

## Checklist: Setting up and running focus groups

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A focus group is a discussion group, which enables understanding of a selected topic. Focus groups can provide important qualitative information about various issues, as well as identify the capacities and resources that the community has for identifying and implementing solutions and action plans.

Focus groups should be structured around a few key questions. The role of the facilitator is key. S/he needs to remember that there are no right answers and that the process of discussion and disagreement is central to the meeting's value.

Be aware that camp leaders are not usually involved as it is best not to have people in authority present. They can be interviewed separately. In most cases it is appropriate to conduct separate groups for women and men, boys and girls.

<b>Setting up a focus group meeting</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Decide on the theme(s) to be addressed in the focus group e.g.: protection, education, participation, health		
Take time to prepare questions (including starting questions, open ended discussion questions etc.)		
Select focus group members		
Ensure language/translation needs are met.		
Arrange for someone to document the discussion		
Select a quiet place where people will not be overheard		
Select a time when people are available		
<b>Running focus group meetings</b>		
Brief the translator to translate sentence by sentence and not summarise		
Create a layout beneficial for discussion (a circle works well)		
Allow time for introductions at the beginning of the meeting		
Establish ground rules for the meeting (E.g. everyone has a right to speak, confidentiality)		
Be clear about the purpose of the meeting. Get agreement from the participants.		
Use culturally appropriate ice breakers		
Use appropriate visual materials including maps, pictures and drawings		

Address how participants will receive feedback about action to be taken as a consequence of the meeting		
Ensure everyone has a chance to speak by structuring the discussion using, for example, talking sticks, beans etc.		
Encourage to elaborate on their points		
Do not make people feel rushed or excluded		
Ask simple questions one at a time		
Avoid dominating the discussion or letting one of the participants dominate		
Recap regularly throughout the meeting in order to check understanding		
Do not judge verbally or in your body language what people says		
Steer the group towards an analysis of their situation and the skills at their disposal to solve it		
Allow time for participants to ask their own questions		
<b>Closing focus group meetings</b>		
Sum up the key points raised in the discussion		
Check that the written record has captured these points		
Decide with the participants what should be the points for action after the meeting. Decide who will be responsible		
Thank the participants for their time and contributions		

*Adapted from the Good Enough Guide*