



III. UN Guide to Producing Statistics on Time Use

Regional Workshop on Time Use Statistics: Methods and Uses

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Iliana Vaca Trigo
Statistician
United Nations Statistics Division



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- ✓ Scope and coverage of time-use data
- ✓ Survey instruments for collecting time-use data
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Scope and coverage of time-use data

🕒 Activity and time

Activity: the human behavior in terms of *what* is being done and may be characterized by the context in which it occurs, its timing, duration, sequence and the frequency with which it takes place.

Reference period: is the time frame for which survey respondents are asked to report their activities.

- **Length of time (day vs week)**
- **Type of day (single day vs multiple days)**
- **Method for assigning the day/week**

🕒 Simultaneous activities

A simultaneous activity is one that is carried out at the same time as another.

Concurrent activities (cooking and taking care of a child, reading while riding a bus, watching television while eating)

Sequential activities sequentially, frequently switching back and forth between activities (gardening and doing laundry).

“Secondary” activity is generally considered to be less important, require less attention or be less intense than the simultaneous “primary” activity.

Scope and coverage of time-use data

Contextual information

Features of the environment in which a specific activity episode takes place (e.g. location, with whom), additional defining characteristics of the activity (e.g. for whom, paid/unpaid), or subjective aspects (enjoyment, stress and wellbeing).

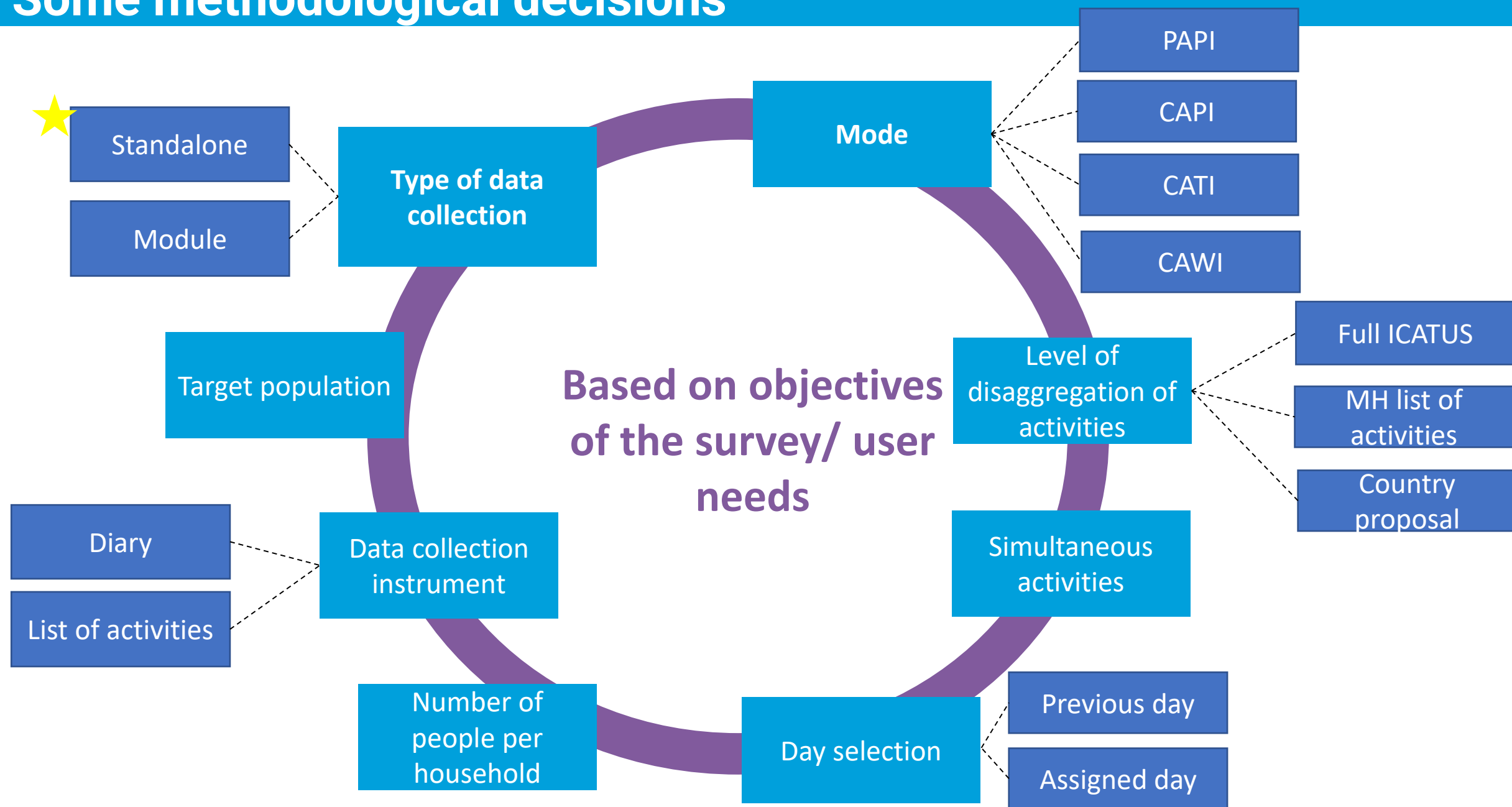
Background information

Background characteristics of respondents and their household composition, are critical to support the analysis, interpretation and uses of time-use data.











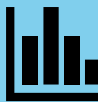




Background characteristics of household members may be necessary to identify eligible respondents (e.g. persons aged 15 years and older).

Background information can also aid validation and quality assessment of the time-use data (e.g. enable checks or by linking information such as unpaid care time with children or adults with disabilities listed in the household roster)

Some methodological decisions



Some methodological decisions: Independent survey or module?

Independent stand-alone survey on time use		Time-use module in a multi-purpose survey
 Tailored to the time-use data objectives and requirements		Careful consideration needed to ensure host survey objectives, target population, number of respondents, period of reference, among others are in line with time-use data requirements 
 Background questionnaire is designed to collect information required to support time-use data analysis		Background information already available from the host survey 
 Higher collection cost (difficulty to maintain frequency)		Lower cost (take advantage of sampling design and field operation) 
 Data uses in line with time-use survey objectives		Data uses might be limited to the possibilities of the host survey 
 More granularity of the data (population subgroups, activities)		Respondent's fatigue could compromise response rates 
Field challenges and training on time-use collection for interviewers		

Examples of country experiences using modular approaches to collect time-use data

Country and most recent year	Base survey	Characteristics
Cameroon 2014	Cameroonian Household Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multipurpose survey on poverty and living conditions: health, education, labour force characteristics, agriculture, migration • Diary using one-hour intervals, up to 5 activities per interval • Mixed mode: PAPI, CAPI • Provides estimates at national and regional level (12 regions)
México 2019	National Occupation and Employment Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sociodemographic and labour force characteristics of the population aged 15 or over • Stylized questions on time use • Mode: CAPI • Provides estimates at national, state and municipal levels • Proxy respondent: One respondent aged 15 or over provides information on all the household members 15+
Switzerland 2016	Labour Force Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stylized questions on unpaid work: domestic work, care, formal voluntary and informal voluntary • Mixed mode: CAWI with CATI option • Provides estimates at national and regional level
Tanzania 2019-2020 (Zanzibar) 2017-18 (mainland)	Household Budget Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household budget survey measuring poverty and living conditions: food security, health, education, • Diary with open intervals • Mode: CAPI • Provides estimates at national and regional levels and above/below poverty level

Survey instruments for collecting time-use data

🕒 Stylized questions

Ask respondents the **total amount of time they spent on selected activities** during a specific reference period. May use categories covering all possible activities or may be limited to a specific subset or subsets of activities (such as only unpaid domestic and care work). The respondent totals the amount of time they spent on the activity category during the reference period, over all episodes. This gives a total amount of time. It **does not capture the timing of the activities, nor the sequence of activities, nor the number of activity episodes** during a given reference period.

COMPRAS PARA EL HOGAR

6.8 Durante la semana pasada, ¿usted...

6.8 During last week, did you...

- 1. look for or buy spare parts, tires, construction tools, or materials, for the car, house, or land?**
- 2. look for or do grocery shopping, stationery, medicines, or cleaning supplies?**
- 3. search for or buy items or goods for your household, such as dishes, tablecloths, furniture, clothing, footwear, or others?**

6.8.a Including the transfer, how much time did you spend...

from Monday to Friday? HOURS MINUTES

Saturday and Sunday? HOURS MINUTES

| | | | : | | | | | | | |

| | | | : | | | | | | | |

| | | | : | | | | | | | |

Survey instruments for collecting time-use data

🕒 Time-use diaries

Capture the **full sequence of activity episodes** performed during a specific reference period together with the starting and ending time of each activity. The respondent reports each activity episode, in **chronological order** together with additional information for the episode. Time-use diaries provide information on the **duration, timing, sequence, and number of episodes** of specific activities during the reference period.

Full diary

Writing verbatim descriptions of activities that are coded later on to an activity classification

Day 1		6 am - 9 am			2
1	2	3	4	5	
What was your main activity? (Please record all activities, even if they only lasted a few minutes)	Who did you do this for? (e.g. self, family, work, friend, a charity, the community)	What else were you doing at the same time? (e.g. childminding, watching television, listening to the radio)	Where were you? (e.g. at work, home, on a bus, driving the car)	Who was with you at home, or with you away from home? (e.g. no-one, family, friends)	
6.00 Sleep	Self	Passive child care	Home	Family	
↓					
6.05					
6.10					
6.15					
6.20 Toilet					
6.25 Had shower					
↓					
6.30					
6.35 Got dressed					
6.40 Put on a load of washing	Family				
6.45 Made breakfast		Talked to family			
↓					
6.50					
6.55 Ate breakfast	Self	Read newspaper			
7.00					
↓					
7.05					
7.10 Hung washing on line	Family	Nothing			

Survey instruments for collecting time-use data

🕒 Time-use diaries

Capture the **full sequence of activity episodes** performed during a specific reference period together with the starting and ending time of each activity. The respondent reports each activity episode, in **chronological order** together with additional information for the episode. Time-use diaries provide information on the **duration, timing, sequence, and number of episodes** of specific activities during the reference period.

Light diary

Restricts activity descriptions to a limited categorization of “pre-coded” activities

Figure 4. Illustration of a light diary

Activity categories		04.00-05.00	05.00-06.00	06.00-07.00	07.00-08.00	08.00-09.00	09.00-10.00
Sleeping and resting	1	■	■	■	■	■	■
Eating	2			■			
Personal care	3			■			
School (also homework)	4						
Work as employed	5						
Own business work	6						
Farming	7						
Animal rearing	8						
Fishing	9						
Shopping/getting services	10						
Weaving, sewing, other textile care	11						
Cooking	12						
Domestic work (washing, cleaning)	13						
Care for children/adults/elderly	14						
Commuting	15						
Travelling	16						
Watching TV	17						
Reading	18						
Sitting with family	19						
Exercising	20						
Social visits	21						
Practising hobbies	22						
Other, specify	23						

Survey instruments for collecting time-use data

🕒 Time-use diaries

Recording time

🕒 **Fixed intervals:** non-overlapping segments of uniform length -> Interval length?

🕒 **Open recording:** the respondent reports start and finish times of each activity

Simultaneous activities

Context

Layout

Che cosa sta facendo?		Indichi una attività o al massimo due per ogni colonna, ad intervalli di tempo di 10 minuti!	🕒 07:00					🕒 08:00				
			10	20	30	40	50	10	20	30	40	50
Cura personale	Dormire	01	X	—	X							
	Mangiare, bere	02						X				
	Igiene e cura personale	03		X	X							
Spostamenti	Spostarsi per svolgere delle attività	04						X	—	X		
Lavoro	Lavoro	05									X	X
Scuola	Scuola, università, corsi	06										
Cura della casa e della famiglia	Cucinare, apparecchiare/sparecchiare, lavare i piatti	07						X				
	Pulire, riordinare la casa, giardinaggio	08										
	Lavare, stirare e mettere a posto panni	09										
	Cura di animali da compagnia	10										
	Manutenzione, riparazioni (casa, veicoli)	11										
	Spesa, shopping, altri acquisti di beni	12							X			
	Acquisto servizi e altra gestione della casa e della famiglia	13										
	Cura di bambini/ragazzi della famiglia	14										
	Cura e aiuti ad adulti della famiglia	15										
	Produzione di beni per la propria famiglia	16										
Tempo libero	Parlare, socializzare, uso social media	17										
	Assistere a spettacoli, mostre, musei	18										
	Passeggiate, sport	19										
	Leggere	20										
	Guardare/ascoltare TV, video, radio, musica	21							X			
Volontariato e aiuti	Passatempo, giochi e altre attività di tempo libero	22										
	Volontariato in gruppi o associazioni	23										
	Aiuti diretti ad altre famiglie, comunità, ambiente	24										
Partecipazione	Partecipazione religiosa e sociale	25										
Altra attività	Specificare:	26										
Sta usando Internet?			🕒 07:00					🕒 08:00				
Indichi se sta usando Internet, Smartphone, Pc o altri dispositivi		27									X	
Dove si trova o come si sta spostando?			🕒 07:00					🕒 08:00				
Luogo	A casa	28	X	—	—	—	X					
	Luogo di lavoro/Scuola	29									X	X
	Altro luogo	30										
Mezzo	A piedi/bici	31								X		
	Mezzo pubblico (treno, autobus, metro...)	32								X	X	
	Mezzo privato (auto, moto)	33										
È da solo o con persone che conosce?			🕒 07:00					🕒 08:00				
Con chi sta	Da solo, con sconosciuti	34			X	X			X	—	X	
	Con persone conviventi	35						X	X			
	Con persone non conviventi	36										X

Survey instruments for collecting time-use data

🕒 Time-use diaries

1

● Fecha del día: 12 de enero de 2021 ⓘ

	Actividad 1	Actividad 2	Actividad 3	Observaciones
00	 ⓘ			
	 			
01				

2

Trabajo Cuidado Doméstica Personal Ocio Voluntarias

● Seleccione la actividad ⓘ

 Trabajar en una ocupación ⓘ	 Realizar una pasantía no remunerada ⓘ
 Buscar trabajo o iniciar un negocio ⓘ	 Viajar para ir y volver del trabajo ⓘ
 Trabajar para consumo propio del hogar ⓘ	 Otras actividades sin clasificar ⓘ

3

● Defina el rango horario

🕒 Desde 0:0 Hasta 0:10

Layout

Survey instruments for collecting time-use data

Considerations	Stylized questions	Diary
Timing/sequence	Can't collect	Can collect, may help improve accuracy
Simultaneous activities	Can collect in a limited way (questions can ask about activity pairs)	Can collect at episode level
Activity context	Can collect if included in the question	Can collect at episode level
Less-frequent activities	Can include questions targeting less-frequent activities	Prone to being missed
Reference period	Can cover multiple days/week, Increasing the number of days might affect the accuracy of the total time spent on each activity	Can cover multiple days Increasing the number of days increases the burden on the respondent
Completeness	Questions about specific activities prompt memory, improving recall and reporting; these activities unlikely to be accidentally excluded. Could be over or under the number of hours of the reference period (a day could have data for more or less than 24 hours)	Some activities may be forgotten and under-reported. Activity information should add up to 24 hours (though can have missing time slots)
Simplicity	Simple to collect and process. Produces same type of output (number of minutes or hours) for all respondents.	Processing and analyzing data are more complicated in particular for full diaries. Respondents provide varying levels of detail.
Literacy and comprehension	Respondents with low literacy can have difficulties with activity categories	Respondents with low literacy can have difficulties with self-complete forms
Cost	Data processing and analysis are simpler, reducing costs. Lists with fewer activities reduce data collection time, reducing field costs.	Data processing and analysis are more complex, increasing cost. The lighter the diary, the simpler the analysis and lower the cost.
Type of survey	Suitable for a module in a multi-purpose survey, reducing costs compared to a stand-alone survey.	Diaries most often used in stand-alone surveys but light diaries feasible in modules.

Minimum Harmonized Instrument for the collection of time-use data

- **Why and when using it?**
 - For more frequent collections
 - As a start point for countries not already collecting time-use data
- **What it consists of?**
 - Essential Background characteristics
 - Minimum individual and household data
 - List of 25 activities covering a 24 hour period
 - Light diary survey option
 - Stylized questionnaire survey option
- **International comparability**
 - Correspondence table for activities between MHI and the Harmonized European Time-Use Surveys Classification (HETUS)



Minimum Harmonized Instrument – Minimum activity list

1. Working in paid job or income generating activities
2. Making goods for own household or family use
3. Volunteer work
4. Preparing and serving food and meals for own household or family members
5. Cleaning own or family dwelling
6. Maintaining and making small repairs in own or family dwelling
7. Cleaning and care of clothing and footwear of own household or family members
8. Managing own household
9. Taking care of pet of own household or family
10. Shopping for own household or family
11. Taking care of own (household or family) child
12. Taking care of or helping adults (own household or family)
13. Education
14. Socializing and communication
15. Community participation, civic and related responsibilities, and religious practices
16. Cultural, entertainment and sports events
17. Hobbies, games and other pastime activities
18. Sport participation and exercising
19. Reading for leisure
20. Watching TV/Listening to radio or streaming
21. Sleep
22. Eating and drinking
23. Personal hygiene and care
24. Travel
25. Other

SDG 5.4.1

Minimum Harmonized Instrument – Minimum activity list

Common language

- 1 Working for pay or doing activities to generate an income for yourself or your family
- 2 Unpaid activities done to produce goods for use by your household or family
- 3 Helping neighbours, friends, or others without receiving payment
- 4 Cooking, preparing or heating meals, setting up or clearing the table or washing the dishes
- 5 Cleaning the inside or outside of the dwelling; disposal of garbage or recycling, water plants
- 6 Making minor repairs to the dwelling, repairing or maintaining furniture, appliances, or household vehicles
- 7 Washing, ironing, hanging drying, mending clothes or cleaning footwear
- 8 Budgeting, paying bills, organizing or planning household-related activities or completing administrative forms such as passports, contracts, applications, or collecting social program benefits
- 9 Taking care of a family pet, feeding, bathing, taking them for walks, cleaning their space or using veterinary or pet services
- 10 Buying household supplies, food, or clothing for family members in person or online
- 11 Taking care of children in your household or family by feeding, bathing, dressing, putting to bed, talking, playing, assisting or supervising homework, attending school or care provider meetings, accompanying to appointments, providing healthcare
- 12 Taking care of adults in your household or family by feeding, bathing, dressing, putting to bed, talking, listening, providing healthcare or planning for health care services or helping with personal business management
- 13 Education, attending classes or courses onsite or online, or education-related assignments, homework
- 14 Getting together with others for social purposes, talking, chatting, writing or reading personal emails or texts
- 15 Joining in community festivities or events, attending civil obligations, or participating in religious celebrations or practices
- 16 Attending cultural, entertainment and sports events
- 17 Participating hobbies such as painting, music, or photography, playing games, or relaxing
- 18 Participating in a sport or exercise
- 19 Reading for leisure (e.g. newspapers, books, e-books, social media, magazines)
- 20 Watching TV, listening to radio or streaming
- 21 Sleeping
- 22 Eating or drinking
- 23 Own personal hygiene such as showering, getting dressed, getting a haircut or personal health care like resting sick or visiting doctors or specialist
- 24 Traveling to and from places
- 25 Other (including no answer or refusal)

Minimum Harmonized Instrument – Data collection tools

Digital light diary instrument

- 🕒 Permits self-completion by respondent and/or interviewer-assisted setting
- 🕒 Drop down list of activities to select from as well as pre-defined contextual information associated to the activity
- 🕒 Contextual variables: Location, With whom, For whom, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) use
- 🕒 Collect at least one simultaneous activity using a pre-defined list which is a subset of the MHI list
- 🕒 Quality checks to be built within the instrument for travel and basic physical needs such as eating and ensure a whole 24 hours was described

Minimum Harmonized Instrument – Data collection tools

Digital light diary instrument

What were you doing at 4:00 am?

Dropdown list: (25 MHI activities)



1	working for pay or doing activities to generate an income for yourself or your family
2	unpaid activities done to produce goods for use by your household or family
3	helping neighbours, friends, or others without receiving payment
4	cooking, preparing or heating meals, setting up or clearing the table or washing the dishes
5	cleaning the inside or outside of the dwelling; disposal of garbage or recycling, water plants
6	making minor repairs to the dwelling, repairing or maintaining furniture, appliances, or household vehicles
7	washing, ironing, hanging drying, mending clothes or cleaning footwear
8	budgeting, paying bills, organizing or planning household-related activities or completing administrative forms such as passports, contracts, applications, or collecting social program benefits
9	taking care of a family pet, feeding, bathing, taking them for walks, cleaning their space or using veterinary or pet services
10	buying household supplies, food, or clothing for family members in person or online
11	taking care of children in your household or family by feeding, bathing, dressing, putting to bed, talking, playing, assisting or supervising homework, attending school or care provider meetings, accompanying to appointments, providing healthcare
12	taking care of adults in your household or family by feeding, bathing, dressing, putting to bed, talking, listening, providing healthcare or planning for health care services or helping with personal business management
13	education, attending classes or courses onsite or online, or education-related assignments, homework
14	getting together with others for social purposes, talking, chatting, writing or reading personal emails or texts
15	joining in community festivities or events, attending civil obligations, or participating in religious celebrations or practices
16	attending cultural, entertainment and sports events
17	participating hobbies such as painting, music, or photography, playing games, or relaxing
18	participating in a sport or exercise
19	reading for leisure (e.g. newspapers, books, e-books, social media, magazines)
20	watching TV, listening to radio or streaming
21	sleeping
22	eating or drinking
23	own personal hygiene such as showering, getting dressed, getting a haircut or personal health care like resting sick or visiting doctors or specialist
24	traveling to and from places
25	other (including no answer or refusal)

Minimum Harmonized Instrument – Data collection tools

Digital light diary instrument

What were you doing at 4:00 am?

Dropdown list: (25 MHI activities)



How long did this activity last?

Hours (00-23) minutes (00-59)

Minimum Harmonized Instrument – Data collection tools

Digital light diary instrument

What were you doing at 4:00 am?

Dropdown list: (25 MHI activities)



How long did this activity last?

Hours (00-23) minutes (00-59)

Where were you?

Dropdown list: (places or transportation mode)



- 1 At home
- 2 At place of work or school
- 3 At another residence
- 4 Outdoors (away from home)
- 5 At store or place of service
- 6 Other (non travel)
- 7 Car, van, truck as a driver
- 8 Car, van, truck as a passenger
- 9 Public transportation such as bus, tramway, subway, light train, ferry
- 10 Bicycle
- 11 Walking
- 12 Taxi, limousine service
- 13 Plane
- 14 Other transport
- 99 Refusal, no answer

Minimum Harmonized Instrument – Data collection tools

Digital light diary instrument

What were you doing at 4:00 am?

Dropdown list: (25 MHI activities)



How long did this activity last?

Hours (00-23) minutes (00-59)

Where were you?

Dropdown list: (places or transportation mode)



Who was with you?

Dropdown list:



- 1 Alone
- 2 Spouse or partner
- 3 Household children
- 4 Other household or family
- 5 Friends
- 6 Workmates, colleagues, classmates
- 7 Other

Minimum Harmonized Instrument – Data collection tools

Digital light diary instrument

For whom did you mainly provide this unpaid household work?

Drop down based on the selected activity



For **volunteer work** (MHI activity 3)

- Friends
- Neighbours
- Colleagues from work, school or community organization
- Acquaintances
- Other

For **unpaid domestic work** (MHI activities 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10)

- For paid job / own or family business
- For use by own family or household member(s)
- For use by family member(s) from another household
- For use by other

For **unpaid care work** (MHI activities 11 and 12)

- Family members living in your household
- Family members living outside your household
- Unrelated household members
- Other

Minimum Harmonized Instrument – Data collection tools

Digital light diary instrument

For whom did you mainly provide this unpaid household work?

Drop down based on the selected activity



Were you **using any type of ICT** for this activity?

Question shown for specific activities such as working, socializing, education, shopping

Minimum Harmonized Instrument – Data collection tools

Digital light diary instrument

For whom did you mainly provide this unpaid household work? ↓

Drop down based on the selected activity

Were you **using any type of ICT** for this activity?

Question shown for specific activities such as working, socializing, education, shopping

Please indicate if you were doing any of these **activities at the same time.** ↓

Drop-down list for secondary activities (abridged)

- Housework (such as dishwashing, table cleaning, taking away garbage, laundry, etc.)
- Child care (such as supervising homework, watching child swimming, minding)
- Adult care (such as supervising someone else's medication consumption/ or treatment)
- Organizing, planning or paying bills
- Pet care

Minimum Harmonized Instrument – Data collection tools

Stylized questionnaire instrument

- ⌚ Permits CAPI or CATI collection settings
- ⌚ Asks one question for each of the 25 recommended activities (probing questions may be required for some activities).
. It captures the total amount of time a person spent on each specific activity.
- ⌚ The instrument is administered using eight sections or modules tailored to specific groups of activities within the minimum set of 25. The groupings are:
 - ⌚ self-care and learning
 - ⌚ employment and production of goods for own final use
 - ⌚ unpaid domestic work activities for own household
 - ⌚ unpaid care activities for own household
 - ⌚ unpaid domestic and care activities for non-household persons
 - ⌚ volunteering
 - ⌚ socializing and leisure
 - ⌚ other activities
- ⌚ The set of questions proposed include travel and waiting time in the total amount of time for each activity (except for employment and education)
- ⌚ Countries can set their reference period to a day or a week
- ⌚ Contextual information and simultaneous activities are not asked as it cannot be linked to one single episode
- ⌚ Quality checks so it covers a full 24 hours or 168 hours

Minimum Harmonized Instrument – Data collection tools

Stylized questionnaire instrument

Example :

A1. (Yesterday/Assigned day/Last week) how much time did you sleep?
A2. (Yesterday/Assigned day/Last week) how much time did you spend on personal hygiene (<i>taking showers, getting dressed, getting a haircut</i>) or personal health care (<i>resting sick, visiting doctors</i>)?
A3. (Yesterday/Assigned day/Last week) how much time did you spend eating or drinking?
A4.a. (Yesterday/Assigned day/Last week) did you attend any education classes, participate in an online course or work on education-related assignments? 1. Yes → A4.b 2. No → A5.a
A4.b How much time did you spend on it?
A5.a. (Yesterday/Assigned day/Last week) did you commute to and from school, college, or university? 1. Yes → A5.b 2. No → B1
A5.b How much time did you spend on it?

Reference period a day	Reference period a week
[] hours and [] minutes	Hours and minutes Monday to Friday [] and [] Saturday and Sunday [] and []