



YOU PART

Engage. Connect. Empower

FOCUS GROUP ON YOUTH POLICIES

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FOCUS GROUP ON YOUTH POLICIES

FACTS

Age of participants: at least 15

Number of participants: 6-8

Duration: 60-120 minutes

GOALS

This method aims to gather data on attitudes, opinions and experiences of young people in relation to local youth policies. In general, the majority of young people are not that much involved in the local community life and in the decision-making processes of local authorities. Thus, the focus group is used as a tool to identify barriers that prevent young people from participating.

In contrast to conducting surveys where participants' answers are limited by questions, the focus group offers the chance to find out the reasons for each positive or negative answer. It is an excellent opportunity for a small group of people to develop a large number of creative solutions.

TOPICS

A focus group session can also be used to gather information on the attitudes, opinions and experiences of young people in relation to various topics: information channels that young people use, motivators that encourage young people to activism, volunteering vs. conformity, the existing generation gap (cultural and technological), peer and other types of violence, etc.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR

Cities across Europe adopt youth strategy documents. However, many local governments and their competent authorities adopt such youth policies without asking young people about their needs. When young people are asked about their opinions and needs, this is usually done through surveys with closed questions, so that only a rough picture of their attitudes and needs is obtained. Strategic documents are then created based on the results of such surveys, which are rarely implemented fully or properly, and in some cases not at all.

Moreover, some local authorities believe that youth policy is the responsibility of central government, so they are not taking it upon themselves to adopt current youth policies, allowing them to expire and fail to redesign and adopt new youth policies.

Finally, even when local governments implement strategic documents for young people, it is usually difficult to successfully organise activities and projects for the youth due to lack of information and lack of interest from young people.

These are the key areas that the facilitator of the focus group should explore by encouraging discussion and critical thinking among the participants.

MATERIALS

Participants should get some blank sheets of paper and a pen. The facilitator should have a printed questionnaire and copies of the questions with the lists to help participants answer the questions. A phone can be used to record the flow of the focus group if the participants agree. If they don't agree, the facilitator needs someone to assist with taking the minutes.

PREPARATIONS

Place the participants' and facilitator's chairs in a semi-circle. Put the blank sheets of paper and the pen on each chair.

Prepare a phone for recording and make sure that it has the maximum battery capacity so that you do not end up in the unpleasant situation of not being able to continue the recording. Also arrange the printed questions in the correct order.

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1

At the beginning of the focus group session, invite participants to sit down. Introduce yourself in a fun way. For example, say your name and tell participants what you are best at in the world, what your hobby is, or add a character trait to your name that starts with the same letter. Then ask the participants to introduce themselves in the same way. The goal of such an introduction is to "break the ice" and create a creative and relaxed working atmosphere.

Step 2

Introduce the topic of the focus group, the purpose of the wider research, the further actions that will be taken after the activity and the social changes that may be sought. Also introduce the working rules, such as no interruptions, time limits for discussions, etc. Emphasise that all answers are welcome and that it is perfectly fine if a participant does not know the answer to a question. This is to encourage active participation and focus on parliamentary communication among participants and to promote active listening.

Step 3

Ask the group questions while waiting a few moments for the participants to think about the answers. The participants answer according to their own readiness. Constantly encourage critical thinking and discussion among participants by asking sub-questions, occasionally looking back at what has been said, inviting participants to comment on what other participants have said, etc. If there are dominant participants, make an effort to maintain balance and give the other participants space to contribute. During the entire activity you maintain objectivity and try to keep the activities within the planned time frame.

Step 4

After the participants have answered all the required questions, invite them to ask you questions if they have any.

Step 5

At the end of the focus group session, you thank the participants for their efforts and their contribution to the research. Express some personal impressions regarding the focus group held. You may also ask all participants to do the same and address how their participation may have contributed to their personal development and how they can use the new insights they may have acquired.



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PROJECT PARTNERS



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