

HANDOUT 2 GROUP DISCUSSION AND GROUP INTERVIEW

Group *discussion* is a tool often used in evaluation research. Two aspects are important in group discussions. The first one is that it focuses on the social processes and social interactions within the group. Therefore it is a good instrument to see what group dynamics are in play, and how people collaborate and respect each other. The second issue is that group discussion can lead to spontaneous reaction to each others' contribution, more than happens in an individual interview. Also, people tend to offer more extreme opinions in group discussion than in individual interviews. The information elicited from the group will be more diverse.

Another tool is the group *interview*. The group interview focuses on the opinion of the group as a whole on a particular subject whereas the main objective of the group discussion is to gain insight into group processes and interaction. Both objectives, insight into group processes and group opinion, are relevant in the evaluation of the units.

Some issues to keep in mind when conducting group interview and group discussion

- The more diverse the group composition, the more time consuming the discussion.
- The larger the group, the more time consuming the discussion.
- Dominant participants. Some participants always tend to take the lead in answering questions. The consequence is that other people find it more difficult to state their opinions. The trainer should notice this and explicitly invite others to participate in the discussion.
- Quiet people. Some participants are inhibited from contributing in a large group. The trainer should invite these people explicitly to state their opinion.

Structure of the discussion

- Introduction
- Introduction of the topic
- Discussion.
- End of the discussion

Some general topics that can be addressed in the group discussion during the course

- What do you think so far of the course?
- Is the content of the course relevant for your work?
- Do you find the course interesting?

When

The group discussion is planned at the end of the second day of Unit