



The Three Focus Groups

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Presentation

The focus group is a discussion organized with a selected group of individuals in order to acquire opinions on an argument pertinent to the research; it is characterized by a certain interactivity among participants and it is also used to collect the opinion of the group, not only that of individual participants.

The conversation is animated by two figures with complementary functions:

a *facilitator* who proposes the activity and asks some key questions (pre-defined) that allow to explore and deepen the topic and plays the role of moderator;

an *observer* who has the task of assisting the facilitator, recording the meeting and noting the observed aspects.

In the action-research-training “*Multiculturality and intercultural competences in ecclesiastical institution of higher education and in formation communities of consecrated life*” the focus group was proposed in a battery of 3 meetings and intended to provide a brief training itinerary designed as a guided self-analysis. The following sheet offers the general outline of each focus group.

Duration	about 2 hours for each focus group
Participants	between 8 and 15 people per group
Typology of groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – members of formation communities of consecrated life – university students (consecrated and lay) of the selected ecclesiastical academic institutions – teachers of the selected ecclesiastical academic institutions
Facilitators	1 facilitator and 1 observer
Ways of conducting the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The facilitator presents the focus group, introduces the topic, asks the questions, encourages the participation of all group members in the discussion, maintains a listening position and neutrality by avoiding expressing their own opinions and evaluations. – The participants initially express their opinion and/or experience on the proposed topic and only later interact with each other. – The observer is responsible for making a verbatim recording of the dialogues that will follow the initial presentation and he/she notes the order of speeches, issues pertaining to the conduct, dynamics, and climate in the group.
Outline of questions	<p><i>The outline for conducting the focus group contains 2 to 4 key questions: the first one is useful to get into the theme of the meeting, the following ones to deepen it.</i></p> <p><i>(Cf. The tracks for conducting focus group)</i></p>
Final report	The facilitator and observer transcribe the dialogues and draft a report containing the full transcript of the conversation with attached (but separate) comments and critical notes from both; and upload the files to the online platform within 15 days of the meeting taking place. <i>(Cf. Report form)</i> .



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Tracks for conducting the three focus groups

2.1 First Meeting: *Multiculturalism and interculturalism*

Purpose

To reveal, to 'measure' and to evaluate the opinions, knowledge and the positions of the participants about the two key concepts of the research, *multiculturalism* and *interculturalism*, and the difference between them.

Expected outcomes

The participants (and by extension, the institutions they belonged to), having explored the theme, become aware of their own opinions, knowledge and positions about the two key concepts of the research, multiculturalism and interculturalism, and the difference between them.

They also revealed some of the opportunities and problematics which emerge in a multicultural context

Activities

- After a brief presentation, the facilitator explains the purpose and modality of the meeting, introduces the topic and sets out the questions (5 mins).
- Before asking the first question, he/she specifies that the answers must refer only to the context of analysis that is the subject of the focus group, i.e. the university context or that of the formation community of consecrated life.
- Start a brainstorming session on point 1.1. below using two flipcharts (or whiteboard) on which to write down the emerging aspects: each person silently marks a word related to the two concepts (15 mins – remember to photograph and transcribe the two posters). Then ask each person to briefly add a few words or explanations on the difference between multiculturalism and interculturalism (45 mins).
- After the first round of interventions, he/she proposes the next question (1.2.) (20 mins); he/she then proposes the third question (1.3.) in the same way (20 mins).
- In the end, he/she says thank you, goodbye and reminds the date of the next appointment.

Questions

- 1.1 In your opinion, what is the difference between *multiculturalism* and *interculturalism*? Each one reflects, then we do a first round of interventions.
- 1.2 The context to which you belong (academic community or community of consecrated life) is a multicultural reality. When, and in what sense, is this an *opportunity*?
- 1.3 The context in which you live is a multicultural reality. When, and in what sense, is this a *problem*?

2.2 Second meeting: *Multiculturalism and education*

Purpose

To detect, to 'measure' and to evaluate the opinions, knowledge and the positions of the participants with regards to the relationship between multiculturalism and the learning path, both on a personal level and with regard to institutional training activity.

Expected outcomes

The participants (and by extension, the institutions they belonged to) became aware of their own opinions, knowledge and positions about multiculturalism as a more or less integral part of the formation process, both on a personal level as well as with regard to institutional training activity.

Activities

- After the greetings, the facilitator presents the purpose and modality of the meeting, recalls the previous meeting, asks the first question and invites participants to answer (30 mins). He/she specifies that the answers must refer only to the context of analysis that is the subject of the focus group, i.e. the university context or that of the formation community of consecrated life.
- After the first round of interventions, he/she proposes the next question (2.2.) and leaves time for interventions. (40 mins.).
- Then he/she proposes the third and fourth question (2.3. and 2.4.) in the same way (30 mins).
- In the end, he/she says thank you, goodbye and reminds the date of the next appointment.

Questions (for members of Institutes of Consecrated Life formative community)

- 2.1 In the multicultural formative context you belong to (community of consecrated life) you interact daily with people whose culture is different from yours. Talk about some examples of interaction and exchange that you live here with people from cultures different from yours.
- 2.2 Thinking about your educational experience in the context you belong to, what kind of proposals are made by the people who animate or manage this situation to promote multicultural interaction? Describe briefly.
- 2.3 How do you evaluate the proposals which have been listed? Express your evaluation.
- 2.4 If you could suggest other proposals, what would you indicate?

Questions (for the teachers)

- 2.1 In the multicultural educational context you belong to (academic community) you interact daily with people whose culture is different from yours. Talk about some examples of interaction and exchange that you live here with people from cultures different from yours.
- 2.2 We are in a multicultural educational context. How does this reality change your didactic provision (lesson content, language used in lessons, strategies and methodology, manuals and bibliographies required at examinations? (proposals)
- 2.3 How do you evaluate the proposals which have been listed? Express your evaluation.
- 2.4 If you could suggest other proposals, what would you indicate?

Questions (for the students)

- 2.1 In the multicultural educational context you belong to (academic community) you interact daily with people whose culture is different from yours. Talk about some examples of interaction and exchange that you live here with people from cultures different from yours.

- 2.2 We are in a multicultural educational context. How does this reality change the didactic provision by the university (lesson content, language used in lessons, strategies and methodology, manuals and bibliographies required at examinations)? (proposals)
- 2.3 How do you evaluate the proposals which have been listed? Express your evaluation.
- 2.4 If you could suggest other proposals, what would you indicate?

2.3 Third meeting: Intercultural competences in multicultural education and formation communities

The third focus group is activated only for members of the formation communities of consecrated life and for their students

Purpose

To reveal, to “measure” and to evaluate the opinions and the positions of the participants about the competences they considered useful in order to live and learn in multicultural formative contexts.

Expected outcomes

The participants and by extension, the institutions they belonged to, became aware of their own opinions, knowledge and positions about the competences they considered useful in order to live and learn in multicultural formative contexts.

Activities

- After the greetings, the facilitator presents the purpose and modality of the meeting and initiates a short brainstorming session on point 3.1. below using a poster on which participants place their individual post-it notes (15 mins.).
- Once everyone has spoken, propose the second activity (3.2), deliver and present the activity sheet: *The competences that are useful in multicultural education and formation contexts* (90 mins).
- Before concluding, collect the activity sheets and present and hand out to the participants the optional online activity. (See: *Tool for the narration of critical incidents*) (10 mins.)

Questions

- 3.1 What are the problems (or challenging situations) you meet up with in a multicultural formative community? In a note on a post-it, write down a problem you encounter with reference to the multicultural formative context to which you belong.
- 3.2 Starting from the problems mentioned and your own experience in multicultural formative contexts, in your opinion what are the competences required today in order to react efficaciously and appropriately when you are in a relationship with people who have a language and a culture different from yours? Each one of you, describe the three aspects you consider to be the most useful on the form provided.

Activity Sheet: The competences that are useful in multicultural training contexts

Purpose

Identify the aspects (beliefs, skills, attitudes, values) that you consider useful for living in a multicultural educational context

Activity

The activity takes place in 3 moments, the first 2 are individual and the last one takes place in a group.

- a. Select 10 aspects you consider most useful for living in a multicultural educational context. Circle the numbers that relate to the chosen aspects. You can add other aspects to the list below, but the total of those chosen must be 10 (10 mins.).

1. Caring for the other	2. Decentralising	3. Respecting privacy
4. Knowing how to communicate appropriately and effectively	5. Respect for freedom	6. Compliance and respect for social norms
7. Knowing historical, political, religious contexts	8. Understanding meanings	9. Understanding the other's point of view
10. Respect human rights	11. Knowing how to observe	12. Flexibility
13. Help other people	14. Trusting the other	15. Knowing how to interpret
16. Suspending judgement	17. Tolerance	18. Respecting others
19. Welcoming	20. Resilience	21. Empathy
22. Personal development	23. Loyalty	24. Critical thinking
25. Finding shared horizons	26. Reflection	27. Self-respect
28. Breaking free from ethnocentrism	29. Democracy	30. Self-esteem
31. Awareness that culture is dynamic and plural	32. Knowing the language	33. Reducing stereotypes and prejudices
34. Managing conflicts	35. Wisdom	36. Respect for diversity
37. Knowing how to collaborate	38. Patience	39. Kindness
40. Knowledge of one's own culture	41. Dialogue	42. Curiosity for the other
43. Willingness to talk about oneself	44. Mediation	45. Truthfulness
46. Independence and autonomy of thought	47. Listening	48. Humour
49. (Other): ...	50. (Other): ...	51. (Other): ...

- b. Now imagine that you could only keep 3 of the 10 aspects you chose. Write on the line below the number that refers to the 3 aspects you chose (5 minutes)

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

- c. Join 3-5 people in a group and explain why you chose them (5 minutes).

About you: male female | _____ age | _____ country of origin

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Annexes

3.1

Information sheets

The observer fills out the following form in which he/she collects some information on the meeting, the participants, and how and when the focus group (FG) was actually held.

FG number	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3					
Group Type	<input type="checkbox"/> consecrated life community		<input type="checkbox"/> university students		<input type="checkbox"/> teachers	
FG date and time		Start time:		End time:		
FG location						
Facilitator	<i>Surname and Name</i>					
Observer	<i>Surname and Name</i>					
List of FG participants	Surname and Name	Initials	Age	Sex	Nationality	Role
	1.					
	2.					
	3.					
	4.					
	5.					
	6.					
	7.					
	8.					
	9.					
	10.					
	11.					
	12.					
	13.					
	14.					
	15.					
Modes of the FG conduct	Phase:	Player:		Time:	Note:	
	<i>Greetings, thanks, brief presentation of the purpose of the meeting and of the host and observer, by the organisation's contact person</i>	<i>Contact person of the Institution</i>		5 mins.		
	<i>Clarify the objective of the meeting, the subject of the investigation, how to participate, the timing, the logistical aspects and provide a definition of the object of investigation</i>	<i>Facilitator</i>		5 mins.		
	<i>Starting stimulus questions and collecting answers</i>	<i>Facilitator and participants</i>		90 mins.		
	<i>Acknowledgments and information on the communication of focus group outcomes and greetings</i>	<i>Facilitator</i>		5 mins.		
	Other (specify):					
Annexes	Annex A. Transcription of the dialogues (e.g. Dom. 1: Respondent acronym: "Response Intervention") Annex B. Critical notes and comments by the facilitator and observer					

3.2 Form for the transcription of the dialogues

Annex A contains the form for the transcription of the dialogues held during the focus group.

FG number	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Group Type	<input type="checkbox"/> consecrated life community	<input type="checkbox"/> university students	<input type="checkbox"/> teachers
FG date and time		Start time:	End time:
FG location			
Facilitator			
Observer			

Complete the text of the dialogues without any formatting (no bold, italics, paragraphs) in the boxes below keeping in mind the following:

- On the **Question** line: Write the words the facilitator used to ask the question (without creating paragraphs or pressing enter)
- On the **Response** line: Write what the participants shared omitting any eventual statements by the facilitator; do not indicate the number of the respondent (as is required in Appendix D, it is not necessary to identify the respondent).

It will be the secretariat's task afterwards to clean up the text and insert the analysis keys.

Question 1.1 <i>(facilitator)</i>	
Answers 1.1 <i>(participants)</i>	
Question 1.2 <i>(facilitator)</i>	
Answers 1.2 <i>(participants)</i>	
Question 1.3 <i>(facilitator)</i>	
Answers 1.3 <i>(participants)</i>	

3.3 Form for critical notes and comments

Annex B contains the notes and comments by the facilitator and observer.

FG number	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Group Type	<input type="checkbox"/> consecrated life community	<input type="checkbox"/> university students	<input type="checkbox"/> teachers
FG date and time		Start time:	End time:
FG location			
Facilitator			
Observer			

Critical notes and comments

Indicate in the box below the observations that are shared by both animators (facilitator and observer) and possibly (specifying) those perceived only by one of the two observers but not shared by the other

3.4 Brainstorming transcription (focus group n. 1)

Annex C contains the transcription of the individual words written in the brainstorming at the beginning of the first focus group on the concepts of *Multiculturality* and *Interculturality*.

Multiculturality

In the box below write the list of words

Interculturality

In the box below write the list of words

3.5 Form for the full transcript of the recorded

Annex D contains the full transcript of the recording with an indication of the number of participants. From this text, the parts for the compilation of Annex A should be extracted. Indicate the speeches with the No. assigned to the respective persons. The "Fc" will indicate the "Facilitator".

