

IMPACT PROJECT

video4change

► **Method: Focus Group Discussions**

When is this method useful?

- When you need to collect individual or collective attitudes to affect behaviour change.
- When you want to create new spaces for communication.
- When you want to increase people's access to knowledge and information.

How do I use this method?

The following worksheet offers tips and examples that will help you use this method.

Focus Group Discussions

▶ Quick Summary

Time: 1-2 hours

Facilitators: 1 per 5 people

Offline option: yes

Online option: no

Participant consent: yes

Scope for creativity: medium

▶ Introduction

The purpose of focus group discussions is to discuss a specific topic with a group of individuals. This method emphasises the gathering of different perspectives from within a group setting but with a group who are generally similar.

Facilitators lead focus group discussions by drawing out discussions between individuals.

This method can be used at any stage of your project, depending on the sort of ideas you want to test.

▶ Considerations

- 1 Consider discussing or drawing up group guidelines or boundaries before you begin the focus group discussion.
- 2 Sensitive topics should be approached very carefully as participants are being asked to reveal themselves to several people.
- 3 This method can reveal rich data but as it engages small groups of participants, findings cannot be generalised to represent the opinions of larger groups.

■ This resource is for video makers to gather evidence of their impact. More tools can be found at <http://www.v4c.org/cookbook>

METHODS

Focus Group Discussions

► Steps

1. Decide how you will capture people's responses. Audio and video recordings are recommended if you feel they are appropriate.

2. Prepare questions in advance of the focus group discussion. Think about the order in which to ask the questions, but be prepared to go 'off script' as discussions often take on a life of their own.

3. Start by telling the participants that you are there to learn from them. Also stress that you are interested in the discussions that will emerge between the people in the room so people should feel free to respond to one another.

4. Use discussion probes (ask for examples, descriptions or perspectives that clarify what is being discussed) when you need more information from the group.

► Discussion probes

1. Can you give me an example of what you mean?
2. Could you explain that point further?
3. Could you tell us more about that?
4. Does anyone else have thoughts on this?
5. Has anyone had a different experience to this?

► TIP

Make sure the space you choose to conduct your focus group is a place where the participants will feel comfortable. Make sure the venue is easy to travel to and to locate.

► TRY

Try and be comfortable with periods of silence during the focus group. This leaves space for people to contribute. Also, have some strategies for moving the conversation away from people who are dominating and towards participants who may be shy or less outspoken. For example: 'Great! Let me stop you there as I'm really curious how others feel about that/want to give us time to also talk about.....'

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