



Tips



Facilitating Gender-Responsive Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

TIP 1: CONSIDER THE GENDER OF YOUR FACILITATORS

01

It's important to create an environment where everyone feels comfortable.

In some cultures, participants may feel more open with facilitators of the same gender. In mixed-gender groups, having both male and female facilitators can balance power dynamics.

For example, in rural Kenya, a female facilitator encouraged women to speak openly about maternal health, while a male co-facilitator engaged men, ensuring their perspectives were included.

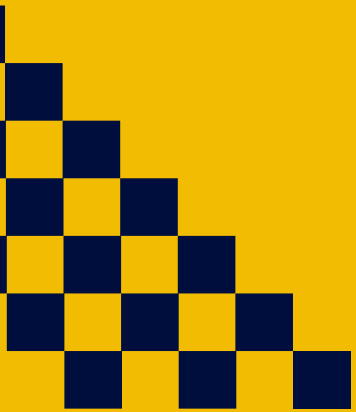


TIP 2: ACHIEVE A GENDER BALANCE, BUT BE FLEXIBLE

Equal representation matters, but so does comfort. In some settings, women may hesitate to speak up in the presence of men. In such cases, consider running separate focus groups for men and women.

For example, in Afghanistan, separate FGDs for men and women allowed women to candidly discuss barriers to entrepreneurship without fear of judgment.





TIP 3: HANDLE SENSITIVE TOPICS WITH CARE

03

SAFE
ZONE

When discussing topics like gender-based violence or reproductive health, create a safe and confidential space.

Make it clear that participants can skip any questions that make them uncomfortable.

For example, in South Asia, participants shared experiences of gender-based violence more openly when allowed to write responses anonymously.

TIP 4: PAY ATTENTION TO NON-VERBAL CUES

04

Non-verbal communication often differs by gender. Look for signs of discomfort or disengagement. If certain participants seem hesitant, consider breaking into smaller groups or allowing written responses.

For example, in an education FGD, women avoided eye contact with male participants. Splitting into smaller groups encouraged them to share more freely.



TIP 5: UNDERSTAND THE CULTURAL CONTEXT

05

Gender norms vary across cultures. Tailor your approach to fit the local context, ensuring that both men and women can participate meaningfully in the discussion.

For example, in agricultural FGDs, facilitators structured the discussion to ensure that women, who often played critical roles but were less vocal, had equal opportunities to contribute.



TIP 6: USE TECHNIQUES TO ENCOURAGE EQUAL PARTICIPATION

06

Some participants may dominate the conversation, while others hold back. Use techniques like "round-robin" questioning to ensure everyone has a chance to speak.

For example, in West Africa, facilitators used round-robin questioning to draw out insights from women who were initially quiet, ensuring their contributions weren't missed.



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