is the result of several months of work of four partner organizations. In October 2015 a training session was held on the methods of making diagnosis of local communities with a particular focus on the specifics of work with young people. During the training session 20 participants got familiar with the methodology of social research. They shared their experiences in this respect and planned the diagnosis of needs that were later fulfilled in their countries. Further, during the training session the study visits were held to the “ę” Association of Creative Initiatives and to the Youth Department of the Centre of Social Communication at the Warsaw City Hall. The experiences collected as part of this process, supported with the knowledge of the experts – the employees and the collaborators of the School for Leaders Foundation were used to create this publication.

It is to be a user friendly and practical guide of running the diagnosis of local communities with a special focus on the group of youth. Our aim was to capture the specifics of the activities of Polish community organizations. You will find here the step-by-step description of the procedure of local diagnosis, the presentations of tools and experiences or the guidelines of Polish community organizations that carried out their own diagnosis as part of the project.

We do encourage you to get familiar with the publication and to use it in your everyday practice in your own organizations. We hope that the next parts of the publication will become the tools that the School for Leaders Foundation and the organizations run by its Alumni will use to work with the Polish community youth. Of course, we also encourage you to use the tools presented in the publication with regard to the activities of the youth organizations which are active in Poland.
Diagnosis. Who needs this?

We rather speak about diagnosis than practice it. Many non-government organizations perceive social research as expensive and time-consuming activity which does not bring expected results (see e.g. Daszkowska-Kamińska and others, 2013, p. 7). This opinion is also accompanied by other problems, such as the lack of the people with adequate skills in the organization, the hermetic language or the professional terminology that the researchers generally use.

The organizations usually reach for the research results or try to carry out their own research when they are obliged to do so, for example when submitting an application or trying to obtain the funds to carry out their ideas, as it is usually not enough to present the project and it is necessary to explain what problems are our undertakings to solve.

It all makes many organizations think the following way: “Without doubt the diagnosis is important but it is not a job for us.” Shortly, unnecessary bothering, especially if we are oriented towards practical action and not towards “pointless theorizing”. Why to loose energy for the elaboration of research and diagnosis?
Disarming the bomb

Let’s be sincere – not all the fears concerning the diagnosis are totally unjustified. Does it mean, however, that every diagnosis and every research must be time-consuming, difficult and useless? No. A lot depends on how we plan and carry out the whole undertaking. I will write about it further. At this moment, I will focus – with regard to the previous doubts – on why the diagnosis is worth carrying out. If we look objectively at our fears, it will turn out that the diagnosis is not as horrible as the others present it.

First of all, the diagnosis always takes time (as every action!); as many actions it requires time and it depends on the scale of the planned actions. It is worth limiting the diagnosis to the necessary size, especially if our goal is to collect information and to draw the conclusions for the needs of a non-government organization. It is often worth carrying out research within a limited scope, however, in such a way that it enables us to acquire useful knowledge. There is a huge space between making the diagnosis and not making it at all, where you will find different kinds of actions that aim to check “what the situation is really like?”. Research helps to understand in what context and for whom we act, as well as what we can do better to meet the expectations of the people to whom we address our undertakings. We can make the diagnosis from time to time by treating it as a separate project (more or less time consuming). We can also gather information on a current basis along with different actions that we carry out anyway. In such circumstances the research is less absorbing than usually. We can also prepare in advance many things that improve the research, if we remember about them.

Secondly, it is true that the diagnosis may be a challenge for the organizations, especially when there are not too many people in the team with research experience (gained at the university or at work). However, this difficulty is often exaggerated, all the more if the aim is not to carry out complicated research but to deepen the knowledge important from the point of view of the organization. After all, it is not about the surveys that enable to draw the conclusions with regard to the whole population, which indeed requires both time and substantial knowledge.

I will instead try to encourage you to reach above all for the research methods that do not differ much from what you are already doing in your organizations. All that you need is to apply the skill of talking and listening, describing and summing up, and particularly the skill of reflective and critical thinking. Therefore, it is about those features that help us to function and be knowledgeable about the world. What differs the research attitude from the other ways of collecting information is its planned and well-thought character.

Thirdly, a good diagnosis is necessary for the organization. By saying “good” – I will underline it again, I do not mean the scale and the scope but the adequate adjustment of the diagnosis to the needs and resources of the particular organization. A good diagnosis is the one which:
- answers the questions that are important for the organization,
- is adjusted to the capability to act of the organization,
- is planned and well-thought.

Finally, it is only up to you whether the diagnosis will serve any goal or whether it will be finished with the elaboration of a report that you will indeed use in your everyday activities.
Advantages of the diagnosis for the organization

Acquiring knowledge may be the goal in itself. However, as far as diagnosis is concerned, it may involve something more, that is the formulation of conclusions that may be necessary at work.

Diagnosis is important both for the organization of those who only start their activity and for those who have been active for a longer time.

Regardless of the length of activity, when planning the undertakings we are based on certain conceptions concerning the environment in which we operate. By developing our own projects we use our own experience, the opinions of other people, the press articles or the professional publications. Based on this diversified information, we formulate opinions but we are usually guided by our beliefs that we don’t question too often.

Planning the diagnosis we can stop and look in a critical way at our knowledge and beliefs on the world – do they find their reflection in the reality? We stop not only to say: “I know that I don’t know anything” but also to say: “I know, though I don’t know how right I am”.

Without any doubt, such a moment of reflection will be important for our everyday work and it will have impact on the achievement of better results in the future.

Making the diagnosis is a natural part of professionalization of an organization that is aware of its own value and wants to continue its development. The acquired knowledge not only helps us to plan better the future activities but also to present the results to other people, including the sponsors and the funders.

Let’s sum up, the diagnosis can help us to:

• develop the projects that meet the needs of the people;
• understand better the environment in which we operate;
• reach the people with whom we have never been in touch before;
• verify the results of our work in a more effective way;
• find the ideas and inspirations for new activities.

Having a diagnosis shows that we know what we are talking about. We have run research and we are not only guided by our feelings. With this the knowledge acquired as part of diagnosis makes it easier for us to communicate both with the outside (a group of recipients and institutions) and with the inside (within the same organization), that is with the collaborators and the volunteers. Therefore, the diagnosis extends first our communication skills: our actions become more transparent and the goals more understandable, and secondly our image abilities: referring to one’s own research demonstrates the professionalism of the organization.
How to start with the diagnosis?

Every research starts with a basic question: what do we actually want to find out? It is a very important stage which is not always valued by the practitioners. Everybody would like to move to the field to collect the data, which is not always necessary. Sometimes it turns out that the data we are interested in have already been collected by somebody else.

Let’s assume that we want to dedicate our diagnosis to the Polish emigrant community in a particular country. But what do we really care about? Do we want to determine how many people came to the country within the last years? Are we interested in the reasons of emigration? Or are we maybe more interested in the needs of a particular group?

During the initial stage we do not have to be experts. However, it is surely useful to have general understanding of a given topic. One does not need to anticipate the answers to all the questions but we should know what to ask about. We should clearly form all the questions and use specific terms, thanks to which it will become clear for us what we want to achieve. Let's not be afraid to make our questions more detailed, either. The more precise we are when describing what knowledge we care about, the easier it will be for us to adjust the appropriate methods.

It is also a good idea to think about the aim of our research. What do we care about?

- Checking or verifying certain hypothesis (formulated based on our experiences and/or readings)?
- Getting familiar with a particular issue that we do not know much about to define the aim of further investigations?
- Describing a particular phenomenon?
- Finding the reasons and describing the results of the observed situations?
- Evaluating the efficiency of our previous actions addressed to the target group?
Thinking about the aim of the diagnosis is a good moment for team activities. If we have longer experience at work in a particular environment, it is worth inviting the employees and the volunteers of an organization to the common workshops in order to talk about the data that we miss. At the same time, the discussion on the purpose of the diagnosis will be a good opportunity to define our views with regard to the particular problem. Maybe we think that the majority of the emigrants in our age group are interested in particular events or that they communicate in a particular way? We will be able to verify those views during the diagnosis.

The preparation of the research questions is the first step to elaborate the whole research concept. As part of it we should:

- **define the methodology**, that is determine how we will collect the data.
- **choose the events**, or indicate what we are going to analyse, who we are going to talk to and when we are going to carry out the research.

Next we start to carry out the research and at the end we sum up the results. As part of this process we should:

- **collect the materials** (it is the so called field stage);
- **elaborate and initially analyse** the collected materials;
- finally **elaborate and formulate the conclusions**;
- prepare the report.

On the following pages I will describe the particular steps that will make it easier for you to prepare and to carry out independent research.

1. **Elaborating the survey concept**
   - Selection of method
   - Selection of incident

2. **Carrying out the survey**
   - Collection of materials
   - Elaboration and initial analysis
   - Elaboration and formulation of conclusions
   - Report
First: the diagnosis

Selection of methods

If we already know what we would like to find out, it is time to start to collect the data. Social sciences provide us with many useful ways of collecting material that will enable us to draw the conclusions. In spite of a wide range of methods, social research is usually associated with different kinds of surveys and questionnaires. Respondents get familiar with the prepared questions and they answer them according to the attached key (e.g. by marking one of the proposed options). To many, such research seems more trustworthy and significant, which is not always the right belief. I will write about it on the following pages, trying to explain what the quantitative approach consists of and how to prepare a good questionnaire or what kind of difficulties we may encounter.

Being involved in the activities of a non-government organization I myself choose the approach based mainly on the qualitative methods that are close to the ways in which we usually acquire knowledge about the world; by reading and analysing, talking and observing. The qualitative approach is based on the skills that we practice at school and in the professional life, i.e. reading, thinking and communicating. This way of research is to a large extent oriented towards an individual whom we do not treat only as a source of data and information. The research situation provides space for self-expression and allows the respondents to express more fully their thoughts or beliefs.

In practice, the different methods are often used alternately, which enables us to better understand the problem. Generally, in such situations the research process starts with qualitative research and later it tries to confirm the hypotheses with the numbers. In this publication we will reverse the order. I will start with the quantitative methods and different kinds of questionnaires, most often associated with social research and later I will pass to the qualitative methods. I will finish the review of the methods with the description of less typical ways of research that combine the approach of a researcher and culture animator or even an activist.
Quantitative methods

If we ask a random passer-by what he or she associates social research with, the typical answer will be the election polls. In Poland this is probably the kind of research that is published most often with regard to the support for the political parties. It is enough to switch on the TV. The results of other surveys carried out by public opinion research agencies reflect what the citizens think of current topics (e.g. migration or admission of refugees) or what attitude they have towards important institutions or the people who occupy important government positions (e.g. if they trust the president or the prime minister).

In the case of similar research, the data is collected from a significant number of respondents on their beliefs and opinions so that the answers of the particular individuals can be summed up and compared and the results presented in the form of graphics, tables and percentages. For example, we will try to verify what percentage of respondents supports the current activities of the government or, how many of the researched emigrants keep in touch with somebody from Poland at least once a week.

Contrary to the qualitative methods, the quantitative methods are strongly formalised and they assume a “subject-oriented” approach towards the respondents who are treated above all as sources of information.

Collecting a large amount of observations (answers of different individuals) requires standardization both of the tools (questionnaire with questions and answers) and the way of carrying out the observation (the relation the interviewer – the respondent, the conditions in which the answers are given).

The researchers have the largest impact on the flow of the meeting with the respondents when planning the research and preparing the tools (questionnaire) but not during the research itself. The mistakes committed at the very beginning – for example with regard to the way of formulating the question – can not be reversed later, which can make the collected data not very useful. That’s why I rather recommend this way of work to the more experienced people who have a good understanding of the researched topic.

Method description

The aim of the method is to provide a quantitative description of the reality. We not only want to know whether but also how often the particular event occurs. How intensive is it?

This method works better when it comes to the examination of facts than of the opinions or judgements.

It allows us to obtain answers from more people.

Much of the research used in the local diagnosis is based on collecting the data from the respondents via a previously prepared questionnaire. The respondents are asked to get familiar with a series of questions and to answer them according to the way proposed by the researcher. The whole process is pretty much harmonised. You cannot change:

- The content of the questions,
- The order of the questions,
- The sound of the questions and the used terms,
- The answer options.

Regardless of whether we prepare the questionnaire that is to be completed by a respondent or an interviewer, the rules for elaboration of the questions and the answers remain the same. That is why they will be described together.
Types of questionnaire interviews

The respondents may provide the answers to the questions in the questionnaire on their own (to simplify it, let’s call it a survey) or in the presence of the interviewer who reads out the particular questions and asks the respondent for an answer (questionnaire interview). Sometimes the interviewers do not contact the respondents personally but via phone.

There is a lot of scientific literature available on this topic. In our case, however, there is no need to go into details. All the more that the organizations which start their adventure with the diagnosis will most probably not carry out large quantitative research based on questionnaire interviews. They will at most carry out a survey among the attendees of – let’s say – a picnic hosted by our organization.

Who Should we carry out the quantitative research with?

Quantitative research very seldom covers the whole population. Only in few cases we try to reach all the members of the group that we want to get to know better. It usually happens during such unique research as the census of population, as part of which the interviewers try to talk to the representatives of all the households. Even in the case of the census, which is quite popular among the Poles, it is not always possible to “question” all the citizens.

If the goal of the research is to gain the knowledge on the whole population (e.g. the political preferences of all the Poles aged over 18), then the researchers select (draw) the adequate sample or a selected group for respondents whose answers will be generalised over the whole society.

Shortly, the point is to choose such people who resemble all the members of the society with important traits. If we wanted to create a representative group of Poles, we would have to include in it the individuals of both sexes, the well and the poorly educated, the rich and the poor, those who live in the country and in the larger or smaller towns. The proportions between those groups should be close to those that exist in the society. It is easy to ensure this condition and it does not require creating the sample of a few hundred to a few thousand people. It is only then that we can talk about the representative sample that enables us to talk with large probability of accuracy about the whole population.

It is worth remembering though that we talk about a kind of approximation. There were situations in the past where the obtained results did not correspond with what people really thought. Some batches, for example, are almost always underestimated, which is either due to the inappropriate sample selection or, especially when selecting the batches of extreme views, due to the unwillingness of the surveyed to admit to certain political affinities.

In this publication we are not going to talk about the kind of representative research that should be carried out. They are beyond the scope of possibilities of the majority of organizations anyway due to the costs and the degree of complexity. It does not mean that we do not use quantitative methods at all. You only need to remember that different kinds of surveys (paper and electronic ones) will most probably not lead to the conclusions that could be representative for the whole society.

For example, let’s assume that we decide to run an online questionnaire that is to help us to check what kind of cultural events the Polish community representatives miss abroad. Even if 600 individuals participate in a similar survey, it is difficult to say whether their opinion is in accordance with what the others think. In such situations we have no control over who answered the questions.

Does it mean then that similar results are insignificant? Absolutely not. After all, we got familiar with the expectations of the individuals with whom the organization stays in touch or whom it was able to reach. However, here I would like to draw your attention to certain limitations that are worth being taken into account in the data analysis.

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How to make a good questionnaire (the main part)

We have the largest influence on the kind of data that we will obtain at the very beginning when we make out the research. That is why the elaboration of the questionnaire calls for serious thought and obviously time. The possibility to correct our initial assumptions is definitely much smaller than in the case of qualitative methods.

The majority of the questionnaires consist of three main sections:

1. Initial information
   - Information about the survey
   - Guidelines/form for the interviewer
   - Instruction for completing independently

2. The basic part
   - Open and closed questions

3. Data sheet
   - Questions concerning the characteristics of the person

1. Initial information
   In the case of questionnaires to be completed independently, in the first part it is necessary to enter mainly information regarding the goal of the survey, the organization that stands behind it and the way of completing the survey. It is a good idea to provide the contact data to those who will be able to address potential doubts. This information cannot be too long. However, it should encourage the respondents to continue completing the survey.

   With regard to the interviews in the form of questionnaire, the initial part should contain information about the research (as in the case of the survey), as well as the box for writing down the place and the time of the interview.

2. The basic part

   The questions in the questionnaire should correspond with the research questions. If we care, for example, about surveying the level of civil engagement of the representatives of the Polish community abroad, we should create the questions that will enable us to verify it in the best possible way. We can, for example ask about:

   - Participation in the elections (e.g. to the local government abroad),
   - Participation in social consultations,
   - Social engagement (e.g. as part of voluntary work or membership in a non-government organization),
   - Undertaking diverse civil activities (e.g. contact with the councillors, participation in the demonstrations),
   - Being familiar with the political situation and the ways of obtaining information about it,
   - Level of trust to other people.

   It is very important that our research interests translate into the questions that will be comprehensible for the respondents. Let’s take a more difficult example – “the social engagement”. It might be quite an abstract formulation for many respondents, so we need to split it into a few questions. However, we should, above all, ask ourselves what we want to research. If we care about:

   - Membership in a non-government organization,
   - Voluntary work,
   - Ways of spending time (e.g. helping neighbours in difficult moments or with shopping),
   - Being ready to help others altruistically,
   - Free and voluntary work on behalf of the society,
   - Charitable or philanthropic engagement,
   - etc.

   We will not ask all the questions, so we must choose. Limiting the number of issues is already an important decision that has impact on what we will be able to find out. In the case of a survey (e.g. on the website) we should be careful not to ask more than 15-20 questions. If this number is higher, it can make the respondents disrupt the completing of the questionnaire.
The interviews in the form of questionnaire run by an interviewer may be longer but in this case it is also necessary to act with moderation. Hardly anybody will be able to dedicate us more than an hour of their time. Of course, we should take into account where we would be carrying out this kind of research. If, for instance, we are going to carry out a street survey, we should limit the number of questions (similarly to the survey). The individuals whom we will stop on the street or those who participate in an outdoor event may be unwilling to dedicate us more than a couple of minutes.

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The questions in the questionnaire should be:

- **Clear.** You should only ask about one thing at the time.
- **Comprehensible for the respondents.** You should not use the words that can be difficult for the respondents.
- **Logically linked.** The questions should follow one another according to the comprehensible order, that is they should be linked to one another. For example, if we wanted to have a look at the migration preferences of the Poles, we should first ask whether anybody considers leaving the country and then where they would like to move.
- **Ordered in terms of difficulty.** In the literature it is often suggested to ask first about easy things and then to pass gradually to more difficult issues.
- **Uncontroversial.** We should avoid the topics that could make the respondents feel stressed and disrupt the interview. Sensitive topics should be avoided.
- **Short and uncomplicated.** We should ask about one thing at the time so that the respondent has it clear what his answer applies to. If we want to carry out an evaluation of a cultural event, it is worth splitting the evaluation into a few questions and not trying to cover too many topics (e.g. the selection of the performer, the date, the ticket price or the localization).
- **Unsuggestive responses.** The example of a bad beginning of a sentence is the following formulation: “Don’t you think that?” It is better to ask about somebody’s opinion about the particular matter. It is also worth avoiding emotional terms.

Now, it is time for the answers. We should try to make the majority of the answers closed. It will make the analysis significantly easier when preparing the results or writing the final report. It is especially important with regard to the surveys that involve a large number of respondents. What is more: open questions can also be more difficult for the respondents, especially when the respondents enter the answers in the questionnaire by themselves. The absence of an interviewer makes it more tempting for them to disrupt the survey.
Single choice questions may consist of:

**Indicating one answer from the provided list**, e.g., “Did you vote in the local government elections in Poland in 2014?”

Possible answers:
- (1) Yes,
- (2) No,
- (3) I can’t remember/Difficult to say.

**The possibility to choose the answers from the café (or the list of sample questions),** e.g., “Please indicate where you look for information about current political events (you can select up to three answers)”.
- Press
- Radio
- TV
- Online services
- Conversations with other people (family/friends)
- Other (please specify)

**Evaluation of a certain event on an imagined scale**, e.g., “Please assess to what extent the following sentence applies to you: I am well-informed on the political situation in Poland”.
- (1) Yes, definitely.
- (2) Rather yes.
- (3) Maybe, maybe not.
- (4) Rather not.
- (5) Definitely not.

The scale may also be presented in a different way, e.g.,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitely yes</th>
<th>Maybe, maybe not</th>
<th>Definitely not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The second way of presenting is useful especially with large scales when, for example, we want to ask the respondents to what extent they are happy with something on the scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means Not satisfied at all and 10 means Completely satisfied. The wider the scale, the more difficult it is to find the definitions for every point (as with the scale above).

**Matrix questions.** If we ask many questions with a similar formula of answers, we may place a simple table (matrix) for convenience. Example: Instead of creating separate questions concerning the evaluation of the particular plans of the local government, we may ask the following question: “Please indicate in the table below (by marking X where appropriate), to what extent do you agree with the government’s plans for the next term (1 – totally agree, 7 – totally disagree).”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postulate 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postulate 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postulate 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By grouping the questions in such a way we save space and we make it easier for the respondents to complete the survey.

**Ranking.** We may also ask the respondents to rank their answers according to their personal needs instead of pointing to the particular answers, e.g., “Please rank the following answers according to how important they are for you.”

### 3. Data sheet

Those are the questions about the respondent. They allow us to find out more about the person who completed the survey. The most common data included in the data sheet are:
- Age
- Sex
- Education
- Place of residence
- Marital status.

As far as the diagnosis of a local Polish community is concerned, it is possible to extend this part by other questions, such as the period spent abroad, the reason for coming or the professional status.

The data sheet is usually placed at the end of the survey as the respondents could react in a negative way to the interest in their private situation.

**Where to carry out the survey?**

I assume that the majority of the organizations will not be able to select a representative sample, which requires an experienced team, significant knowledge, numerous preparations and considerable amount of money. In practice, such research is most often commissioned to the professional research institutes which are prepared to undertake similar challenges.

As for the quantitative methods used for the needs of the diagnosis, we should collect a considerable number of answers (over a hundred or even a few hundred). The surveys to be completed independently should be delivered directly to the respondents (e.g., to their mail address). If there is any Polish community magazine, it is worth placing the questionnaire inside.

In practice, electronic questionnaires are used more and more often. The elaboration of an appropriate form (e.g., with the Google tools or other services such as Survey Monkey) is quite straightforward and fast. It does not require the time-consuming elaboration of the visual side either. Survey platforms offer many different formats of answers that may be adjusted to our needs.
The basic problem consists in how to reach the potential participants of the survey. In this case it is worth using very different methods, e.g.:

- Include information on your own website and on social media platforms,
- Attempt to post information on the websites visited by the Poles who live abroad,
- Try to reach the potential respondents via organizations/institutions/firms which are in touch with the individuals you are interested in,
- Use the word of mouth and encourage your friends to spread the word about the survey.

It is also worth going out to the people with the questionnaire. It will not be a traditional survey task but it may help us to gather the necessary surveys, for example, in the form of a short questionnaire interview in the street or during a cultural event.

There might be places where the Poles like hanging around and you may ask them to complete a short questionnaire. There might be events where you can meet the Poles. Direct contact does not guarantee the success but it may bring very good results.

**The last tips**

When carrying out the survey and elaborating the questionnaire it is worth to:

1. **Explain why you carry out the survey and how you will use it.** You should try to sound convincing, explain the practical effects and show that completing the survey will not be a waste of time.
2. **Leave contact** to those who will be able to provide more answers with regard to the survey.
3. **Prepare the questionnaire that will not be too long.** It is particularly important with the surveys to be completed independently.
4. **Take care of the visual side of the questionnaire.** The point is not to place colourful graphics but to make sure that the questionnaire is clear, comprehensible and it does not intimidate the respondents with its size.

**The most important:**

5. **Make the pilot.** Before you share the questionnaire, check how it works. Ask several people to complete the survey. With this you will find out whether all the questions are comprehensible and if there are no answers missing. Only after correcting the tool you will be able to start carrying out the survey on a larger scale.

**Conclusion**

As you may notice, the elaboration of a quantitative survey and of a good questionnaire requires time and significant knowledge. We usually realize it only when we try to create a set of questions by ourselves. During the training sessions I often ask the participants to prepare in groups a few sample topics for the survey. It is then that they realize how complicated the task is.

Anyway, try to think about the surveys that you happened to complete by yourselves. Were all the questions clear to you? Did you feel that the proposed answers enabled you to express your own opinions? How many of those surveys did you leave unfinished, as they were too long or too boring?

For those reasons I suggest not to focus too much on this kind of work. I do not want to say that the organizations should not use quantitative methods. They have many good sides which are worth taking into consideration. However, you should be aware of the limitations, both your own and of the method itself.

The methodologists underline numerous problems related with such way of carrying out research. They point to the fact that the questionnaires (both for completing independently and with the support of the interviewer) are based on unconscious presumptions. Besides, we do not always take into account the fact that the questions that we formulate may be understood by the respondents in different ways and that they may provoke certain emotions. They also draw the attention to the artificiality of the whole situation that results from such a way of data collecting.
Online survey

It was addressed to all the Poles who live in Iceland.

The survey “To what extent are you Icelandic?” combined the quiz questions with the survey ones. Thanks to the entertaining form it attracted the attention of the respondents and enabled to obtain important, in terms of research, information.

The survey consisted of 33 questions and it was divided in two parts. The first part contained the questions about the forms of spending free time, the participation in cultural events and social activity and the quiz questions. After completing the first part the respondents would be asked to provide information with regard to their knowledge of immigrant organizations in Iceland and the basic sheet data (sex, age).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example / To what extent are you Icelandic?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tu przykładowe pytania z quizu:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q1</strong> How long have you been living in Iceland?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For less than a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For 1–3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For 4–8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For 9 years or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Since I was born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q2</strong> Where do you live? (enter the zip code, e.g. 101)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q3</strong> How often do you go to the swimming pool?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Everyday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A few times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A few times a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A few times a year or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q4</strong> Right now you would prefer to have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Grilled cheese baguette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pylsa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q5</strong> How many books do you read?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quite many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hardly any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q6</strong> In what language do you prefer reading?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Polish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Icelandic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I don’t like reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other (please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q7</strong> How often do you watch TV?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Everyday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A few times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A few times a month or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q8</strong> What channels do you watch most often?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• RUV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stöð2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• TVP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• TVN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• National Geographic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q9</strong> On which social media portals do you have a profile?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nasza Klasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instagram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fliqr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Snapchat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pinterest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• YouTube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I don’t have a profile on any social media profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other (please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q10</strong> How often do you use them? (social media portals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Everyday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A few times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A few times a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hardly ever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q11</strong> The best party is the party:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• With friends at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• With friends at a house party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• At Laugavegur until dawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• On the sofa in my own company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q12</strong> If you were to choose, you would choose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Jólasveinar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mikolajki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q13</strong> If you were to choose, you would choose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bolludagur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tłusty Czwartek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q14</strong> If you were to choose, you would choose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• mätt &amp; appelsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communion wafer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q15</strong> How many times did you have skata?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I won’t have it, even if you pay me for it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Once but it was my last time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A few times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I have it every year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I don’t know what it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q16</strong> How often do you go to the church?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Everyday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Once a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Once a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Once/twice a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example / To what extent are you Icelandic?

Q17 How often do you visit Poland?
- At least once a year
- Once every two years
- Once every five years
- More seldom than every 5 years
- Never

Q18 What languages can you speak? Please determine your level of fluency.
- Polish
- Icelandic
- English

Q19 Most of my friends are:
- Poles
- Icelanders
- Poles and Icelanders
- Other foreigners
- I don’t have any friends

Q20 How often do you participate in cultural events?
- Almost every week
- More or less every week
- A few times a year
- More seldom than once a year
- Only when I’m in Poland
- Never

Q21 If you don’t participate in cultural events, what is the reason?
- I don’t have time
- I don’t have money
- I don’t understand the language
- I don’t like going out
- There are no events in Iceland that would interest me
- It doesn’t apply
- Other (please specify)

Q22 In what cultural event did you participate last?
- Icelandic Airwaves
- RIFF
- Cabaret performance of Ani Mjr Mjr
- Concert of VNM (rapper Tomasz Lewandowski)
- The Festival of Polish Movies in Bio Paradis
- The concert of the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra
- The Multicultural Parade in Reykjavik
- GayPride
- The Celebrations of the National Holiday in Iceland
- The Concert of the Boys and Basta bands in Hafnarfjörður
- Verslunarmannahelgi
- Menningarnútt
- The choir performance
- Other (please specify)

Q23 When do you have ice creams?
- Generally in the summer
- Throughout the whole year
- At least once a week
- Never

Q24 Where do you search for information about cultural events in Iceland?
- Icelandic newspapers (including online editions)
- Radio/TV
- Polish internet portal Iceland News Polska
- Forum “iceland.pl”
- Facebook
- Websites of cultural institutions
- Friends
- I don’t search/ I’m not interested in cultural events
- Other (please specify)

Q25 How important is it for you to stay in touch with the Polish culture?
- Very important
- Rather important
- It’s difficult to say
- Rather not important
- Definitely not important

Q26 Do you feel:
- Polish
- Icelandic
- Neither Polish/nor Icelandic
- Neither Polish/not Icelandic
- Other (please specify)

Example / To what extent are you Icelandic?

Q27 What do you think, which nation deserves to be called hard-working?
- Poles
- Icelanders
- Poles and Icelanders
- None of the above

Q28 In what Polish community events did you take part?
- Meetings Razem Razziej
- Polka Bistro
- Activities organized by Winda
- St. Andrews Eve party/ Easter ProjektPolska.is
- Many Nations One Blood
- A guided visit to the museum with a Polish guide
- I have never taken part in any Polish community event in Iceland
- Other (please specify)

Q29 Which of the following organizations have you heard about?
- Winda
- Polska Szkoła
- ProjektPolska.is
- W.O.M.E.N.
- Pozytywni
- Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Islandzko-Polskiej
- PLeikhüs
- Stowarzyszenie Polonii Islandzkiej (SPI)
- Towarzystwo Polaków at VestFjords
- Towarzystwo Polaków in Reykjanesbaer (Rejs)
- I have never heard about any organization in Iceland
- Other (please specify)

Q30 What could the Polish community organizations do for you?
- They could organize courses or training sessions
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

Q31 What do you do currently?
- I work
- I learn/study
- I am unemployed
- Other (please specify)

Q32 How old are you?
- Less than 18 years
- 18–24
- 25–30
- 31–35
- 36+

Q33 What’s your sex?
- Female
- Male
- Other (please specify)
Qualitative methods

Qualitative methods respond to some of the problems that quantitative methods fail to solve. As the name indicates, it is not about collecting a large amount of observations but about obtaining materials with rich content. Such research material is more "substantial" but it is also internally diversified and not homogeneous, which makes it more difficult to carry out. It depends to a large extent on the researchers and their skills to analyze and draw conclusions how good the final report will be.

Let's demonstrate it with an example. In a quantitative survey we would ask the respondents how they would like to extend the offer of our organization and we would propose them a few possible solutions (concerts, exhibitions, social evenings). As for the qualitative research, such question could be left open and we could find out the things that we didn't think about earlier. The direct contact with the respondents makes them feel as particular individuals and not only the sources of information; besides, it provides an opportunity to discover the way of thinking of the person we are talking to. We obtain less standardized data, which makes them more difficult to compile, but they are also potentially more useful to understand deeply the different way of viewing the world.

The methods used in the qualitative research often seem intuitive. As a matter of fact, they are based on the ways of acquiring information about the world, that we use everyday (conversation or observation). It is easy and difficult at the same time. Easy because using those methods seems to be something natural that does not require extensive knowledge related, for example, to the sample selection or the questionnaire layout. The methodology is not very complicated and the imperfection of the tools (e.g. the interview outline) may be corrected during the interview following the intuition of the researcher.

Difficult because, though it seems that everybody may carry out an in-depth individual interview (after all, it is only a conversation) – the proper accomplishment of this task requires specific soft competencies, such as active listening, time controlling or creating the adequate atmosphere (which involves refraining from making remarks or expressing one's own opinions, all of which could make the respondent more tense and unwilling to cooperate).

Those skills are acquired and developed with time. The experience and the reflection over one's own behaviour is without doubt the most crucial element here. After all, there is no one recipe for the meeting with another person.
Existing data or desk research or direct survey

Method description

It is used to verify the existing information concerning the topic that we are interested in.

It is often used as the first step in a wider diagnosis.

It consists of using the collected data that are immediately available (reports, statements, etc.).

It enables to describe the situation (or the level of knowledge on the particular topic) and to discover the new threads that we have not thought about before (exploration).

The majority of the methods that I will describe further are related to the data solicited by us or such data that hadn’t existed before we started our work. It is different with regard to the analysis of the existing data. As the name itself indicates, it is based on collecting and researching the materials that have existed before. The role of the researcher consists of reaching the interesting, necessary or unique materials and analysing them.

Such way of work is not only one of the oldest but also one of the most popular ways of work in social sciences. The analysis of data gained in importance in the 19th century when the government institutions started to collect and compile on a large scale the statistical data that they could analyse and from which they could draw conclusions.

What materials to analyse?

The analysis of existing data very often concerns the statistical data but it is not limited to them. There are many other kinds of data immediately available. They are also extremely diversified and they include:

- Strategic documents elaborated by public institutions and/or organizations,
- Statistical data,
- Legal acts (and their drafts),
- Media communications (in the press, TV, radio, internet),
- Compilations and reports, including the results of social research,
- Scientific publications (articles, books),
- Records of discussions (e.g. on the online forums or in the social media services),
- Photos,
- Movies.

The representatives of social sciences work with the data in many different ways. We will not go into the quantitative methods of researching texts or into the analysis of the hidden content. In our case we will treat those materials as a source of information that can be more or less reliable but it will serve us as a base to draw the conclusions on the ones who created them.

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2 It is, for example, about determining the frequency with which certain expressions appear in the particular texts. For instance, in how many publications about emigrants can we also find other issues that are interesting for the researcher, such as politics, economic situation or social problems.
How to start?

The process of the analysis of data is very close to what many readers have to deal with when they are writing their BA or MA dissertation. It can be described in a few steps:
1. Describing the materials that are interesting for us – outlining the topic and writing down the key words.
2. Searching for and selecting the materials.
3. Reading the collected materials and making an initial analysis (e.g. in terms of reliability).
4. Drawing the final conclusions.

The biggest challenge concerning this method is to obtain the valuable material for the analysis. It seems that everything is within our reach. With the internet penetration, each day we exchange more and more information, which makes us believe that it has never been easier to get access to the knowledge that we need. It is true, if it is about searching for the local bus schedule, the cinema repertoire or the guidelines for the tourists who travel abroad. However, this belief does not have to be confirmed while searching for the data concerning the communities of the Poles who live abroad. This data can be:
- Dispersed,
- Unavailable in the digital form,
- Inaccurate,
- Hard to find.

While we should not have any problem with finding information about the next scandal in Hollywood, determining something exact about the character and the specifics of the Polish community living abroad may be difficult. In such case how should we search for this kind of information?

Without doubt, the Google search engine will not be enough here. It is also a good idea to:
- Visit a good library (e.g. at the university) in order to search for the texts that may be related with our issue,
- Search for public institutions and organizations that deal with immigration or immigrants,
- Search through the resources of the European and the national statistical offices,
- Elaborate the list of experts and researchers who deal with the topic that we are interested in.

It may turn out that although the data really exist, the access to it is not easy at all and the public institutions that collect information do not make everything available on their websites. If, after looking through the materials of a particular institution that we were able to reach, we still feel that it is not everything, it is worth contacting them and asking whether they have the materials that we are searching for. The citizens of the member countries of the European Union are entitled to access public information, so you may ask for it.

The existing data are not always the data that are easily accessible. Sometimes you really need to work hard to find what you are interested in. The search, especially if the topic is not very well known, resembles the work of investigative journalists who focus on the particular topic and spend a lot of time looking through different materials till they find what they are looking for.

Sometimes it is a good idea to ask for help somebody who has already gone through the same process. That is why I suggested not to forget about those who deal with the particular topic on a professional level. Perhaps a phone call or an e-mail sent to such a person will help us reach the publications that we did not know about, which will enable us to determine what we cared about.

Once we have collected the material, there comes the time to analyse it in terms of authenticity and reliability. With the popularization of the internet that we have already mentioned, the same information is distributed by the subsequent individuals without any critical analysis. It also happens that what we were able to collect seems unreliable or incomplete.

It is necessary to look with a critical eye at all the materials that we were able to collect and not to take them as the records of mere facts. It is also important who elaborated the given material. Without any doubt, the reports and the data which are collected and elaborated by the institutions and the individuals who enjoy the authority (the representatives of government institutions, recognised academics, reliable think tanks, etc.) are more convincing than the anonymous posts on the forum. However, even in the case of the sources that inspire more trust, it is important to be careful and to check where the particular conclusions were drawn from. For instance, if we obtain the number of immigrants from Poland that we are interested in, let’s ask on what basis it was calculated or estimated.

Public institutions collect a lot of data but a large part of them are incomplete. Not everybody registers or completes all the formalities, it is not always possible to get in touch with everybody, etc.
Pros and cons

Summing up, the content analysis is a very useful method, especially at the beginning of the work on the given topic. However, it is seldom sufficient, that is such a method that will enable us to answer all the research questions. For the majority of the projects (including the processes of diagnosis) the analysis of the existing data is currently treated as the first step both in the preparation of the research concept and the methodology. The pros and the cons are as follows:

These methods can be complemented by other methods that we describe further.

Example / Analysis of work: hip-hop lyrics

The lyrics of the musical pieces of the artists that appear during the concert organized as part of the project Follow Up Mixtape provide a very important insight into their way of perceiving the reality. Their message reaches not only the Polish audience but also the fans of the Polish rap in Scotland and in the whole United Kingdom. Hence it is so important to take it into account in the analysis.

The lyrics were written in Polish. However, in a few places the English expressions are used (sentences, refrains or samples). The artists use mainly, though not always, the spoken language, the colloquialisms and they moderately use vulgarisms. The content consists of realistic descriptions of everyday life, such as “I leave work and I go home” but it is also presented with the use of metaphors, parallels and stylizations, and it has rich references to the culture (e.g., Greek mythology), literature (e.g., Pinocchio) and pop-culture (e.g., Kasia Figura or Megan Fox).

The main goal of the lyrics is to describe, to define or to redefine the identity and the status of the creators and to provide the answers to the questions they ask. “Who am I, what am I doing and why; what is important for me in life?” The above categories are smooth and they often overlap; they were created to transparently represent the key issues that appear in the lyrics.
IDI or the conversation in four eyes according to the plan

Method description

It consists of carrying out a conversation with the goal to collect the searched data.

It usually lasts about an hour.

The interviews are held with the respondents who fulfil the specified criteria.

To a smaller extent it serves to collect the facts, and to a larger extent it makes it possible to get familiar with the opinions, the evaluations and the associations between the facts.

If we do not know something, we have to ask. Actually, we communicate throughout the whole time: in the shop, at the bus stop, at the family table, at the meeting with friends. We exchange information, asking about the opinion and discussing the matters that are important for us. Is this what this method is about? Almost but not totally.

Individual in-depth Interview is a specific kind of conversation that usually differs from the previously mentioned communication circumstances by:

- The goal,
- The length,
- The extent of orientation of discussion,
- A more formal character (less spontaneous).

Individual in-depth interviews are not initially announced or planned and the interviewees are informed why we want to meet them. They are also not so much about partner conversations: contrary to the everyday talks with friends where everybody has an opportunity to share what is important for them, during the individual interviews one of the interlocutors is more active. The researcher is somebody who is interested in the topic, somebody who would like to find out something. He rather asks and clarifies instead of making his own opinions.

Although the interviews resemble conversations, the possibilities to change the topics or the threads are very limited. The person who carries out the interview (the researcher) usually follows the previously prepared outline that defines the plan of interview and the data that we wish to collect. The outline of the interview may be more or less detailed, depending on our needs.

After preparing the research concept the execution of the IDI is carried out in the following way:

- Determining with whom we are going to talk,
- Elaborating the outline,
- Recruiting,
- Executing the research,
- Analysing the material.

All the above stages have been described in the following points.
Who to make interviews with?

With regard to the local diagnosis of the Polish communities abroad it is worth carrying out interviews both with:

- Experts – e.g. the individuals who work with immigrants or research their situation (academics, employees of the selected public institutions, representatives of certain non-government organizations),
- Emigrants themselves.

The interviews with the experts who deal with the topic that we are interested in on a professional level, will enable us to get familiar with a professional opinion and to gain technical expertise. It is an opportunity to use the knowledge and the experience of the people who would – often throughout the years – analyse and draw the conclusions concerning the situation of the immigrants, their adaptation in a new environment, as well as the needs and difficulties they might have encountered. This knowledge will enable us not only to look at the areas that we are interested in from a different perspective but also to formulate the initial hypotheses that we will be able to verify in the further stage of the diagnosis.

In turn, the conversations with the emigrants provide an opportunity to collect information from the first hand, that is to ask the interested individuals about what happened to them or what they were missing most.

With regard to this research method we will seldom be able to carry out a very large number of interviews. The diagnoses with thirty conversations can be considered as large. It is not a problem. As I already mentioned earlier, the goal of those methods is not to formulate the conclusions that may be generalized over the whole population (all the Poles who emigrated to the particular country) but to gain extensive material that shows different experiences and points of view. If we have unlimited resources, we may carry out individual interviews till the moment when we realize that the next meeting will not bring any new trails or information. In the sociological jargon it is defined as the sample saturation.

We are not usually in such a comfortable situation, so it is good to plan in advance the indicative size of the sample (the number of respondents) and to select the interviewees in such a way that they represent different experiences. For instance, we may try include the respondents differentiated according to the:

- Age (18–25 years old; 26–30 years old),
- The reason why they left (the individuals who learn, work or those who left for family reasons),
- The scheduled length of stay (temporary or permanent emigration),
- The place of origin (the countryside, smaller towns, bigger towns),
- The extent of social activity.

A simple technique related to mapping may be helpful in defining the different categories. It consists of presenting in a graphic way all the groups that should be described in our diagnosis. Such way of work proves to be very efficient during group discussions but it may also be applied individually.

The stages of work by means of a “map of stakeholders” include:

- Writing down randomly the categories of the people that come to our minds (brainstorming),
- Ordering the written pages/grouping,
- Selecting the most important types of respondents whom we wish to invite to the interviews,
- Assigning the particular individuals/institutions from our environment to the selected categories.

It is worth filling in as many pages as it is possible. The more knowledge we have about the problem, the easier it is for us to indicate the most important groups from our perspective.

After writing down all the types of respondents and ordering the material we obtain a map, presented in the form of a picture, of dependencies and associations. It is worth adding the individuals and the institutions that represent the particular group and are active in our surroundings to the list of the most important stakeholders. It will make it easier for us to collect the opinions at a later time.

Of course, we will never be able to talk to everybody. A similar map including the acquired knowledge will facilitate making a choice and it will show who we cannot forget about.
The recruitment of the respondents

All the interviews should be discussed in advance. Recruitment is a quite tedious and often underestimated activity. Without any doubt, not all the respondents will want to agree at once, some of them will have doubts. It depends on the skills of the person who deals with the recruitment and to a large extent on his or her attitude whether the interviewee will agree to the interview. With regard to the experts, especially those who have links with public institutions, it may be necessary to obtain the agreement of the superior for the conversation.

In such situations we should not get discouraged straight away. If somebody does not pick up the phone – let’s try again. Of course, it is not about persecuting somebody infinitely. Everybody has the right to refuse to participate in the research. If somebody objects strongly, we should leave them the possibility to retreat. We should always act in a cultural and understanding manner. We cannot force anybody to participate in the interview. A good recruiter knows when they can still try to convince someone and when they should let go.

We should also be prepared for the fact that some of the respondents, especially those who have links with public institutions, may want to get familiar with more details concerning the research. It is good to have a previously prepared short text that we will be able to send them by e-mail, where we will explain in general what the interview will consist of, what we would ask about and what way we are going to use the results.

In sporadic cases the respondents may ask us for a document that confirms our role of researchers. The scan of the writing prepared by the organization that carries out the diagnosis should be sufficient.

The samples for individual interviews are usually deliberate. It means that we assume in advance who we want to talk to and later we search for the respondents who fulfil the specific categories. In a local diagnosis we may use our own contacts – asking friends and colleagues in the organization whether they know any individuals with the trait that we are searching for (e.g. those who study abroad or are active socially as part of a student organization).

With regard to the problems with finding all the types of respondents that we are searching for, it is a good idea to ask the individuals with whom we carry out interviews if they know anybody else who could help us. This way, we may reach other people by the method of a snowball. It is quite a convenient way of proceeding, though it has its limitations. Throughout the whole time we remain in a group of friends of an original informer, who – it may happen – will tell us very similar things.

We may still try another way: to announce our diagnostic project at outdoor activities, on the websites and on the social media profiles frequented by the potential respondents. There might be places which are visited frequently by immigrants. Why not to hang a poster in such places?
Where to carry out the interview?

It is good to carry out the interviews in the places where the respondents will feel at ease and where nobody will interrupt them. Those may be both the places that are quiet and secluded (e.g. a house, an office) and the places where there is more “noise”. On one hand, the noise in a café makes it difficult to record the interview (especially if the microphone is of poor quality). On the other hand, it may have a calming effect on the person. Even if many people sit at the surrounding tables, we should not be afraid of our privacy, as people in the cafés or restaurants usually mind their own things.

It would be the best if the respondents themselves chose the venue. Let’s leave the decision to them. However, when making an appointment we should ask them whether they would like to meet us in the place where we could talk peacefully and without being disrupted.

Elaborating the outlines and carrying out the interview

In biographic interviews that consist of getting familiar with the history of a particular person, you may often ask only one question, e.g.: “Could you please tell me what your life was like?” After the introduction during which the interviewer presents the aim of the survey, this question will usually be enough for the interviewees to start their story.

The task of the researcher is then to “follow” the respondents in a way that makes it possible to get familiar with the history of their lives. Each interviewee has a different story to tell, so it is difficult to create very detailed guidelines on how to make an interview. This kind of interviews (narrative of biographic) are defined as unstructured: there is no specific set of questions but a general draft and goal.

With regard to the local diagnosis where we have more specified needs concerning what we would like to find out, we usually use more detailed guidelines and the outlines are more homogeneous. Depending on the needs, we might clearly mention to the interviewees the list of data that we would like to collect (e.g. the ways of spending their free time, the reason why they left) or an exact list of questions that they should answer.

Every interview is preceded by an arrangement stage or everything that leads to making an appointment and starting the interview. The meetings are arranged in advance and the interviewees are presented with the goals of the interviews.

At the beginning of the interview you should remind the interviewee who you are and what will happen. It is a good idea to include the following elements:

• Welcoming and introducing ourselves,
• Explaining the goal and the nature of the interview,
• Presenting the way of using the results,
• Assuring the interviewee of his or her anonymity,
• Determining the length of the conversation,
• Applying the rule of no good or bad answers,
• Applying the rule being sincere,
• Accepting the possibility of providing no answer to the question if the respondent refuses to do so,
• Explaining the way of registering the flow of the meeting (e.g. recording).

After the first, initial stage, there comes the time for the proper interview. It is a good idea to start the conversation from a few warming up questions about the interviewee. Those questions are the easiest ones as the majority of people like talking about themselves. The interviewer shows his or her interest in the interviewee and in what he or she has to say. With regard to the diagnosis of a local community of the Poles who live abroad, we can, for example, ask the following questions:

• What do you work at?
• How long have you been living in [name of the country]?
• What made you leave abroad?
• Is it the first time that you travel abroad?
• How do you like it here?
• Are you planning to stay here for longer?
After the initial set of questions you should start the conversation dedicated to the different groups of topics, for example:

- The difficulties related with staying abroad,
- The needs,
- The bonds with the country,
- The ways of spending free time,
- The councils dedicated to the elaboration of the offer of a Polish community organization or the communication with the Poles who live abroad.

The outline should be ordered logically so that one block of topics follows another smoothly. The interviewees should be convinced that the conversation is well thought and that it is going in the right direction. I also recommend that in the majority of cases you should start the conversation with the needs and the experiences and ask for advice at the end.

The way of preparing the outline depends on our knowledge on the researched issue and the extent to which we are familiar with the topic. In the situation where we start our research and we know very little or it is difficult for us to make accurate hypotheses, I recommend preparing a more open plan of conversation. Let’s treat our interviews as the possibility to gain additional information. We will be able to form the initial conclusions (hypotheses) based on them and they will provide guidelines for further research. If in turn the research area seems to be very well known to us, we may ask about the guidelines and dispositions in order to gather as much concrete information as it is possible.

Secondly, when elaborating the outline it is worth taking into account the experience of the team. If we work with the more experienced researchers, the list of the searched details will probably do. The interviewer will decide for him or herself in what way to carry out the conversation in order to achieve the determined goal. However, if the team is young (or it is just diversified in terms of experience), we may try to draw a draft which contains the questions similar to those that we would like to be asked.

In the second case it is a good idea to divide the outline into blocks. Below you will find a copy of an outline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description/questions</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction and warm up</strong></td>
<td>Welcoming and presentation. Highlighting that there are no good or bad answers in the questionnaire. Highlighting that the goal of the interview is to collect as sincere answers as it is possible. Explaining that the interview will be recorded for the needs of documentation and the report from the survey and none of the answers will be assigned to the particular person. Presentation of the goals ad the character of the research.</td>
<td>5 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 1</td>
<td>(It is usually dedicated to the characteristics of a person)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 3</td>
<td>The last block is a good opportunity to ask about recommendations and more general reflections.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summing up</strong></td>
<td>Being thankful for the interview. Asking about the latest comments.</td>
<td>min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The last tips with regard to writing and using the outline:

When preparing to the conversation it’s worth remembering that:

1. **The outline may help but it shouldn’t limit you.** In the case of individual free/in-depth interviews it is worth letting the interviewers change the form of questions (without changing their sense) so that they are better adjusted to the needs of the interviewee.

2. **Let’s limit the number of questions and dispositions** so that we can finish the conversation within an hour. There are also longer interviews but they are tiring both for the interviewer and for the interviewee.

3. **Let’s mark the questions that are crucial** from the perspective of the diagnosis that you are carrying out. It happens that the interviewer will have to give up some questions (e.g. the interviewee will claim that he or she will have to finish earlier), so he should know what to focus on.

4. **Let’s make the questions open**, so that they do not suggest the answer (e.g. “Do you think that there are not enough concerts for the Polish community?” It is better to ask first whether the interviewee feels any need to stay in touch with the Poles abroad and if they confirm, ask them to be more accurate and to describe in what way they would like to stay in touch).

**Comments on running and recording to the interview**

The situation related to the interview, especially for the beginners, often involves a lot of stress and the need to make earlier preparations. Before the interview you will surely wonder what to talk about or how to behave. The interviewee may also feel nervous but it will show mainly at the beginning.

During the interview we should take care of good atmosphere and show our interest in the interviewees’ answers. We should be inquisitive. If something is unclear, we should always ask or use paraphrase, that is repeat with your own words the opinions of the interviewee. Let’s not forget however that the interview is not an interrogation, so we should not be reproaching the interlocutor’s contradictions.

I encourage you to use a recorder. With it you will be able to register the whole conversation and you will be able to focus completely on the answers. The majority of the people agree to be recorded and they quickly forget about it. When there is no equipment, it is broken or in the rare situations when the equipment refuses to work, it will be necessary to make reliable and detailed notes. Of course, it is time consuming and it may contribute to the disruption of a free way of conversation.

**Conclusion**

An open interview is a quite comfortable tool that enables to understand better the issues that we are interested in. The interviewer has a possibility to establish the contact and to run a conversation in a way adjusted to the way of speaking of the interviewee. As the majority of the questions are open, the interviewee may respond to them in her or his own way and sometimes they may even question the assumptions standing behind them. Of course, such an interview is time-consuming: the need to find and recruit the interviewee, running the interview itself and analysing it later. Even if we do not want to transcribe the interview, we will have to make the notes. However, an open interview, besides many other advantages, makes it possible to discover the issues that we did not think about before.
Example / The outline of the interview from Hungary

1. Warm up
We ensure the anonymity. We would like to know whether we can take the notes in the cafe. Let's present ourselves. We don't say that we represent Polonia Nova. We say why we are meeting but we do not disclose the exact goal of the research: e. g. the conversation will help us to look in a fresh way at our activity carried out in the Polish community organizations.
A small chit-chat:
• Weather, the situation in the street
• How did you get here?
• Do you know Budapest well?
• Can you move easily around Budapest?
Throughout the whole time creating the sense of security.

2. Initial, opening, general questions
• What is your current life situation? Do you work?
• What was the reason why you came to Hungary?
• How did you spend the weekend or are planning to spend it?
• What are your hobbies/interests?
• Can you fulfill them here?
• YES → How are you fulfilling them here?
• NO → Why? What prevents you from fulfilling them?
• What do you like about Hungary?
• What is important for you here?
• Do you live well here?
• What should this country offer you so that you can live better?
• What do you miss here?
• What do you miss that you left home?
• How do your friends spend their free time?

3. Introduction questions
• In what types of events have you taken part recently / since arriving here?
YE → What kind of event was it?
   → Did you like it?
   → What did you like?
NO → Why not?
• Who do you go to the cultural events with?
• What would make it easier for you to participate in the cultural/social life?

4. Basic questions – the set of 20-25 photos, from which our interviewee chooses those which he or she associates most with Poland and then we ask them about the associations.
(Q. What do you associate Poland with? What does Poland mean to you?)
• What contact do you have with Poland and the Poles?
• Have you taken part in any event in Polish in Hungary?
YE → What kind of event was it?
   → Did you like it?
   → What did you like?
NO → Why not?
• Would you like to participate in the events for the Poles / related with Poland?
• What have you heard about the Polish community events in Hungary?
• What events would you like to take part in?
• What would make you participate more often in cultural events?
• What would make it easier for you to participate in them?
• What do you associate Polonia Nova with?
• Do you know what Polonia Nova deals with?
• What kind of events would you be interested in?
• What information channels should the Polish community organizations use to get in touch you?

5. Closing questions
• How do you think, are the Polish community organizations still necessary and if so, could you advise how they should work in order to be more attractive for the young people?
• How do you think, how to encourage your friends to take part in the events organized by Polonia Nova?
• What do your friends think of this kind of events / forms of spending free time?
• If you were to become an advisor to the Polish community association, what program would you suggest?
• We would like to thank you for your time, your answers helped us explain many issues, gave us food for thought and helped us understand better the needs of the Poles.

Data sheet
• Age: 18–25, 25–30, 30–35
• Have been living in Hungary for over a year
• Works / doesn't work / studies (do we need it?)
• Sex
• Place of residence: capital and the surrounding area

Tips
During the interview KEEP ASKING: Is there anything else that comes to your mind? "Motivating silence“. If somebody finds it difficult to answer the question, let's not ask them directly about their opinion but let's hide it instead behind the following question: How do you think, why do people have problem with this and that...
A focus group interview or a conversation in a group

Method description

It consists of running a moderated discussion in a group.

The conversation is oriented towards obtaining particular information (carrying out certain practices).

It is a good way to obtain information that may be used to carry out the diagnosis or to sum up and to draw the conclusions from the whole diagnosis.

Similarly to individual interviews, also in this case a researcher supervises the conversation based on the previously elaborated outline.

Group interviews make a very useful tool thanks to which we will be able to find out many things that would otherwise be unavailable for us. With regard to the dynamics, the conversation one to one (as in IDI) differs from the group interview which is generally more stimulating for the participants. The interviewees not only respond to the questions of the moderator but they also comment their own opinions and suggestions. During the focuses the participants are usually able to:
- Come up with more ideas than alone (synergy effect),
- Engage more as the statements of some individuals entail further statements,
- Show more enthusiasm,
- Have greater sense of security due to the presence of other people.

At the same time, the interviewees may present different opinions than in the case of a meeting face to face with the researcher. Some individuals may adjust their behaviour and views to the ones that dominate in the group and hide their own views (conformism) while the others will do the contrary, underlining their different opinions in order to draw the attention of others to themselves and to stand out of the crowd. The risk of deviating from the topic and following the rhythm of the conversation is also greater. In order to avoid all of this we need an efficient moderator.
Who should we invite to the interview?

In practice, group interviews are carried out either with the experts or the people whose opinions we would like to know (in our case mainly the emigrants). Generally, we strive to choose similar members of the particular groups invited to the interviews. There is no reason to talk at the same time to the experts who deal with different aspects of the support for the immigrants and with the people who left abroad. The selection of the respondents based on the similarity will enable us to a large extent to avoid conflicts and it will make the invited people feel more at ease when sharing their knowledge and inspire one another.

With regard to our diagnosis, if we want to talk to the Poles who moved to the particular country, we may create a few groups that differ in terms of different criteria that I drew the attention to on the occasion of the recruitment to IDI, e.g. in terms of age, the length of their stay abroad or the scheduled period of stay.

The recruitment is held in a similar way as with individual interviews, though it is obviously more labour intensive. It is worth reserving the room in advance and inviting the participants. Right before the meeting (e.g. two days before) it is worth contacting the interviewees again and reminding them about the approaching meeting.

In the case of IDI, the financial compensation is seldom applied. It is different with focuses. If you have an opportunity, prepare some rewards or a small financial bonus. It may be an additional incentive to take part in the survey.

Where to run the group discussions?

Similar discussions are often held in the specially prepared venues where apart from a big table and chairs there is also a flipchart and equipment for recording the picture and the sound. In the event of group interviews the recorder itself will not be enough. It happens that the participants speak at the same time or they have similar voices, so it may be quite a big problem to distinguish who said what. In the rooms intended for carrying out the focuses there are often one-way mirrors through which it is possible to observe the discussion. They are useful especially when more people want to follow the discussion, as it was in the case of commercial research, for example of a marketing profile.

Renting such premises is usually quite expensive. However, you can arrange a similar space on your own. You need to prepare space as for every other workshop and to set the camera with a good microphone that will “gather” the sound from the room. For the needs of our diagnosis, the possibility to follow the flow of the interview may not really be necessary.

When preparing the room it is worth providing snacks (such as cookies, salty sticks or crackers) and beverages (coffee, tea, juice, water). It will not only make it easier for the participants to endure a longer time of work but it will also create a friendlier atmosphere for the participants.
Guidelines for elaborating the outline and running the interview

Similarly to IDI, it is worth starting with an appropriate introduction to the discussion and the presentation of the rules of conversation. Next, there comes the time for the presentation of the participants (unfortunately, there will not be time for a more detailed presentation of the respondents). The process of ordering the thematic blocks is similar to the creation of the outline for the interview. It is worth grouping the questions into the blocks so that they create the whole units linked logistically. When thinking about the questions we need to stick to the ones that all the participants will be able to respond to.

The advantage of such a method is the possibility to use the elements of a workshop. For instance, when talking about the ways of spending free time in a particular city we can work on the maps and ask the respondents to mark the places where the immigrants often hang around. We can also work on the illustrations (e.g. asking the participants to describe the situation presented in the pictures) or use the projection method, which means not to ask directly but to ask the participants to try to understand the situation of the third parties.

In the case of a conversation in a group it is worth allowing more time, that is about 2-3 hours. Similarly to IDI, the longer meetings may become tiring for the respondents. The outline should be at least as well thought as in individual interviews.

During the meeting the moderator should try to create a good and safe atmosphere and show understanding for different opinions that are presented during the session. A good workshop leader takes care of the following:

- Collecting information and supervising the outline (knowing when to ignore it and to follow the group).
- Engaging all the participants into the discussion.
- The participants find it easy to solve the conflicts and they can understand one another better.

Conclusion

It is a very interesting and useful method but it requires a lot of energy and major preparation, as well as having a good moderator. Carrying out FGI is without any doubt more difficult than carrying out a good individual interview. Due to this fact this method will work better with regard to the people who have larger experience related with running workshops and group meetings. However, during such meetings we may obtain many interesting data resulting from the interaction between the participants, which would not be possible in the case of individual interviews.

The comment to the table below: “The dynamics of the group processes” is not the same as in IDI.
The meeting of the focus group was carried out in Polish language and eleven participants aged from 16 to 25 took part in it. Information about the organized focus research was distributed via Facebook, Emito.net (Polish internet portal in the United Kingdom) and by the participants’ own networks. The form of the meeting was to be informal, free and creative.

The projection techniques were used – the creative workshop part was dedicated to the planning of the event under the name of Follow Up Mixtape. The participants were divided into groups and each group received a paper model presenting the potential participants of the concert. The task of every group was to determine the sex, the personality, the background and the expectations of one’s own “participant” and to guide them through the different stages of the scheduled event. The results of the workshops were presented in the form of maps that present the path of each model.

The participating observation – during the workshop one of the members of PCFA was responsible for observing the participants. Trying to maintain balance between the participant and the observer, he was making notes of the conversations with the rest of the participants and of the observed interactions in the group.

Unfinished tasks – “questions on the ropes”. In the premises where the focus was held the ropes were hanged with the beginnings of the sentences written on the sheets of paper. The participants were asked to finish the sentences and to hang their answers on the ropes.
A few ideas for less typical methods of diagnosis

So far, I have described the most used “classical” methods used in the diagnosis. They make it possible to collect a lot of information but they also have their limits. One of the problems is for example to provide a sufficient number of people who take part in the research. It is particularly visible in the case of the people who are very often asked to take part in the surveys, e.g. the pupils and the teachers. In the modern schools many different diagnoses are carried out. The pupils complete many surveys and the teachers are often burdened with a huge number of forms and questionnaires.

This phenomenon is limited to the education institutions. When viewing the online portals or using different kind of services, we receive an invitation to share our opinions at least a dozen times per year. On one hand, it is nice that somebody is interested in our views. On the other hand, however, we all live in a rush. We all ask ourselves the question whether it is worth dedicating again our time in order to help some institution or organization to achieve their goals.

It happens more and more often that the participants refuse to take part in the survey. With regard to the individuals invited to express their opinions we can even talk about the phenomenon known as a “survey fatigue”. No wonder that sometimes it is difficult to carry out the plans related to the survey. The risk of not being able to carry out the survey is particularly big with regard to the quantitative methods, especially such as online questionnaires where our contact with potential respondents is limited to the minimum.

In the previous chapters I wrote what one should do in order to increase the chance of a success. For example, with regard to the qualitative methods, such as an individual in-depth interview or focus, a lot depends on the attitude of the person who is responsible for the recruitment. The right attitude is necessary in order to convince somebody to take part in the survey. The councils mentioned before were only to show how to cross the barriers. They assumed that if we have an efficient tool that is not really working the way it should, we need to introduce some corrections. However, the tools themselves would not change.

In a short subchapter I propose a little different approach. I would like to present a few examples that show a different face of the surveys. The methods that will be presented below are inspired by the activities for the area of art and civil participation. What is important, in the past they were often tested in the contact with the youth.

Those methods, contrary to the ones mentioned above, encourage to experiment. That is why their descriptions will be shorter and will be completed by the bibliographic references where you can find more information.
Civil cafe

The characteristics and the description of the method

Many individuals do not want to participate in more surveys but they may be willing to get to know new people. There is a solution to this – a civil café. As the name itself indicates, they are most often organized in the cafés or in similar venues where one may sit peacefully and talk to other people (also in the restaurants or pubs). Apart from the venue we only need the moderator who will present the topic and the rules of the discussion to the participants.

As for the rules, the topic raised during the discussion should concern the issues that are important for the participants. With regard to the methods focused on the migrations we could for example propose the following topics:

- What do I love and what do I hate about the country that I left?
- How to start a new life abroad?
- How to be a Pole abroad?
- Poland – a vague memory or a reference point?

At the beginning of the meeting the moderator also presents the basic rules related with the dialogue, such as the openness to different views, the readiness to change one’s own point of view, the briefness or refraining from judging the others (of course, we may say that we do not agree with somebody). The aim of those rules is to ensure friendly atmosphere so that everybody feels secure and is ready to share their thoughts.

After agreeing on the rules, the conversation in the civil café revolves as part of four rounds:

**Round 1:** All participants introduce themselves (in turns) and say what they think about the discussion. So far, the participants do not respond to their ideas.

**Round 2:** All participants can comment (but they do not have to) on the ideas that appeared earlier and they can say what new came to their heads (they present their statements in order).

**Round 3:** This time the participants present their opinions without any determined order. The moderator may ask or encourage the person who did not have a chance to speak to make a statement.

**Round 4:** Summing up, again in turns.

Moderating the conversation in this way works very well in the case of the people who do not know one another or who know one another not too well. It is an ideal method for those who want to get to know new people and to learn how to overcome their own interpersonal limitations. From the point of view of the diagnosis it is an opportunity to obtain information on the particular topic that is important both for us and for the group that we work for.

You may find more information about this method on the English website www.conversationcafe.org. You will find there many useful materials, including the tips for the moderators, the examples of the topics and the proposals of posters and leaflets.

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4 The description based on the materials prepared by the Unit for Social Innovation and Research “Shipyard”. You will find more information about this and other methods on the following website: http://partycypacjaobywatelska.pl/strefa-wiedzy/techniki.
First: the diagnosis

Selection of methods_less typical methods

Example / Budapest:
Meeting over mulled wine, the sheets of paper in the jar

For the needs of the research a special meeting was held under the slogan “Meeting over mulled wine”. The participants discussed the issues proposed by the organizers in an informal atmosphere. They suggested their proposals of cultural events in which they would like to take part.

Outside events

The characteristics and the description of the method

With this method we can present ourselves to the society and make them aware of our research project.

It is an opportunity to reach the people with whom we would not stay in touch otherwise.

It makes it possible to combine different research and animation methods.

As we have already indicated, many people may not want to participate in the next survey. However, everybody may want to take part in the picnic! If we take care of the attractions (e.g. the performance of a popular artist, outdoor sport activities, food stalls) we will have an opportunity to reach different age and social groups. Why not to propose a tournament in traditional backyard games (bottle tops, hopscotch or rubber band rope jumping)? It is an excellent opportunity to attract all the families. When the children are busy playing, you will be able to talk to their guardians.

The organization of outside activities is an excellent opportunity to carry out a shorter survey or to invite somebody to the interview. It is also possible to collect information on a current basis during the event with the help of the previously prepared volunteers who will be ready to talk to the people about their experiences, or in another way, for example you may hang a rope in the designated points to which the participants will attach their answers to the questions.

The possibilities are limitless. The projects carried out and tested by the others may serve as inspiration. The “ę” Association of Creative Initiatives has been collecting them for years. On their website http://pomysly.e.org.pl you may read the instructions concerning the different methods gathered as part of the project “Ideas to carry out”. You may use many of them on the occasion of outside campaigns.

Have a look at how the British organization of Bold Creative did it in 2008 on the occasion of the conversation with the community about the neglected park: https://vimeo.com/2760799.
Example / Rejkiavik: „Many Nations One Blood“

During the event organized on the Day of Independence (11th November) under the slogan “Many Nations One Blood” (the campaign to promote the blood donation among the Polish immigrants in Iceland) a social campaign was carried out. In the hall of the point of blood donation in Reykjavik a banner was hanged with the question “What do the Poles in Iceland need?” and the sheets where the participants could write their answers and stick them to the banner. The answers were public and they provided an insight into the content to the other participants.

Example / A hip-hop concert in Edinburgh

A hip-hop concert was organized in Edinburgh. The main star was a Polish artist whose work is addressed mainly to the young people. The entrance was five pounds but it was also possible to receive a free ticket. One only needed to complete a questionnaire before or during the event.

Besides, during the concert the young volunteers (the participants of the previous focus group) made short video interviews and prepared a video from the concert, which they posted online (e.g. here).
**Story competitions**

**The characteristics and the description of the method**

This method is used to collect information on the way of perceiving the world or describing a problem.

It is a time-consuming method for the participants but it is also more creative and it provides more opportunities of self-expression.

For years the sociologists have been researching the autobiographic accounts, such as diaries or memoires. This method was also used to survey the emigrants, as an example we can mention the classical work concerning the emigration of the Poles to the West. At the beginning of the twenties of the 20th century a publication “Chłop polski w Europie i Ameryce” by William I. Thomas and a Polish sociologist Florian Znaniecki was published. The book was based to a large extent on the materials elaborated by the emigrants themselves. Znaniecki, after coming back to Poland, the same as his pupils, promoted this kind of work which consisted of different kinds of competitions for diaries or memoires.

Some examples of what could be researched include:
- The competition for the diary,
- The competition for the memoires,
- The competition for a blog/emigrant’s diary,
- The photography competition (e.g. the portraits or the flats of the immigrants).

By organizing the competition you obviously need to reflect on the possibilities to increase the motivation of the participants. You can achieve it by offering a prize or an opportunity to publish or to promote the effects of work (e.g. in the case of a photography competition – the exhibition).

The materials obtained in this way will surely be rich in content but they may also be difficult to analyse.

**Creative activities**

**The characteristics and the description of the method**

The combination of education and information collection.

A good introduction to wider discussions on a certain topic.

Time-consuming character.

The need to engage the experts.

Young people may often be reluctant towards typical social research diagnoses that they regard as little interesting and time-consuming. However, many of them dedicate a lot of time to learn the things that they are particularly interested in – sport activities or interest groups. Why not to use it?

It was the idea of the researchers and the activists from the USA who instead of creating a social campaign on drugs addressed to the young people encouraged them to take part in the project aimed to create the movie dedicated to this topic (Ollner2010: 55). The team of adolescents of different ethnic background wanted to write the script and to make the movie from the scratch. A professional filmmaker was helping them.

Although in the presented case the emphasis was put on the creation of a short feature film, it is possible to develop this idea. The activities may consist of the creation of a document. One can also steer away from the movie and organize workshops on short story writing, journalism or the design of the posters.
Photography workshops are also very popular, which serve to collect information useful for the diagnosis. The participants not only learn gradually how to make pictures but with the support of the facilitators they talk about the stories that are hidden behind them. The method, which is often defined in English as "photovoice", was applied with success both among the pupils and the individuals who cannot communicate efficiently in writing (e. g. among the Chinese farmers, see Wang, Burris 1997). The photography turned out to be a good way to start the discussion with the aim to collect the important data for the decision makers.

Similar work focused around the particular topic may bring many data, especially if it is completed by discussions on the particular topic. The final works on the particular community can become the pretext to start a public debate on it (e. g. the show of the movie with a discussion afterwards).

Rather than a classical form of research the described method is a way of using the artistic activity to deepen the understanding of the world. Similar activities and projects may without any doubt be an interesting change for young people as they engage the youth who can gain knowledge and particular skills. However, with regard to such way of work it is important to act with caution so as not to limit the creativity of the young people but to leave them the freedom to act, while at the same time collecting the data necessary to formulate the conclusions concerning the diagnosis.

You may find more examples of work with youth based on the methods related with the art in the collection of articles A Guide to the Literature on Participatory Research with Youth (Ollner 2010).

The participants of the concert took part in drawing “live”. The invited street art artists were to provide the answers to the questions of the organizers concerning the life in Scotland in the form of drawings.

The graphic designers started by drawing their own visions. In spite of the initial assumptions, the further drawings were created by the same participants. None of them seemed to respond to the existing questions – they were a spontaneous and chaotic combination of signatures – tags and pictures.

The tip for the future: It would be good if during organized events the participants who express artistically were accompanied by active facilitators.

Example / Analysis of creative work: drawings

The participants of the concert took part in drawing “live”. The invited street art artists were to provide the answers to the questions of the organizers concerning the life in Scotland in the form of drawings.

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The tip for the future: It would be good if during organized events the participants who express artistically were accompanied by active facilitators.
Conclusion

Obviously the above methods of work are not the only ones. When viewing the reports from different projects and analysing the ways of acquiring knowledge applied by others, it turns out that the range of methods is really wide. Regardless of whether we emphasize on the classical research tools or on the creative workshops or competitions, we may obtain very interesting results. Sometimes even the ordinary observation of places can teach us a lot. If we exercise enough caution, after a certain period we will be able to say where the groups that we are interested in hang around and what they do in those places. Maybe we will also be able to present the initial hypotheses, for example with regard to what makes the Poles abroad come to the particular place and to avoid the other. Similar conclusions may be an introduction to forming important research questions that can be further explored.

Even though there are many different work methods, the curiosity and the willingness to explore the world form the basis of each of them. If this is also our case, then if we are open to new observations and we look around carefully, we may be able to carry out a diagnosis in many different ways.
You have accomplished the field part of the research. Congratulations! It is a big success. Now the time has come to have a look at what you were able to collect. The larger the scale of the used methods, the more materials which may serve as a base and the source from which to draw the conclusions. However, the content of the data is quite a big headache: how not to get lost and make sense of it?

The analysis and the elaboration of the report are without doubt some of the most important elements of the whole diagnosis. The interesting data that we have collected will not be useful if we are not able to interpret them and to tell somebody else about them.
Analysing and drawing conclusions

Drawing the conclusions with regard to the collected materials, especially at the beginning of the research work, may be difficult. That is why you should not make the mistake and assume that everything will go smoothly. Allow a lot of time to get familiar with the materials. Also, try to draw as many conclusions as it is possible during the fieldwork. It does not apply to quantitative methods (such as electronic questionnaires) where one must wait till all the responses have been collected. If the qualitative research is quite simple, the presentation of the results will be limited to showing the distribution of the answers in a table or on a graph.

You may (and even should) follow on a current basis the data, if we use the qualitative methods or more creative ways of work described above. Then after each interview or meeting it is worth getting familiar with the materials and wondering whether we found out anything that would enable us to answer the questions that are crucial for our work. And maybe we have found the new trails that should be included?

If at the beginning of the whole undertaking we formulated the research questions, we should order the materials while having this in mind. Let’s assume that we wanted to find out how the Poles engage socially abroad. Each interview is analysed from a different angle. When we collect all the pieces, we may start to think on the final answer.

Here, an important remark on what we should analyse. Earlier, when mentioning the qualitative methods I suggested recording the interviews. If you transcribe the interviews, you will make the work significantly easier for yourselves. If you decide not to do it, you will at least make the notes. The best way is to elaborate the working report right after carrying out the interview. Such a note should be complemented after listening again to the recording, for example by the quotes that are especially worth writing down.

The more detailed the transcription, the richer the material for the analysis. You may not only draw all the important data from the full transcription but you may also follow the flow of the conversation. With this you may express yourselves in a more precise way with regard to whether the researcher suggested to the respondent the pre-determined conclusions or what questions were particularly difficult. You may also have a proper look at the process of the understanding of the interviewee or better understand the context in which the particular opinions or judgements were formed.

Transcribing the interviews or taking precise notes is really time-consuming but it makes it much easier to sum up and to draw the conclusions. It is much easier to work with a written text – it is easier to localize the content we are searching for, to analyse it and to use it in the form of a quote in the report.

I suggest that you deal with every (individual or group) interview in the same way. After getting familiar with the full content, it is necessary to find the parts that apply to our research questions. Some of the researchers used the “paper and scissors” method in the past in order not to get lost in the plethora of data – some parts that applied to the particular topic were physically cut out from the transcription (or the notes) and set apart on different stacks. After finishing the work (or with a high number of interviews, after the partial selection of the material), the specific parts of the text were analysed. Such way of acting had without any doubts its good sides as it made it easier to get familiar with a large amount of data. However, it was impractical in many ways. It was a challenge for the less organized individuals to keep control over such a large number of sheets without getting lost. Besides, with regard to the fact that some of the respondent’s statements could respond to different research questions, the additional prints were necessary.
Luckily, not much has changed since those “pioneer” times. There appeared many programs for the qualitative data analysis, which make it possible to carry out a similar work in electronic documents. However, do not reach for them if you do not plan to seriously deal with the diagnosis in the future. Every program requires a longer period of time from the user to learn how to use it. That is why, if you are not sure whether you will deal with the analysis of the next research, it is enough to use one of the text editors. If you do not want to get lost, you should assign a specific research question to the particular files. You may paste those parts of the transcription or the notes that apply directly to it to the particular file.

You may act in a similar way with regard to the materials collected while using the other qualitative methods, both the classical and the less typical ones (e.g. diaries, the transcriptions of the discussions during the creative activities).

When we have collected the material, we may start the proper analysis. Let’s review the material mainly with regard to the following:

- The similarities in the answers – Can we draw any common approach based on the excerpts or maybe each of those answers is different?
- The differences – If certain statements are significantly different, let’s not ignore them. We may find here a potentially interesting point of view.
- The order – Can we specify the more general categories (e.g. if the answers to the question about the favourite ways of spending free time include the following: “the walk”, “the trip”, “running”, we may generalise it – “spending free time outside”) based on the answers?
- The associations between the particular events – Can we specify the cause–effect relations based on the interviews?

Inductive reasoning (from the specific to the general) is time-consuming but it protects us against too hurried conclusions and it helps to lean on the actually collected material.

After collecting the material (we know more or less how it works), it is time now to pass to the deeper level of analysis and to ask ourselves the questions: “Why?” and “What results do we expect from it?” Did anything surprise us in particular? Can we answer the question about the reason of the given situation?

It is the right moment to look at the material as a team. It is good if in the group that analyses the first conclusions from the research there are people who are more or less engaged in making the diagnosis. Based on the data delivered by us, they may suggest some hypotheses or conclusions.

Consider whether the data collected be means of different methods are compatible or contradictory. Write down what you learned based on the acquired knowledge.

During the analysis and the reasoning:

1. **Stay curious.** Do not stop on the associations; do not pass straight to the conclusions.

2. **Be critical towards the collected material.** Do not take everything on trust. Question the statements of the respondents or the results of the questionnaire. Consider why somebody said something, did they really mean it or they just thought it was appropriate to say it.

3. **Give yourself time.** A wider picture may come out only after a longer interaction with the collected data. The first impressions after the encounter with the abundant materials may be intimidating. It is only after certain time that we start to better understand it, the relations and the associations, as well as the possibility of generalizations becomes clearer.

4. **Be honest and sincere with yourselves.** If you cannot establish something for sure, write about it directly. Maybe you need to carry out another research or you need to look at the issue from a different angle.
Elaboration of the report

If we analysed the material and drew the conclusions, it should be quite easy to write the report. The majority of the research reports have a similar structure:
1. Title page.
2. Contents.
3. Introduction to the report description.
4. Description of the research goals.
5. Presentation of the methodology.
6. Presentation of information about the way the research was carried out. (When? What materials did you collect?).
7. Presentation of the results:
   a. Description of the situation.
   b. Conclusions.
   c. Recommendations (potentially).
8. Attachments (if they are necessary, e.g. the interview outline, the survey questionnaire form, more detailed tables with the results, if we did not place all of them in the text).

Apart from the transparent layout you need to take care of:
1. A simple language. We should not use complicated terms, if they are not necessary.
2. Avoiding arguments or digressions that do not bring anything to the discussion. You should include only what is necessary in the report. Do not be afraid to remove the paragraphs or pieces that you regard as of little significance.
3. Properly adjusted layout. The image of the report is important. If you are preparing an electronic publication, you’d better use sans-serif font (e.g. Arial, Verdana or Helvetica), as the serif font *with vertical or diagonal beams next to the letters, such as Times New Roman) is more difficult to perceive on the computer screen. Also, give up the adjustment (the alignment to the left and the right margin) which works worse when reading on the computer than on the paper.
4. Do not exaggerate with the colours that may distract or make it difficult to read for the individuals who are visually impaired.
5. Present the results in the form of graphs or tables, if with this the collected data will be more clear.
6. Refer to the quantitative source material. The conversations that you carried out tend to be interesting. Take advantage of it. Quote the statements that show on what basis you drew certain conclusions. It will certainly make you report more attractive.
7. Take care of the rule of anonymity. If according to the guidelines presented earlier you promised the respondents that the interview would be confidential, write the report in such a way that you are able to determine based on the quotes and statements who the author of the given statement was. Mark the particular interviews with the symbols (e.g. W1, W2 etc.) Remove the names and describe the respondents mildly (e.g. not the director of a particular department in the office but the representative of the office).
8. Try to show your thinking process. Especially when working on the qualitative material it is not worth clearly separating the part dedicated to the obtained information from the conclusions. It is worth showing how the particular opinions of the respondents influenced our thinking process and the categorization of the results. Try to show how you came to the conclusion. For the reader it may be definitely more useful and interesting.
Stick to these tips and your report will not only be comprehensible but also attractive and – what’s more interesting – useful. Writing in an accessible way requires previous reading; so before you take to elaborate your own report, check how the others have done it. Maybe you will get inspired by the way somebody described the results of the survey or you will notice the mistakes that you will want to avoid.

However, the most important thing is to be satisfied with the final result. In the end, writing every report is about preparing such a piece of writing that you would like to read yourselves.

Example / Iceland: using the research results

Simple and interesting form of presenting the results of analysis:
Conclusions and recommendations

Iceland
- The key to the research and the diagnosis is the appropriate selection of a method based on the available knowledge with regard to the target group.
- As the activists of the Polish community abroad do not necessarily need to go through the research experience, it seems to be a good solution to use all the possibilities of obtaining the “feedback”, e.g. by carrying out a survey during Polish community events.
- The key – how the example of the Icelandic diagnosis shows – is to use the Polish community media.

Scotland
- It is worth employing a moderator to run a focus group.
- The animators should participate in all the activities.
- By organizing regular “open” meetings with the volunteers and giving them an opportunity to participate in the work on the projects/events, in accordance with their expectations and skills, we engage them into being active.
- It is best to plan the engaging activities together with the potential participants; the higher the participation, the bigger the chance that the project will be successful.
It is worth reaching those who seldom use the offers of the Polish community organizations. They may provide information on what makes it difficult to use the offer of the Polish community associations and on the expectations and the needs in this respect. We wanted to access these data as they enabled us to look in a fresh way at the projects that have been carried out so far and to go beyond the accepted outlines.

The data collected during the research and their analysis will provide ground for preparing the organization strategy and planning of the new projects.

When choosing this kind of tool it is worth organizing a meeting with the volunteers already after a few interviews. The aim of such a meeting is to verify whether the particular outline of the interview enables us to obtain sufficient information about the real needs of the respondents or we should modify it in order to carry out a more in-depth analysis of their needs.

By carrying out a social diagnosis we not only provide valuable information necessary for our further development but also have a direct impact on the promotion of the association and its projects. It also builds the image of the organization engaged in the matters of their local communities, the organization that responds to the local expectations.

During the in-depth interviews there appeared some topics and issues that it would be worth researching and analysing further (e.g. during another analysis). It confirms that a well prepared diagnosis of the specific problems of the given community opens the eyes to further matters, which may lead to deep and comprehensive analysis of a given community and contribute to its better functioning and to the improvement of the conditions of life, work, science etc. of the members of a local community.

Hungary
Specifics of the youth research

Many research methods described earlier are of universal character. However, it is worth taking a few things into consideration, as it will enable us to adjust to the context of the group that we will be working with. The following points are more a set of guidelines than a closed directory, which may be extended by new ideas. Writing the below comments I used the literature and my and the other researchers’ experiences.
**Group differentiation**

The youth is a very differentiated group and it is difficult to state explicitly who belongs to it and who does not. Different nations, institutions and organizations accept very different definitions. It is evident that the period of life when you regard somebody for a teenager or a young person is getting longer. It is related to the fact that we live longer and we make our key life decisions later than our parents or grandparents did. Many people stand on their own feet, find permanent jobs and start families later in life. Due to this fact the temporary period between the childhood and the adulthood gets longer. It is most often assumed that the individuals who are defined as youth are usually aged 13 to 15. Some people admit that this period ends at the age of 25, while the others claim that it is over around the age of 29, and this border sometimes moves to the age of 35.

Regardless of where you see the upper limit, you will easily notice a big differentiation of the group. You will find there both the younger and the older teenagers, as well as young adults. You will need to work with each of these groups in a different way. With the pupils we communicate in a different way than with the students or the alumni who are starting to work.

**What to ask about?**

The diagnosis does not create any limits and you may ask about everything that you are interested in. However, it will be easier to invite somebody to participate in the interview, if you discuss the issues that are important from their point of view. In the context of youth and youth policy the things that are most often mentioned as important are related to the following topics:

- Spending free time (including tourism, sports and culture),
- Education,
- Health and preventive health care,
- Transport,
- Participation in public life,
- Support and social integration,
- Employment and professional development.

Those topics appear in most of the strategies formulated in Poland and the European Union. This list may be extended, for example after carrying out the qualitative research.

**Speak the language of advantages**

It applies to all the research but it may also be particularly important when carrying out the research of the school pupils. As it results from the diagnoses carried out in Poland by the Pole Dialogu Foundation, young people often feel busy and tied up. They tend to be in rush and they feel that they have too many responsibilities. They may regard taking part in the research as little interesting, if they do not notice that it may be also useful for them. All the more that they are often fed up with completing the surveys.

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6. This is the assumption that the Eurostat takes for the needs of report making (see e.g. Eurostat 2015: 18).
7. See e.g. the report on youth and migration prepared by UN (UN 2015: 16).
Propose interesting methods of work

If the traditional methods fail, try the ones that are more innovative, such as creative activities or civil cafes. It might be a good idea to carry out a diagnosis that will be pleasant for the interviewees and will enable them to gain valuable experience.

Find ambassadors or assistants

It happens more and more often that young people are being engaged in the organization of the research: they help with the planning, create the youth research teams and carry out diagnoses with our participation. The involvement of new people is a totally different challenge that may bring positive results. If we do not have appropriate resources, we can always search for ambassadors of our projects among young people, who will help us with the recruitment and might give us some tips on how to reach and talk to their peers. This way we will reduce the risk that the youth will treat the research as not related with their needs (as foreign).

Treat the respondents as your partners

Do not look down at them. Make sure that the respondents feel appreciated and that they are being treated seriously. Find the place where they will be able to talk freely and will not have the impression that they are being questioned. If there is a large age difference, it is very important that the interviewer is not treated as a foreigner who is isolated from the problems of the researched youth. Empathy and curiosity, openness and understanding, the willingness to get familiar with another person’s perspective and the acceptance of different views are the key features in the contact with different groups. These are the features that gain particular relevance with regard to the youth research.
First: the diagnosis

Bibliography


The School for Leaders Foundation is an institution that takes care of the quality of public life in Poland and among the Poles abroad. For 20 years we have been working on behalf of the conscious development, based on the leadership values. We search for and support the leaders from non-government organizations, local government institutions and parties or political organizations. We believe that the individuals who have leadership skills and lead others are the driving force of change.

The foundation is the place for meetings and dialogue. The participants of our programs are the people of different political and social options. The confrontation with a different point of view is one of the tools of the School: it helps to build the culture of discussion based on respect and it reinforces the awareness of one's own system of values and identity that originates from it.

The participation in the programs of the Foundation is a powerful development experience and for many Alumni it becomes the turning point in their public careers. The School for Leaders gives them the tools to make change and to have impact; it deepens the level of their self-awareness and creates the possibilities for further development.

Thanks to the engagement of the donors the basic programs of the Foundation have been free for many years. The School for Leaders offers programs and services adjusted individually to the needs of the clients. The profit from the economic activity is entirely assigned to the statutory goals of the organization.

The Polonia Nova Cultural Association has been operating since 2007. One of the main goals of the association is to promote the Polish culture and science and alternative education, including the education of adults, to support the animation of the Polish community cultural movement in Hungary and to perform activities on behalf of the integration of the Polish cultural centres and Polish community organizations in the world.

Since the very beginning the Polonia Nova Association has put emphasis on the mobilization of the Polish youth that lives in Hungary and has Polish roots. We encourage them to take active part in the Polish community life by searching for new forms of activities that are attractive for young people, strengthen their bonds with Poland, develop their knowledge on the history and the contemporary Polish culture and at the same time provide an opportunity to develop their own creativity and form the future Polish community activists. We actively encourage the young Poles in Hungary not to be passive recipients of the association projects but to participate in the planning process and to coordinate the events.
**Projekt:Polska.is** (PP.is) is an association that was created from the initiative of a few dozen Poles related with Iceland. PP.is, as a platform that gathers people who want to build a cultural dialogue between Iceland and Poland, aims to act on the behalf of the community of both nations.

Currently PP.is is the largest non-government organization of foreign origin on the island. For this reason we present not only the largest minority group but also the rest of the immigrants. With regard to the above we address our activities to all the groups.

We cooperate closely with the HOLA association that gathers the Spanish-speaking individuals in Iceland and the W. O. M. E. N. association that gathers women of foreign origin.

**Polish Cultural Festival Association** The organization is a social enterprise that has been operating in Scotland since 2008. It promotes the integration of Polish community in Scotland, as well as the equality and the diversity. It carries out its goals through numerous education and cultural activities that are addressed to all the age groups. The undertakings are run in English or Polish and English, depending on the type of the project and the recipients; they are adjusted and scheduled, taking account of the needs of the local communities. The organization consists of the professionals who have experience in the development of the education programs and in running social and cultural projects with the team of volunteers.

In the recent years our activity focused around:

- The construction of the social capital of the Poles and other national/ethnic minorities that live within Scotland by offering them the possibility to work on social and cultural projects. Our projects enabled many people to gain new skills and experiences – they improved the situation of the participants on the labour market and helped to create a network of contacts useful in the personal and professional life (altogether, 60 volunteers from many countries took part in a two year Polish Scottish Heritage project; they gained the skills of running, recording and editing the podcasts and helped in the organization of cultural events as part of the festival).

- The construction of an intercultural dialogue between Poland, Scotland and national minorities. We established cooperation with many organizations that perform activities on behalf of national minorities, such as: Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council, Fife Migrants Forum, The Welcoming, Volunteer Centre Edinburgh, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations’ Council.

- The development of education programs for children and youth that promote multiculturalism (our education program was presented to the Polish Saturday schools and it starts to be presented in the public schools).
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