

TOOL 2.6

PGI FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE





GUIDANCE AND INSTRUCTIONS

There is general guidance on how to conduct a focus group discussion (FGD) in the IFRC Community Engagement and Accountability Toolkit (Tool 5). The following guidance is for conducting a PGI specific FGD that will help you assess issues related to context, and to the PGI areas of dignity, access, participation and safety.

Target audience – The target groups to discuss with are those that can be considered to have needs and may be considered vulnerable. You should aim to host:

- sex specific FGDs (one for males, one for females inclusive of gender diversity factors)
- consider mixed forums, as well as (where possible)
- host separate forums for groups (such as transgender community members, people with disabilities, marginalised groups, the elderly, youth) because different people will feel comfortable disclosing different issues depending on the group composition.
- If you are holding FGDs with anyone below the age of 18 (adolescents or children), written consent has to be obtained from the guardian or caregiver for the child/adolescent to participate in the FGD.

The ideal size of a group is 5-7 people but can include less or more with a minimum of 5 and maximum of 10.

Staffing – For FGDs it is necessary to have at least one person to facilitate and one to take notes. You should ideally have male and female facilitators. If the FGD is dealing with PGI sensitive analysis of safety concerns (e.g. child protection, SGBV), it is crucial that you:

- have a female facilitator speak to groups of women and discuss how to ensure that any male staff leave the room during part of that discussion. This creates space for a frank discussion especially where there may be issues that are taboo or difficult to raise in front of the opposite sex. This

same guidance should be managed for male facilitators to facilitate male only discussions where needed.

- are mindful of age differences, sometimes older participants do not feel comfortable of sharing in front of young facilitator.

In order to collect perspectives on how to mainstream PGI into other sectors, but also be able to design interventions for standalone protection issues, the data collected during such FGDs includes both cross-sectoral and PGI specific questions. Kindly note that PGI issues may come up in a discussion of any sector (you may learn that the community believes one group is not receiving support or that there are particularly dignity, access, participation and safety concerns). Your questions should be broad and open ended, and you will need to make it clear that it is intended that the respondents speak to the needs of all those (from their group) rather than only their individual household situation. It is helpful to let people know that if they have personal questions, that they can raise them afterwards or privately but that it may not be within your ability to address all concerns. You should always have referral information in your hand and know which agencies to direct someone to if they require counselling, livelihoods, legal aid, RFL, health-care, or protection (case management/police) services.

If someone discloses protection information to you, you should ensure you:

- apply the survivor centred approach
- keep all information confidential
- provide them with referral and help seeking information that they can pursue themselves
- only refer with informed consent from the individual

(See Tool 3.2 Guidance on basic referral mapping and case management for more information on the above)

When asking questions always consider the purpose question and guidance notes to better explain what information is required, as well as what information to document.

Working with interpreters – If you are working with interpreters, whether professional or not, brief them prior to the FGD:

- on the confidential nature of anything shared in the room
- that they should not in any circumstance disclose personal protection information that is shared in the focus group discussion
- on the purpose and meaning of the questions to ensure the best translation of intent.
- on how to translate ‘umbrella’ terms such as dignity, sexual and gender-based violence, child protection concerns, and safety.

You should continue to speak in first person even when speaking via an interpreter and you should ask the interpreter to translate phrases in the first person rather than summarizing phrases or rephrasing. (For example, if you say ‘I want to ask you all a clarifying question’ then the interpreter should translate this word for word/ ‘I want to ask you all a clarifying question’ in language). This will assist in ensuring the best quality of information and in verifying who is speaking and about individual or group concerns.

Lastly, in PGI focus group discussions, issues that may be rumours or incidents that happened in the past could be spoken about. If there is discussion (for example)

Working with children – Participation of children and youth should always be encouraged in participatory assessments. Girls and boys have needs and abilities which are significantly different from those of adults and from each other. Communicating with children and young people has some requirements which include the following:

- Being at ease with children, engaging with them in whatever style of suits the individual (e.g. by sitting on the ground, through play, going for a walk) and tolerating expressions of distress, aggression;
- Using simple language and concepts appropriate to the child’s age, stage of development, and culture;
- Accepting that children who have had distressing experiences may find it extremely difficult to trust an unfamiliar adult. It may take time and patience before the child can feel enough trust to communicate openly;
- Understanding that children may view their situation in distinctly different ways from adults: children may fantasize, invent explanations for unfamiliar or frightening events, express themselves in symbolic ways, emphasize issues which may seem unimportant to adults and so on;
- Being sensitive to gender, culture, ethics, and the power relations between adults and the child;
- Encouraging the involvement of colleagues/ partner staff who are familiar with working with children in a participatory way.

To adapt PGI focus group content for younger children (such as to activity based approaches) consult [A Kit of Tools For Participatory Research and Evaluation with Children, Young Adults and Adults, Save the Children Norway 2008](#) or [Guidelines for Children’s Participation in Humanitarian Programming, Save the Children 2013](#).

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about a certain group of people being turned away from a service or left out, ask follow-up questions about:

- which service,
- whether this is a current or past issue,
- whether this has been experienced recently and/or by someone in the room or someone known to the respondents.

Recovery Programming Tip!

In the case that you are planning Recovery Programmes, it is important to get as much detail as possible to inform the Recovery plan. If a problem is identified at a service, you should also follow up with a service by addressing any discrimination issues that arise (such as through training or advocacy activities through your Recovery plan).

For PGI incidents that come to your attention during the FGD, please also fill in the Incident Monitoring Form (Tool 3.6 PGI Incident Monitoring Form).

Before you begin the focus group discussion:

- identify a private space to hold the discussion
- have a plan what to do with the information collected and that it will not affect the aid they are receiving from RCRC in their community
- host the discussions at times when the target groups are most likely to be available
- consult with the National Society if it is common practice to provide food and drink
- do not offer per diems, money or gifts for attendance
- provide participants with a map on the location of National Society Services and a phone number for a focal point they can contact in case they cannot find/attend the focus group discussion

Let participants know:

- what you will do with the information collected and that what share is kept anonymous and it will not affect the aid they are receiving from RCRC in their community
- that they can choose not to answer a question
- that we hope to hear from everyone, so it is important to leave space for everyone who wishes to contribute

Lastly, **choose only the questions and activities from the list below that you will be able to complete in the time allocated, and adapt any questions to your sector or local needs.**

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

- consent forms (one copy for participants, one copy for the team) or one group consent form
- referral service directory, one for each participant and for each staff or volunteer
- name tags (optional)
- pads and pencils for each participant
- 1 recording device (seek permission first)
- a camera (seek permission first)
- batteries for recording device/camera
- markers
- flip chart paper or post-it notes for making wall matrix
- pre-printed wall matrix and daily clocks (optional)
- notebook for note-taking (optional)
- refreshments
- access tool 'PGI Incident Monitoring Form' for all members of the team (staff and volunteers)

WARM-UP ACTIVITIES

A few warm-up activities that you can run with the focus group participants (if you have time) include:

1. Daily schedule clocks: Ask FGD participants to draw a clock on a piece of paper and ask them to account for the daily activities of a group of people in the community (women, men, girls, boys, or women with disabilities, men with disabilities, etc.). Ask each group to present their clock, to show that different people have different needs, experiences, vulnerabilities. Talk about how important it is to consider each group's specific needs in order to ensure an impartial humanitarian response. **Some prompts for this include: "We would like to ask you about the roles and responsibilities of women, men, boys and girls in your community please draw the current daily schedule of xx group of people on the clock face provided. Your group will present the clock, please ensure you**

tell us what has changed in the daily schedule since the crisis happened".

2. The PGI matrix: Draw a matrix on the wall with sectors down the left hand axis (for example: health, WASH, shelter), and with population groups along the top axis (for example: girls 0-10, girls 11-17, women, boys 0-10, girls 11-17, men, elderly, people with disabilities, indigenous people, sexual and gender minorities) and ask the group to identify the key needs in each sector for each group of people. You could also form the participants into groups and give each group one 'sector' to analyse, asking them to identify needs for each group of people listed across the top, ensuring participants are very specific about what the different experiences and needs of each group are.

Sample matrix:

	GIRLS 0-10	GIRLS 11-17	WOMEN	BOYS 0-10	BOYS 11-17	MEN	PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES	SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITIES
Shelter								
Health								
WASH								
Menstrual Hygiene Management								

3. The DAPS matrix: Draw a matrix on the wall which includes sectors down the left side, and the 4 DAPS headings as well men, women, girls and boys across the top (see below). Discuss what dignity, access, participation and safety mean. Break participants into groups and ask each group to identify key challenges (or solutions) related

to the DAPS headings for each sector disaggregated by groups and present back to the group. Ask if any issues are missing after each group has presented. Instead of words, you can use pictographic representation (a house for shelter, a hospital for health and then images of people representative of the groups)

Sample matrix:

	DIGNITY				ACCESS				PARTICIPATION				SAFETY			
	G	B	W	M	G	B	W	M	G	B	W	M	G	B	W	M
Shelter																
Health																
WASH																

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Introduction and consent

Introduce yourself, and any other staff, volunteers and interpreters in the room.

Thank the informants for participating in focus group discussion

1. Explain the objectives and expectations of the discussion
2. Outline the session and the amount of time the interview will take
3. Ask permission from the group to take notes and photos

General intro

Good morning/afternoon, my/our name is/are_____. We work for the Red Cross (IFRC). Do you know the Red Cross? [If no, explain – Red Cross/IFRC is a humanitarian organisation that helps people affected by crisis and disaster. The help we provide is always free and given based on need alone.] We are in _____ your community to get information about the issues related to dignity, access, participation and general safety and what the main needs of different groups are.

The information provided will be used by the Red Cross (and potentially other responders – Government, UN agencies, NGOs) to plan and deliver humanitarian support tailored to different needs.

- Participation in these consultations is free and there is no obligation to respond, you can stop at any point. We will use the household information to design a programme that builds on priority needs and takes into consideration the capacity of the community.
- No personal data will be shared with others and the information provided will be analysed anonymously and used confidentially.
- Your views are valuable and important and will contribute to improve the humanitarian support that your community will receive over the next months.

Do you have any questions?

CONSENT:

Do you provide consent to document, use, store and share the information provided for reporting and communication purposes?

YES NO *(if no, say thanks and terminate the interview)*

Do you provide consent to take, use, store and share your photos for reporting and communication purposes?

YES NO *(If NO, do not take photos of the person/s at any time and ask if you can continue the interview)*

May I begin now?

QUESTIONS	GUIDANCE
<p>Can you please describe a typical day in your community before the crisis?</p> <p>Please describe a typical day after the crisis.</p>	<p>Overarching question (Context, warm-up)</p>
DIGNITY (RESPECT FOR LIFE, INTEGRITY AND HUMANITY)	
<p>Who (for example women, men, boys, girls, people with disabilities) is in need? Of what? Why?</p> <p>Who has been most affected by the crisis?</p>	<p>Overarching question (Problems)</p> <p>First ask them to identify the problems.</p> <p>Then ask them to choose the most significant among them and record these, also asking about the reasons behind them.</p> <p>You can use the wall matrix to analyse needs.</p>
<p>What issues affecting women's dignity, men's dignity, the dignity of boys and girls, of the elderly, or people with disabilities?</p> <p><i>Make sure the participants have a same understanding of word 'dignity'.</i></p>	<p>Open ended.</p>
<p>What are some solutions to these issues?</p> <p>Ask participants to rank the most prevalent 3 issues to be addressed in the solutions sections.</p>	<p>Overarching question (Solutions)</p> <p>Open ended. As participants to rank problems and then to identify solutions for 3-5 most important problems.</p> <p>No options provided, but key solutions to be recorded.</p>
<p>(In female specific focus groups only) ask:</p> <p>How is menstruation managed? What are the preferred products and approaches?</p>	<p>Open ended.</p>
<p>Who (organisations/business/government etc.) supports dignity?</p>	<p>Overarching question (Actors)</p> <p>Open ended. No options provided, but main players recorded</p>
<p>What can members of the community do to address issues related to dignity? What help/support is needed?</p>	<p>Explore what needs to be prioritized to support PGI specific or sectoral programming.</p>
ACCESS (INFORMATION ON DISCRIMINATION, PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY, AFFORDABILITY, INFORMATION ACCESS)	
<p>Do any groups or people face difficulty to access aid? (Is it safe? Do they have to pay?)</p>	<p>Overarching question (Problems)</p> <p>Ask participants to rank the top 3 or 4 problems.</p>
<p>What are the best ways to overcome these problems?</p>	<p>Overarching question (Solutions)</p>
<p>What are the best times for women, men, boys and girls to attend distributions, community activities and discussions?</p>	<p>Overarching question (Solutions)</p>

QUESTIONS	GUIDANCE
PARTICIPATION (FULL, EQUAL AND MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY)	
How do men, women, girls and boys and (insert locally used language – transgender, non-binary, third gender, etc.) people participate in community activities and in rebuilding? What has changed since the crisis?	Overarching question (Context)
<p>What community structures exist now to help people voice their concerns, or to organize community activities? Has this changed since the crisis?</p> <p>How do you share information in your community?</p> <p>Are there communication networks (Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber) being used to share information about how to voice concerns or be involved in community activities?</p>	Overarching question (Context)
What things will help and improve the participation of men, women, girls and boys, including people with disabilities and gender and sexual minorities in community activities?	Overarching question (Solutions)
Are children in school? Is childcare available? Are there activities for people with disabilities and their carers to attend? How does this impact parent's and carer's abilities to participate in community services?	Overarching question (Problems and Solutions)
SAFETY (SECTOR SPECIFIC AND ISSUES OF SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, CHILD PROTECTION AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OR ABUSE [BY HUMANITARIANS OR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS])	
<p>What are the security and safety concerns of women and girls/men and boys after the crisis?</p> <p>Prompts: Thank you also for your participation so far. We would like to remind you that everything you share today will remain confidential.</p> <p>Within this community, is there a place where women and girls/men and boys (or sexual and gender minorities) feel unsafe or try to avoid? (During the day? Night?) What issues make them feel unsafe?</p>	Overarching question (Problems)

QUESTIONS	GUIDANCE
<p>When there is a security problem, who can women and girls/men and boys seek assistance from?</p> <p>Who in the community is helpful?</p> <p>Which agencies help with safety problems?</p>	<p>Overarching question (Context and Services)</p>
<p>If you had a question or complaint for the Red Cross how would you most like to register it?</p> <p>Provide some examples here to guide the discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions or complaints boxes • Community representatives to summarise feedback • Being able to record a voice file or make a phone call in order to provide feedback 	<p>Ask for all participants' input and then ask them which would be their top 3</p>
<p><i>SENSITIVE QUESTIONS (ONLY ASK IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE YOU SEEK DIRECT INPUT ON PROTECTION ISSUES)</i></p>	
<p>Who in the community is most at risk of experiencing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)?</p> <p>Probing questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sort of SGBV might [sexual and gender minorities, boys, girls, boys with disabilities, girls with disabilities, women, men, people from ethnic minorities] face? <p>Which organisations work to reduce risk of SGBV and violence against children?</p> <p>Which organisations do you trust to help you if you experience SGBV?</p>	<p>These questions should only be asked if you have prepared the group in advance and let them know that issues of gender-based violence will be discussed. If you do ask these questions, then you should consult the PSS team first, and you should ensure that you have up to date referral information to hand during the session, as well as a PSS staff or volunteer with you (the facilitator) at all times.</p>

PGI FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES

<p>DATE:</p> <p>TIME: (START AND FINISH)</p>		<p>PARTICIPANT INFORMATION</p>	<p>Number of persons:</p> <p>Number of women:</p> <p>Number of men:</p> <p>Age group:</p> <p>Number of persons with disabilities:</p> <p>Other information important to context:</p>
<p>FACILITATOR NAME(S):</p>		<p>IF INTERPRETERS OR NOTE TAKERS PRESENT: name/s, language/s and number of male and female interpreters available</p>	
<p>FACILITATOR POSITION(S):</p>		<p>OTHER AGENCIES' REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT</p>	
<p>AREAS/LOCATIONS PARTICIPATIONS ARE FROM:</p>		<p>OTHER GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION</p>	

DIGNITY	ACCESS
CONTEXT:	CONTEXT:
PROBLEMS (specific group of people who face each problem):	PROBLEMS (specific group of people who face each problem):
SOLUTIONS:	SOLUTIONS:
OTHER:	OTHER:
ISSUES FOR IMMEDIATE FOLLOW UP	ISSUES FOR IMMEDIATE FOLLOW UP
PARTICIPATION	SAFETY
CONTEXT:	CONTEXT:
PROBLEMS (specific group of people who face each problem):	PROBLEMS (specific group of people who face each problem):
SOLUTIONS:	SOLUTIONS:
OTHER:	OTHER:
ISSUES FOR IMMEDIATE FOLLOW UP	ISSUES FOR IMMEDIATE FOLLOW UP