RESEARCHING VOLUNTARY WORK

An interview method developed by Madelyn Capozzi for the design proposal "Realized through Value Collective" (1 hour)

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the motivating factors, enabling conditions, and systemic constraints experienced by people undertaking personal projects/voluntary work [loosely related to sustainability]?

Efforts may include, but are not limited to: creative work, activism or community organizing, volunteering with nonprofit initiatives, independent research or studies, self-improvement

PART 1: Bird's eye view. *(30 minutes)*

Gaining an overview of the target user's voluntary activities over "the last few years" (left open-ended to let the user's experiences be the determining factor for the exact timescale).

Draw a timeline.

Have you undertaken any personal projects, unsalaried work or voluntary positions in the last few years? If so, please elaborate. (Note: this can also include work involving some financial compensation - just not a salary.)

For each:

What did this involve? (tasks, in point-form)

Why did you undertake this work? (goals, motivations)

Did you receive any financial compensation for these efforts? (ie. honorariums, grants, donations)

If so:

How much?

From whom?

On what basis/under which conditions?

What was your scale of involvement? [valued between 1-5, where 5 = multiple times a week and 1 = once or twice a month]

For all:

What values would you associate with these projects/efforts/initiatives?

PART 2: Exploring specific instances. *(20 minutes)*

Unraveling the target user's experiences with voluntary work through a process of targeted reflection and progressive deepening, guided by open-ended questions.

Choose one project to focus on.

Relevant questions will be selected from the following list:

Timeline

What inspired this effort?

What were the milestones of this project?

Significant events, turning points?

Challenges

Can you identify any defining points of confusion, frustration, or insufficiency? What was the cause? How did you decide to move forward? (obstacles, work-arounds)

What were the main obstacles you encountered? (obstacles)

How did you overcome them? (work-arounds)

If you couldn't overcome them, what stopped you? (severe restraints)

More generally, what was difficult or challenging about this project? What were the limiting factors or systemic constraints? (disincentives, limiting conditions)

Was there anything you weren't able to accomplish that you would've liked to? What stopped you?

Successes

Can you identify any defining moments of clarity, energy, or capability? What made it so? How did you move forward and what were the results? (enablers, results)

At what points did you feel a sense of accomplishment? How were you measuring progress, improvement, success? When did you feel happy to call the project finished? (success metrics)

More generally, what was rewarding or fulfilling about this project? (incentives)

What conditions made this effort possible? Did you have access to any resources or unique arrangements over the course of the project that enabled its success? (resources, enabling conditions)

Interactions

Was this a collaborative effort? If so:

Who else was involved? (actors)

In what capacity? (roles)

What were everyone's responsibilities?

When and how did collaborations take place?

What kind of feedback were you receiving from others? Did they encourage/discourage you? Did anyone offer to assist you? In what capacity?

Did you feel supported over the course of this effort? If so, who or what made you feel that way? If not, what do you feel was missing?

How did the effort conclude?

Closing question: Why did you agree to do this interview?

Final comments/remarks?