# JAF QUALITATIVE DISCUSSION: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) TEMPLATE

## How to use this guidance

This guidance is structured to align with the classification of questions into essential and optional modules based on the JAF list of indicators:

**Essential Modules:** These are the core topics and questions that are considered fundamental as part of the JAF objectives. Essential modules were carefully chosen to complement the questions in the quantitative survey and secondary data review.

**Optional Modules:** In contrast, optional modules consist of questions that are relevant but may not need to be addressed depending on the specific context where the joint assessment takes place.

It will be important to tailor the questions to your specific research context. It's crucial to work with field teams and interpreters to ensure that the questions are culturally sensitive, easily comprehensible, and contextually relevant to the participants. Before conducting focus group discussions (FGDs), test the questions with a small group to identify any issues or areas that may need adjustment.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| General information  Complete before the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) begins | | | |
| Date: | dd/mm/yyyy | | |
| Name/organisation of facilitator: |  | | |
| Name/organisation of notetaker: |  | | |
| Name/organisation of interpreter: |  | | |
| Province/district: |  | | |
| Settlement/community: |  | | |
| Respondent details | | | |
| Number of respondents: | Female \_\_\_\_\_ | Male \_\_\_\_\_\_ | Total \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Respondent age group: | xx-zz years | | |
| Type of group (e.g. women with specific needs): |  | | |

## Introduction

Good morning/afternoon. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I am working for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.   
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is an [I/NGO] / [UN agency] working to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. With me today there are also my colleagues \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

We are here today to better understand your needs, who you think are the most vulnerable households in the community and how the assistance that WFP and UNHCR provide helps families in meeting their basic needs. This discussion will focus on community-level trends and issues and NOT on personal or specific household situations. If you would like to discuss individual issues, you can do so at the end of the discussion by approaching the facilitator.

## Informed consent

We would like to ask for your agreement in taking part in this discussion and we want you to be fully aware of the purpose and content of this consultation, the implications of participating and your rights as a participant.

* **Participation in the discussion is voluntary** and you can refuse to answer questions or take part in the discussion at any time. You may also choose to not answer some of the questions asked.
* **Refusal to participate will not affect your support from WFP or UNHCR** or any other organization now or in the future. Note that the meeting does not have any impact on whether you or your family receives any assistance.
* The information you provide is **confidential.** This means that your identity details will be kept secret and not included when presenting the findings of the consultation.
* **Confidentiality also applies to you**. We kindly ask you not to share outside of this discussion any information heard from other participants.
* We will use the information we gather today to produce reports and presentations that may be shared widely. If there is anything that you do not want us to use in our reports, please let us know.
* I would also like to confirm that you understand that you are not being paid for your participation. [If cash reimbursement is provided, clarify that it is for reimbursement for transport or time.]
* [If applicable]: We will be making an audio recording of this meeting. This is just in case we cannot take notes fast enough. Should you have any objections or concerns regarding the recording of this discussion please inform us.

*The discussion will take around [\_\_\_\_\_\_\_] hours.*

*Do you have any additional questions about the group discussion?*

Can you please confirm that you want to go ahead and participate in this group discussion?

[If applicable: Do you agree to have the discussion recorded?]

Ground rules: Here are some ground rules to follow during the group discussion:

* It is important that only one person speaks at a time. There may be a temptation to jump in when someone is talking but please wait until they have finished speaking.
* When you want to share your views, please do so. There are many of you in the group and it is important that we hear the views of each of you. We encourage you to share openly.
* In this discussion, there are no right or wrong answers. We want to understand your opinions, preferences and concerns and we respect all views from the participants.
* Occasionally, I may repeat some of the things you say to make sure I understood them correctly. If what I summarise is wrong, please correct me.
* You don’t need to agree with what other people in the group say, but we need to respect all opinions.
* Please silence your mobile phones before we begin.

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We’ll start with questions about what vulnerability means in this context and explore the essential needs of the most vulnerable households. This will allow us to gain a comprehensive view of the challenges and dynamics within the community.

### MOST VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS (ESSENTIAL)

* In your opinion, what does vulnerability mean?
* What types of households are generally more vulnerable in your community?

*Probing: Consider vulnerable households and their different members in terms of family composition, gender, age, health, disability, other specific needs, ability to work, or in any other relevant ways.*

* What are the essential needs that these vulnerable households cannot meet? Why can’t they meet them?

Now that we have discussed the needs of the most vulnerable households, let's shift our focus to the economic opportunities and challenges within this community.

### ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES (ESSENTIAL)

* Generally, are the livelihoods in this community sufficient to meet essential needs?
* What do people do when they cannot meet their needs?
* What are the main challenges to engaging in livelihoods in this community?
* According to you, who [i.e. which types of groups or people] face the most difficulties in engaging in livelihoods in your community?
* Are you aware of any livelihood strengthening programmes, activities or services in place or planned in the area? What are they? (Optional)

*Probing: Are there training opportunities available in your area? If yes, do people in your community have access to these trainings?*

* Are there financial services available in your area? If yes, can people in your community access them? (Optional)
* What kind of support would you like to receive to improve the livelihoods in your area?

Now that we have explored economic opportunities and challenges, let's shift our focus to safety and security within the community so that we can better understand the safety and security concerns and the actions that need to be taken to address them.

### SAFETY AND SECURITY (ESSENTIAL)

* Do people generally feel safe in this community?
* What do you think makes people in this community feel unsafe?

*Probing: Are you aware of any safety concerns when accessing basic services [e.g. food distributions, water points] in this community? Are there any services that are avoided by community members due to security concerns? Which ones and is this specific to a certain group e.g. women, people with disabilities, etc.? Why?*

* Do you think that this is the same for everyone in your community – who feels more or less safe? Why?

*Probing: Consider gender differences, women/girls and men/boys may face specific safety and security risks.*

* What can be done about these issues?

Let's now turn our attention to the availability of information and feedback mechanisms within the community. We're keen to explore how community members access vital information and express their concerns regarding humanitarian assistance.

### AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS (ESSENTIAL)

* Do people in this community face any challenges in accessing important information about humanitarian assistance and the way it is distributed? If yes, what challenges? Who faces these challenges?
* What are community members’ preferred ways for receiving important information about WFP/UNHCR assistance? (Optional)

*Probing: Consider different people’s preferences based on differences in gender and age, people with a disability or other specific needs, minorities, people living in remote locations, language, and access to a mobile phone.*

* Do people in this community know how to make suggestions or complaints about the services and support you receive from UNHCR/WFP?
* Do people in this community face any challenges when asking questions or making suggestions or complaints about WFP/UNHCR assistance? If yes, what challenges? Who faces these challenges?
* What are community members’ preferred ways for sharing questions, suggestions or complaints with WFP or UNHCR in case there is an issue with their assistance? (Optional)

*Probing: Consider different people’s preferences based on differences in gender and age, people with a disability or other specific needs, minorities, people living in remote locations, language, and access to a mobile phone.*

Thank you for sharing your views about these issues. Now, let's shift our focus to the availability of essential services within the community. We are interested in understanding any challenges regarding services such as healthcare, education, water sources, financial services, and any other needs that may be challenging to meet in your area.

### AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES (OPTIONAL)

* Do you feel the services (such as education, health, etc.) that are available in this area meet the basic needs of the community? Why or why not? Are there households that face more issues accessing those services? Why?
* Are there any health facilities near your community where people can receive medical treatment? What types of health facilities are they? How far away are they? Do they treat everyone in need of treatment or whom specifically? Are the health services affordable? Do families face any obstacles when they try to obtain health care?
* Are there any schools near your community? If yes, how far away? For which age groups? Can all children within these age groups attend or which children specifically? Do children face any obstacles when trying to attend school in the community? Are the school fees and any other related costs affordable?

*Probing: Are there differences between boys and girls? Any differences in terms of age? Are there differences between children with and without disabilities?*

* Is there a source of drinking water near your community? How far away? Who in the household normally goes to collect water?
* Are there financial service providers available nearby? Can people in your community access the financial products (such as saving accounts or credits) that they provide?

We are now keen to understand the relationships between your community and the local host community, as well as any relationships with other refugee communities in your area. Your insights on this topic are greatly appreciated.

### SOCIAL COHESION (OPTIONAL)

* Overall, how are the relationships between the different members of this refugee community? How is your community’s relationship with other refugee communities in the area?
* How is the relationship between your community and the local host community?
* If there are tensions, what are the main causes of these tensions?
* Which community members are the most affected by these tensions? What do people do to solve these tensions?
* In the past, did anyone help find a solution during tensions? If so, who and how did they help?

Thanks once again for your participation and willingness to share your perspectives. Your insights are invaluable to us. Now let’s discuss household roles and responsibilities within your community. We are interested in understanding any changes in these roles due to displacement and how decisions are made within your community.

### SOCIAL AND GENDER NORMS (OPTIONAL)

* In your community, what are the main differences in the roles and responsibilities of women, men, girls and boys?
* Have these differences changed because of displacement? If yes, how? Why?
* Who in the household is normally taking decisions on the way resources are used within the family (e.g. how money is spent)?
* Who in the household normally attends to domestic work: women, men, girls or boys?

*Probing: Chores such as fetching water, cooking, collecting firewood, caring for children, washing clothes, etc.*

* In your community, does anyone get left out of decision-making? Who? Why do you think this is?

Thank you once again for your valuable contributions. Your insights provide a deeper understanding of the challenges and strengths within your community, which will undoubtedly inform and improve the support and assistance provided. We appreciate your time and openness in sharing your perspectives.

## Annex 1: INSTRUCTIONS

#### KEY GUIDANCE

* WFP, [Focus Group Discussion Guidance document](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000141555/download/)
* WFP, Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis, Guidance Document
* WFP, Disability Inclusion in Focus Group Discussions and UNHCR, [Organizing accessible workshops](https://www.unhcr.org/media/40118)
* UNHCR, [Tool for Participatory Assessments in Operations](https://www.refworld.org/docid/462df4232.html)
* [UNHCR,](https://www.refworld.org/docid/462df4232.html) [Needs Assessment Handbook](https://im.unhcr.org/na/), particularly pages 15-16, 31-32, 78-79, 89-90, 120
* [WFP, Focus Group Discussion guidance to build Livelihood Coping Strategies (LCS) index](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000152117/download/)

#### FGD composition and participation

* The formation of focus groups is an important consideration. It is not enough to randomly divide participants into groups. Instead, it is necessary to form groups of people by age, gender and other relevant diversity factors, e.g. considering disabilities and other specific needs, nationality, ethnicity language or the occupation of participants. Agencies’ tools are providing indications on the modality and procedures to identify groups.
* FGDs should be conducted for groups of 8-12 participants on average. It is recommended that the number of participants does not exceed 12 in order to ensure a manageable and smooth discussion.
* Community representation structures will need to be informed transparently of the planned consultations to avoid misperceptions and negative repercussions on the participants.
* FGDs should be conducted in a comfortable space providing sufficient privacy.

#### Moderation

At a minimum, in each FGD there should be:

* One facilitator
* One notetaker
* If needed, one interpreter

The role ofthe **facilitator** is to guide the discussion to cover the intended topics. He/she should not participate in the discussion and should not 'correct' any ideas expressed, but can ask for clarifications on answers and concepts. The success of the discussion depends largely on the skill of the facilitator. **Co-facilitators** can assist with time keeping and observing participants to make sure everyone gets a chance to share thoughts or dissenting opinions.

#### Recording and notetaking

If participants are comfortable and provide their consent to be part of the discussion, capacities are in place and time allows, FGDs can be recorded to help in the production of detailed transcript for analysis. If the FGD is audio recorded it is important to inform participants at the start of the FGD and get their informed consent for recording. In some contexts (and for some topics), recording can be highly sensitive and may not be appropriate. The recording should be deleted after the compilation of findings.

Notetakers should focus on noting down the main points that are shared by participants and if there are any disagreements between participants. Any major non-verbal reactions of the participants should also be noted down.

#### Informed consent

Participants must be told the purpose and process of the consultations and be informed of the limitations, to avoid raising unrealistic expectations. Participants should be told of the potential benefits arising from the consultations in terms of informing humanitarian interventions. The information they give might help improve certain conditions for other refugees. However, they will not receive any direct financial or other personal gain from participating.

#### Sensitive information

FGDs should not be used to address sensitive topics and sensitive individual information that can be difficult or harmful to discuss openly in a group. However, communities or individuals consulted may raise sensitive information. In those circumstances, it is essential that:

* FGD participants are informed that they are not expected to discuss individual protection incidents and should NEVER reveal any identifiable personal information such as the names of survivors or perpetrators.
* Facilitators and notetakers are trained on basic protection and risk mitigation skills, data protection and basic behaviours of first line responders, and know how to appropriately refer any protection issues that come up in the discussion (see for instance [IASC Safe Disclosure of GBV – Pocket Guide](https://gbvguidelines.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/GBV_PocketGuide021718.pdf)).
* Moderators refrain from asking detailed questions about individual incidents – if reported – or trying to investigate individual protection issues.

#### Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an essential aspect of ethical data collection. It is also closely linked to the safety of participants and Do No Harm. Ensuring confidentiality protects participants, builds trust, and creates a positive environment, creating a greater likelihood of collecting reliable data. In addition, throughout the process, facilitators and notetakers are expected to ensure that any information they record will be kept strictly anonymous and confidential, and that they handle sensitive information with care and protect it from unauthorised access or disclosure.

To ensure confidentiality and foster trust, it is paramount to:

* Choose a conducive venue where privacy can be guaranteed.
* No external actors (including local authorities, armed actors, etc.) should be given access to the venue nor to the discussions being held.
* To ensure confidentiality no names or personally identifiable information should be collected, i.e. participants should not be asked to sign a ‘participants list’.
* If the conversation is recorded, the recording should be destroyed after the compilation of the report.

#### Physical safety, access, and dignity

* Every measure must be taken prior to and during the discussion to Do No Harm and maintain the safety and physical and emotional well-being of participants. If participants are uncomfortable answering any questions, ensure they are ready to proceed and move onto the next question.
* Make sure the venue is safe for everyone and that the route to and from the venue is convenient and accessible for all participants, including the timing.
* Select a venue that is accessible for persons with disabilities, considering barriers to reach (e.g. accessible transportation), enter (e.g. accessible pathways and doors), circulate (consultation rooms in ground floor or availability of elevators) and use (e.g. accessible toilets).
* Ensure availability of shade, access to latrines, provide drinking water (or culturally acceptable drinks such as tea) and/or snacks, and organise chairs or mats to sit on.
* Participants must be permitted to express themselves freely without interruption and without having the information they provide “challenged” negatively. Empathy should guide the attitude of the facilitators and of the interpreters.