



Knowledge to lead

Focus Group

Preparing a Focus Group

1. Identify the main goal of the focus groups.
2. Select 6-10 participants (they should have strong feelings about the issue to be discussed and also have similar characteristics, such as the same age or the same status).
3. Avoid involving friends in the same session, since they can form cliques.
4. Plan your session (consider that the meeting should last 1.5 hours approximately).
5. Phrase five to six open and neutral questions to ask the participants (be careful to formulate them in a language the participants are familiar with).
6. Send the participants an invitation explaining the goal of the meeting, the proposed agenda, the main issue to be discussed and the related questions.
7. Set a quiet room and arrange the chairs in a circle (if possible, around a table).
8. Plan to record the session (using audio/audio-video recorder) or ask a co-facilitator to take notes during the meeting.

Running a Focus Group

1. Welcome the participants.
2. Ask the participants to introduce themselves and, eventually, to wear name tags.
3. Review the agenda.
4. Introduce the main goal of the meeting.
5. Ask the questions you have prepared and reflect back a summary of participants' answers.
6. Ensure balanced participation: if there is somebody dominating the session, invite participants to speak in turn; respect participants' right to be silent but give them the chance to express themselves in a one-to-one context (for instance, during a break).
7. Let disagreements arise, since they can lead to interesting and innovative ideas, but be careful in managing them.
8. Avoid sharing your personal opinion with the group.
9. Keep the discussion on track



unitar

United Nations Institute for Training and Research