**Family protocol (PLA 1) A day in the life of the family**

We will use a participatory learning in action (PLA) approach to avoid the tedium and formality of ‘interviews’ and enable us to gain a relational, contextualised view of factors associated with ILFA at the family level.

Procedure:

Researcher sits with 1 or more adult household member, and children if available. If more present, exploit the focus group potential of quick inter-member cross checking and chats between them about what they do.

**First, capture basic demographic information** ie who lives in the home, ages, occupations and educational status. (This might be done via school first and just confirmed with the family).

**Second, main activity, description of the day**: Researcher asks participant 1 (say mother) how she spends her day using a timeline to start the discussion. Researcher listens very attentively prompting for more information, description and examples (when did you last do that, what happened then, do you do that every day, and so on). This should yield structured information about what she does when, and description from prompts about what she says that provide in-depth information about how duties, responsibilities, what she can and cannot do, and what she would like to be able to do more and less of along the way, and so on.

This approach is pursued for every family member, so it maps what everyone in the household is doing at any time of the day and where there are intersections and co-dependencies, or individual working. Participant 1 could report on this, and/or the research could ask each individual to tell you about their typical day. Age and role differences, and the reasons for them, should clearly emerge.

One exercise should cover a typical day during the school term, and pay attention to any potential seasonal differences by asking when this kind of routine is not maintained. It should also be done for a day in the school vacation so differences in time and duty allocation of household members can be seen.

**Note** that within the description of the day that we are ostensibly eliciting is contained a whole set of complex hows and whys (these emerge from responses to the prompts given above, such as ‘when did you last do that, what happened then, do you do that every day, and so on’), bringing in various structural and institutional and social factors that shape daily activities, and ILFA.

It is important also to provide **methodological reflections** as part of the write-up of these exercises as we are innovating the use of PLA techniques in educational studies so this is of interest to a wide international audience and we will be writing about it.