

DODO

Setting the Scene

Start by understanding the context, community and purpose of your project to help you set the tone for your project. Begin by grounding yourself or your team in the place, people, culture, and systemic realities that make up your project.

Conducting secondary research

Organizing Discovery calls

Participant Selection

User & Stakeholder Mapping

Selecting the right research methods

Conducting secondary research

CONDUCTING SECONDARY RESEARCH

SETTING THE SCENE

Before you start engaging participants, take some time to explore what's already known. Reviewing existing data helps you build context, refine your focus and identify the existing gaps to fill. It ensures that you have sufficient knowledge base to start with and identify emerging opportunities your study can address.

When conducting secondary research:

- Cast a wide net by reviewing reports, academic papers, case studies, media articles, and policy documents related to your topic.
- Identify trends and gaps, take note of what has been learned, what remains unclear, and what's missing from existing data.
- Use your findings to refine your research questions and determine what primary data you need to collect.
- Document your sources by keeping track of where all the information you have came from, this helps with easy reference and credibility.

Organizing discovery calls with stakeholders

ORGANIZING DISCOVERY CALLS

SETTING THE SCENE

Early conversations with stakeholders help you align expectations and uncover valuable context before you begin research. Stakeholders can include funders, program leads, product managers, developers, or community representatives, anyone involved in the outcome of your project.

During a discovery call or worksession:

- Clarify project goals by discussing what success looks like and what decisions your research should inform.
- Identify available resources, timelines, sensitivities, and other constraints that might shape your approach.
- Ask about existing data, assumptions, or ongoing efforts related to your topic that will give you better context.
- Build alignment with your stakeholders. Agree on roles, communication channels, and how insights will be shared.
- Take note of emerging ideas, partnerships, hypotheses and other opportunities that could guide your next steps.

SETTING THE SCENE

Participant selection

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

SETTING THE SCENE

Your research plan is not complete without clearly defining who your participants are, creating a screening criteria to guide your selection. If your team works with a recruitment partner, this criteria which in most cases contains a list of questions, such as to verify your participants helps to ensure you engage with the people who can best suit your research direction.

To decide on screening questions for your selecting the right participants, consider the following:

- Start with your research goal
- List key characteristics that matter to your study, (e.g gender, age, location, income level, etc.)
- Turn these characteristics into simple questions that are easy to understand
- Add exclusion questions, to screen out those who don't fit, (e.g have you participated in a similar interview in the last 6 months?)
- Test your questions

SETTING THE SCENE

User & stakeholder mapping

USER & STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

SETTING THE SCENE

This helps you understand the full ecosystem around your research topic, the users, decision makers, communities, organizations who shape, use or are affected by the product, service or system you're studying.

It gives you a holistic view of the power, influence and relationships, to create better alignment and help you see how the different actors depend on one another.

Selecting the right research methods

SELECTING THE RIGHT RESEARCH METHODS

SETTING THE SCENE

One of the most important decisions in any study is choosing the right research method. This determines the depth, quality and value of what you learn.

Your research method should align with your research questions, research participants, and the realities of your context. Research methods could be qualitative (e.g surveys) to help you measure patterns trends and scale, qualitative (e.g interviews), to understand meaning motivations and lived experiences or mixed-methods, a combination of both quantitative and qualitative, to uncover not just what is happening but why it is happening. Using mixed methods helps you ground your data and offer a stronger evidence for what you're claiming to have found.



DODO

Learning

Gather stories and perspectives through research. Engage people in ways that invite trust and openness, using in-depth interviews, immersion, storytelling, cultural probes, and observation.

Asking the right questions

Field etiquette

Language adaptation

LEARNING

Asking the right questions

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

LEARNING

Research is a systematic process for going from what is known to what is unknown, and you can never get research right with the wrong questions. The kind of questions you ask, shape the quality of insights you get out of it, so to get a great result from your research you need to master the skill of asking the right questions. This also means going for real problems and not surface symptoms.

Tips to achieve this:

- Start with curiosity and not assumptions. Don't ask questions to prove what you think you know, but go in with the mindset to learn
- Questions should be human-centered and not focused on features
- Ask about real stories and experiences, not user opinions
- Go from broad questions to more narrow ones (probing questions)
- Avoid binary questions (this means questions that result in yes or no answers, lacking detail)

LEARNING

Field etiquette

FIELD ETIQUETTE

LEARNING

To be able to successfully engage with users, when doing research work in the field, you need to understand some helpful ground rules.

Field research requires a high level of professionalism, respect, humility, trust and cultural sensitivity.

Some ways to achieve this is by:

- Being warm and friendly so as to gain their trust and attention
- Respecting your participant's time, space, and boundaries.
- Dressing appropriately for the context, ensuring modesty
- Being polite and culturally sensitive, e.g in the context of Nigeria, greetings matter even before business.

LEARNING

Language adaptation

Learn the language of users.

LANGUAGE ADAPTATION

LEARNING

In developing your question guide for your surveys, interviews, and other methods, you need to ensure that your communication with research participants them is clear and complete. What this essentially means is ensuring that they understand what you ask and as they respond, that you understand what they say. This includes all forms of communication, written, verbal and non-verbal (i.e gestures, expressions, etc.).

Adapting your language to theirs means using expressions, terms, and ways of speaking that reflect users' everyday reality, this would help you build trust quickly, get more honest and relatable insights from your research.

To achieve this, you need to know who your user is, have at least a good understanding of their culture and use their own words in developing your questions, taking care to avoid expert language and overly technical terms.



DODO

Sensemaking

Turn your learnings into shared understanding. Work collaboratively to interpret what the findings mean. Identify tensions, patterns opportunities, and priorities. Highlight collective insight.



Finding Themes

Journey Mapping

Prioritizing Areas of Opportunity

Framing Opportunities



SENSEMAKING

Finding themes

FINDING THEMES

SENSEMAKING

Once you've collected your data, it's time to organize and uncover meaningful themes from your research. Affinity mapping helps you organize notes, quotes, observations and even pictures into clear patterns that tell the story of what's actually going on beneath the surface.

Here's how it works:

- Write down key points from your data on sticky notes or digital cards. It could be a key quote, a statement or finding that stood out, or an aha moment (i.e. a moment where the dots connect and an idea becomes clearer). As you write down the different data points, make sure to keep it as one point per note, to help you and your colleagues easily understand, keep track and make sense of the information as it is collated.
- Start grouping similar ideas into clusters based on common ideas, experiences, needs, or challenges.
- As clusters form, label them with themes that capture what it represents.
- Discuss clusters with your team to validate and refine from diverse perspectives. Feel free to cluster and re-cluster as the themes emerge and become clearer.



SENSEMAKING

Journey mapping

JOURNEY MAPPING

SENSEMAKING

Journey maps visualize the full arc of a user's experience, what they do, think, and feel as they move through a process, service or product over time. They show you where the experience flows and where frictions exist.

To build a journey map:

- Start by identifying the key stages or touch points in your user's experience, within a given context.
- At each stage, capture their actions, thoughts, emotions, and pain points.
- Include contextual details, ask: what factors influences their decisions, what shapes their behaviour?
- Finally, highlight the moments where opportunities or frustrations shows up most clearly.

Prioritizing areas of opportunity

PRIORITIZING OPPORTUNITIES

SENSEMAKING

After identifying patterns and insights, it's important to decide where to focus. You can't tackle everything at once, so prioritization helps you focus on what matters most. To help you pinpoint the area(s) to focus on, look at the client's ask, the project's goal, and the largest area of opportunity where you'll get the biggest desirable and feasible impact for the users and business.

How to prioritize:

- Review all the challenges and opportunities you've identified.
- Evaluate each one against two criteria: impact (how valuable or transformative it could be), and effort (how feasible it is to actually implement).
- Use the impact–effort matrix to visualize where things land
- Discuss with your team and stakeholders to align on priorities.
- Record why certain opportunities were chosen to keep focus as the project progresses.

Framing opportunities and high- interest areas

FRAMING OPPORTUNITIES

SENSEMAKING

Framing is how you turn findings into actionable design challenges or statements that spark creativity. By reframing insights as "How Might We" (HMW) questions or insight statements, you shift the team's mindset from problems to possibilities.

Here's how to frame effectively:

- Look at your key insights and ask: "What opportunity does this unlock?"
Example: "People feel more confident using digital health services when they can verify the credibility of professionals."
- Develop short insight statements that clearly capture what you've learned and why it matters.
Example: "How might we make digital consultations feel as personal as face-to-face visits?"
- Turn insights into open-ended HMW questions that invite creative exploration.
Example: "How might we make digital consultations feel as personal as face-to-face visits?"
- Use your HMWs and insights to guide ideation sessions and strategic planning.

This ensures that the ideas you develop stay rooted in real insights and are aligned with the needs and realities of your users.



DODO

Making

Design and experiment with users,
communities and cross-disciplinary partners.
Prototype with locally available tools that are
easy to build, use and work with in unique
contexts. Iteratively test and refine.

Ideation Prompts/Methods

Prototyping Steps

Conducting User Testing

Participatory Co-designing

MAKING

Ideation prompts/ methods

IDEATION PROMPTS/METHODS

MAKING

Ideation is a crucial step in the Making phase and should be carried out with rigour, exploring new possibilities and creativity, all rooted in user needs and not assumptions.

Several methods you can try out, to help generate a wide range of ideas are crazy 8's, brainwriting, brainstorming, SCAMPER. The list goes on!

In ideation, you should:

- Aim to generate a wide range of ideas. The reality is that your first few ideas are often cliché. By pushing yourself to develop many more, you expand your thinking and increase the likelihood of discovering something truly original. And if none stand out on their own, combining multiple ideas can often lead to fresh and powerful ideas.
- Combine different perspectives for richer solutions
- Avoid building solutions based on bias or assumption

MAKING

Prototyping ideas

PROTOTYPING IDEAS

MAKING

Turn your ideas into quick, simple but clear versions to experiment with users. They allow your users to react to something real, and allow you to learn, refine, and improve quickly.

What to watch out for:

- Don't over-design early, start small and simple
- Test with the right users, not colleagues or friends
- Don't defend your idea; listen, learn, and adapt
- If users don't understand it, the design needs work (not the user)

MAKING

Conducting user testing

CONDUCTING USER TESTING

MAKING

User testing allows you to see how people actually use your product, service, or idea. What people say is not always what they do, testing reveals the truth. The aim is to observe, learn, and improve, not to prove your idea “works”. Methodologies include; A/B testing, co-creation, user/usability testing.

Key Tips for Effective User Testing:

- Test in the user’s natural environment when possible
- Give tasks, not instructions e.g. “Show me how you would pay a bill”
- Look for moments of confusion, hesitation, or frustration
- Ask: “What were you expecting to happen here?”
- End by asking how the experience felt, not if they “liked it”

MAKING

Participatory co-designing

Turning themes into How Might We questions
and Insight statements

PARTICIPATORY CO-DESIGNING

MAKING

This ensures you create solutions that reflect the realities, strengths, and aspirations of the people you're designing for. When users shape the solution, they feel ownership, which increases adoption, trust, and impact.

It means inviting users, community members, stakeholders, or frontline workers to actively participate in designing the solution alongside. Their lived experience becomes part of the design process, not an afterthought.

Co-design helps you:

- Create culturally relevant and acceptable solutions
- Avoid blind spots and bias from designing in isolation
- Build trust, buy-in, and long-term ownership

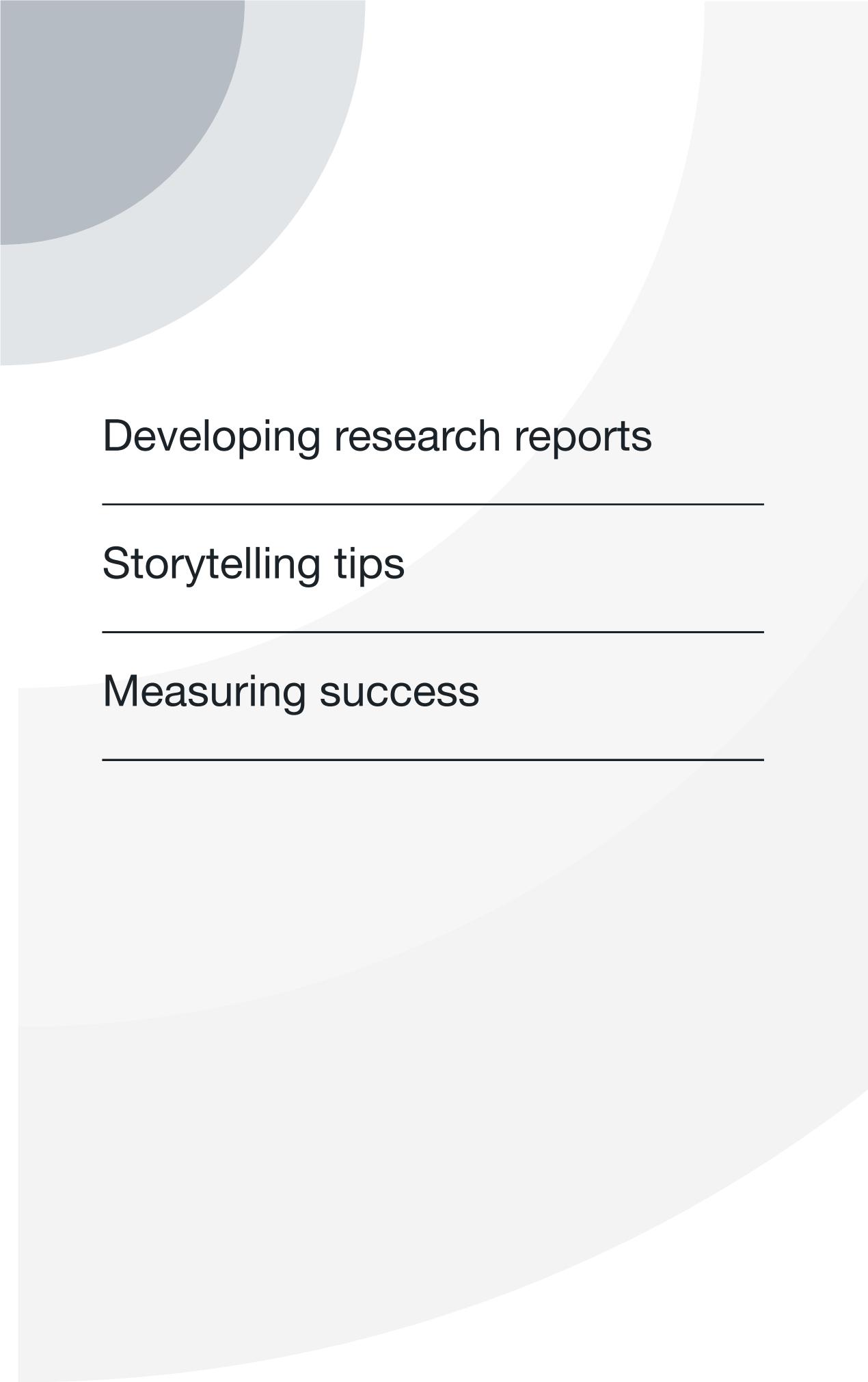
The Participatory approach is especially powerful in Nigerian communities where voice, inclusion, and respect matter.



DODO

Implementing

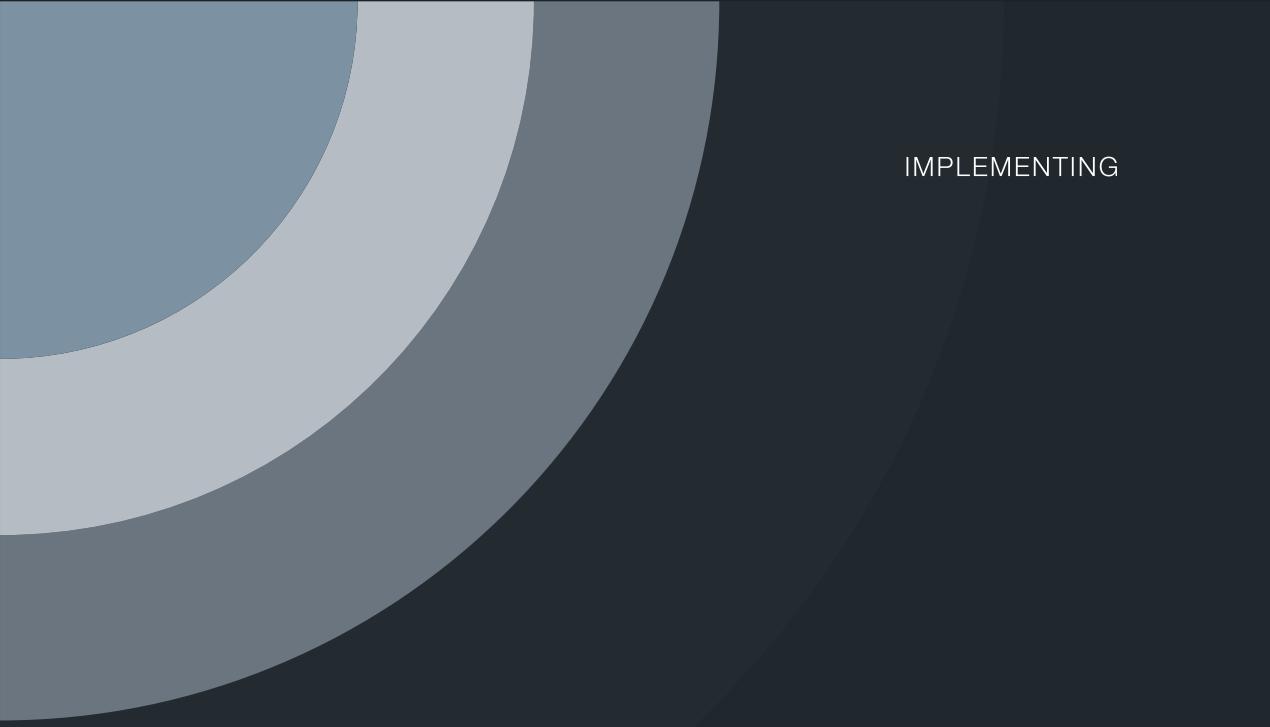
Share, implement, and reflect. Deliver built solutions, Share insights and recommendations through reporting and reflect on insights and impact. Share learnings openly to grow community capacity. Emphasize sustainability, local ownership, and iterative learning.



Developing research reports

Storytelling tips

Measuring success



IMPLEMENTING

Developing research reports

DEVELOPING RESEARCH REPORTS

IMPLEMENTING

Your report is how you turn research into action.

Keep it clear, structured, and visual.

You should include:

- Context on what you set out to learn and how you approached it.
- Key findings and insights organized by themes or needs.
- Opportunity areas on what can be improved or recommendations on what to explore next.
- Appendix: any detailed notes, transcripts, or data.

Use simple, confident language, visuals that support understanding, and highlight the stories that matter most to your stakeholders. Make sure to use pictures to showcase what you found, your ideas, synthesized data and even recommendations where relevant.

IMPLEMENTING

Storytelling tips

STORYTELLING TIPS

IMPLEMENTING

Stories make your findings relatable and memorable. Bring your data to life by weaving in participant quotes, short anecdotes, and visuals that will connect your audience to real moments or emotions. Use photos, sketches, or journey visuals to highlight human experiences, not just statistics. This helps your audience connect with the “why” behind your insights and builds empathy for the people you’re designing for.

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- Key findings and insights organized by themes or needs.
- Opportunity areas on what can be improved or recommendations on what to explore next.
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IMPLEMENTING

Measuring Success

MEASURING SUCCESS

IMPLEMENTING

After research, define how success will be tracked and sustained.

Create a simple checklist to guide your monitoring and evaluation:

- What change or outcome do you want to see?
- How will you measure it (quantitative and qualitative indicators)?
- Who is responsible for tracking progress?
- How often will you review results?

Tracking KPIs ensures that insights don't end in reports but translate into measurable improvements and long-term learning.