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VOLUTORING PROJECT FOCUS GROUP RESULTS 2019



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Document Identification:

Outputs	FOCUS GROUP RESULTS
Deliverable type	Focus Group Report
Lead partner	Elderberry AB (Sweden)
Author(s)	Elderberry AB, EU Activities Centre, CSI, ITC, Symplexis, CSV
Dissemination level	1
Status	Final
Version	v.2



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Introduction

Focus group discussions were held in each partner country. There were two group discussions in each country, one with Low skilled and low qualified adults and one with people volunteering for the first group. The focus groups followed the desk research, and although the groups weren't large enough to come up with any conclusive answers to our questions, the replies gave us enough to continue with on-line questionnaires. Also, when summarizing the focus groups, we noted that many of the answers (please see Summary) were similar in all six countries. This gave us confidence to continue on with our initial idea.

To see the full set of questions, please refer to Appendix 1. For a full set of focus group outcomes per country, please contact the coordinator of the project.

Summary

Volunteers

Almost all of the volunteers have post-secondary education and are in employment or are retired professionals, indicating that volunteering is an additional task for them. The reasons for volunteering were almost unison: they want to give back to society and help people.

Receiving training for volunteering was rare amongst the focus group participants, and instead they had to lean on previous experience and peer to peer learning. Interesting enough, the volunteers seems to feel very confident in the area they volunteer in. The desired trainings are more geared towards relevant laws and regulations regarding the asylum process and the legal rights of migrants/immigrants. Other frequent requests were more cultural knowledge of countries where migrants are from and some indications of stress management and group management.

Low skilled and low qualified adults with migrant background

Most of the participants stated that they feel comfortable communicating with public institutions such as doctors, schools, authorities et cetera, making us to draw the conclusion that language training per se is working well in all partner countries.

Also, in terms of managing finance, most of the participants felt comfortable managing daily finances.

What stood out in the discussions are the low use of app usage for language learning, job searches and such.



Turkey

Volunteers

Of the six participants, four are undergraduates and the other two are graduates. Graduated fields are Economics, Turkish Language and Literature and Psychology. Only one person in the group is unemployed. Three persons have pedagogical background.

The participants stated that their motto on volunteering is "touching the heart", and therefore a synergy is created, and the young population felt this and demanded trainings from them. Their most important motivation is to ensure happiness through helping.

Ensuring adaptation of migrants to the Turkish culture and education system is another source of motivation. All participants have indicated that loving human beings and carrying out human focused helpful work is a great motivator. One of the participants has been volunteering for three years, four of the participants for a year and one recently started.

Voluntary trainings provided are mainly concerning reading and writing Turkish, but none of the participants has received any training courses for volunteers.

Improvement of skills is usually carried out through internet and YouTube sources. Therefore, training videos of institutes such as UNICEF are also valuable resources for volunteer trainers. It is stated by participants that in some cases, volunteers from other cities are contacted for knowledge and information transfer. The volunteers participate in relevant seminars when they have free time.

Their most basic need is basic Arabic language skills due to the large Arabic speaking population, other topics for training is in culture and lifestyle of other countries, basic psychology to better understand persons and training in cultural and educational adaptation.

Other trainings requested by volunteer trainers are business environment and motivation trainings. Besides, guidance trainings and trainings to strengthen cultural infrastructure should increase.

Finally, the participants stated the training need for each volunteer trainer on both the history of our country and the history of migrant countries (including the history of bilateral relations and diplomacy).

Low skilled and low qualified adults with migrant background

Of the five participants, 1 high school graduate, 1 college graduate and 3 university graduates, all having resided in Turkey for more than one year. Of them, one had started his own business. The other four were unemployed.

The participants felt secure in their communication with institutions, such as public officials and schools and consume Turkish news. The participants stated that they understand 50% of the news / information and the persons communicated.



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As a four out of five were unemployed, their main income is relatives living abroad. They stated that they had received information regarding the Kızılay-Red Crescent- Card Application (25€ per person) however they have not applied for the fund and also do not have sufficient information regarding the conditions of application. Only one participant seems to benefit from Kızılay Card.

None of the participants use credit cards. One of the participants has a bank loan. They receive money from abroad through Western Union or use the Ziraat Bank.

The first reaction of participants to the question regarding numeracy was that they dislike maths. Therefore, one of the participants have stated that numeracy skills are not necessary anymore due to the existence of smart phones. They have added that maths skills are only necessary and used during shopping.

All of the participants have smart phones and use it frequently during the day. They use Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp. They also have translation applications on their phones in which they use on daily basis.

Their information and news sources are internet, and Facebook as a social media channel and are aware of fake news.

Cyprus

Volunteers

The trainers who took part in the focus group were one male volunteer trainer from Cyprus and four female volunteer trainers from Greece and Cyprus currently employed as administrators, project managers and counsellors, aged from 25 to 35 years old. They all have a university degree and they are employed or self-employed.

Most volunteer trainers are motivated to act as volunteers to support migrants, offer their skills and knowledge and help people in need to achieve something in the lives. They expressed the belief that the first step for a professional to succeed in working with such individuals and/ or groups is to realize that each person is an individual, each with their own story.

Much work is done through non-profit and non-governmental organizations and is based on voluntary services, showing that there should be pressure to local authorities to act.

Most volunteer trainers have obtained their subject skills for their area of volunteering through their education and career; however, they have not attended any extra training on their subjects. Main resources to keep their knowledge and skills updated is the Internet; articles, news, forums and online informative platforms are the main resources for them.

In line with the above, professionals believe that spending time with migrants and being able to listen to their fears, needs and voices in general should be a main priority in the frame of their work. Apart from theoretical approaches, their training demands practical skills and tools, based on migrants' actual experiences and needs. Furthermore, a combination of offline, face to face and online meetings and material would broaden the professionals' horizons and assist their effort for migrants' social and cultural integration.



Low skilled and low qualified adults with migrant background experience

Regarding the participants' profile, there were three male low-skilled migrants from Guatemala, France and Greece and two female low-skilled migrants, from Lithuania and France. Their ages range from 25 to 40 years old and they were school graduates.

Regarding the low-skilled migrants' professional experience and current employment status, most participants do not have a profession in Cyprus, as they don't have the language skills. Furthermore, they did not receive any professional help or guidance in finding a job. Their search was based on the internet or on mouth-to-mouth information. The participants who currently have a job explained that it is not related to their previous experience, which they cannot utilize in Cyprus due to language and cultural barriers. For this reason, their job is either part-time or underpaid and does not reflect their existing skills and competences. Moreover, they did not receive any career orientation or counselling and they are actively looking for online courses, public programs and services for migrants.

The interview revealed that even though they have a positive attitude in informing themselves, consume news and communicating with official and/or public services, language and cultural barriers do not allow them to do so. Attitude takes its role here as well, as many express their feeling of exclusion and bias against locals, due to religious, cultural and other differences.

The findings show that low-skilled migrants feel secure when managing finances, doing budgets and calculating interests and/or mortgages. They do have some basic numeracy skills, however, these skills could and should improve as to reach a better level.

When it comes to the digital skills, all participants expressed their confidence in using digital tools. However, everyone expressed their desire to improve their digital skills and knowledge as to reach an even higher and more specialized level.

When it comes to the source critique, the interviewees did not show any skill on how to manage fake news or how to carefully select sources of information.

Sweden

Volunteers

The focus group consisted of five persons with varying backgrounds and age range: from early 20's to retired. One upper secondary school diploma, one retired engineer, one working in HR, one university student and one working with volunteers. Two of the participants have migrant background.

When asked why they volunteer, a majority of the group said they wanted "to give back to society". Other frequent responses were "do something meaningful", "competence development" and "meet new people/the social side". When asked about any difficulties with volunteering, lack of time and finding the balance with work/personal life and volunteering came up for discussion, a sense of insufficiency and occasional difficulties communicating (both internally and externally) were mentioned in the discussion. One of the participants mentioned the lack of monitoring and follow-up after volunteering as an area of improvement.



Hence, the broad background and social skills volunteers have provided a solid base.

When discussing the skills needed for volunteering within the frame of Kompis Sverige, participants mentioned that preparation before each event was key. Given the broad scope of the organization (events could be anything from going to a concert or to an exhibition or a football match). Preparations could be anything from visiting the venue beforehand, locating the venue and finding travelling directions and finding out more about the artist (or equivalent). One other word that came up in the discussion was “experience” – i.e. learning by doing.

In terms of trainings, the main topics wished for were:

To learn more about different cultures

Training to learn more about different cultures/religions was asked for as this would increase cultural awareness.

The asylum process

Participants wanted to receive information regarding the asylum process in Sweden as this is a topic that often comes up at interventions.

Leadership

Whilst leadership skills might not be required per se, group management skills are crucial when taking groups on outings.

Training and tools could be either organized by organization (as lectures or group trainings) or on-line. Spain.

Low skilled and low qualified adults with migrant background experience

The focus group consisted of six participants, all partaking in Swedish for asylum seekers. The six participants came from Venezuela, Turkey and Iraq. Their educational background was varied, from basic education to engineer. However, they were all deemed to fit into target group given their employment status.

The target group all agreed that communicating in Sweden is rarely a problem given the fact that much of “public” information is given in their mother tongue and the fact that interpreters are available upon request. Whilst their Swedish skills are currently being developed, the group gave a very confident and unison answer that communication is not really a big issue.

The group stated that they are confident in everyday financial management and the use of digital tools and apps. Tools and apps used are, for example, Facebook, Skype, Twitter and other tools for social media. None stated that they used apps or digital tools for learning.

One thing that came up, and understandably so, is the group did not use BankID (Swedish app for identification) as they have not yet received a Swedish National Identification number). However, some of the participants stated that they had used similar apps in their respective home countries (for identification, doing bank errands and such) and stated that would be confident to use Swedish apps for those purposes once available.



The question regarding source critique was somewhat more difficult to answer. Whilst all of them consumed news from respective country of origin and stated that “you can’t believe everything that’s in the newspaper”, the level of Swedish wasn’t good enough to hold a deeper discussion regarding fake news and source critique.

Spain

Volunteers

The group consist of five participants, three females and two males, all of them from Spain. Ages of participants vary from 34 to 72 years old. Four out of five have an education background directly related to their volunteering activities with migrants: Degree in Education, Social Work and Mediation, Law and Labor orientation), that is, they have high education level. Only one participant has primary education level. Regarding their current labor situation, three of the participants are currently employed and two of them are retired.

All the participants agree on that the most important motivations are personal convictions (the will to help others in need) and ideology, but there are specific drivers that pushed each one to give the step to volunteer.

Two participants (males) were motivated to volunteer after being retired. They understood volunteer as a way to fill out their free time being useful for society. Other two participants started to volunteer as a way to put into practice the knowledge obtained after finishing their degrees so that they could obtain professional field experience in their area of education.

On the side of the positives sides of volunteering, all participants agree on the personal enrichment (friendships), a feeling of satisfaction and gratitude expressed for their activities as the most important intangible returns of volunteering. On the other side of the coin, the feeling of frustration due to the inability to cover all the needs of their users is the worst side of being a volunteer and can end in demotivation or causing stress, topics (manage frustration and stress) that are mentioned by some participants as possible contents for training volunteers.

None of the participants received any specific training to perform their volunteering activities but most of them received a welcome training about the values and organization of the institutions they collaborate with (Red Cross and Caritas). Two of them also attended a one-day training on Spanish Immigration Law offered by the Red Cross but course contents are not related to their field of activities.

The majority of participants just applied the knowledge obtained in education and expertise acquired in professional careers to their volunteering activities. At the beginning of their volunteering, they were forced to adapt and develop the needed skills in their field “on the go”. When they find a knowledge barrier, they primarily try to find help in other volunteers of the institution and secondly just derive the user to the specific department of the institution dealing with the specific topic. Participants do nothing special to keep their subject skills updated. They just try to read political, social and economic news from the countries migrants come from (mainly North and West Africa as well as the Middle East) and look for general information on the internet to solve doubts about the migrant's context.



Frustration and stress management are proposed topics to be included in the Volunteering Capacity Building course. Also, legal and institutional advisory training would be appreciated to provide migrants with basic guidance on regularization process and labor orientation as well as with information about those institutions (public, private, NGOs, etc.) providing specialized services addressing migrants needs. Additionally, they asked for training on gender violence and human trafficking in order to help identify, help and deal with these situations that may impact negatively on migrant's identity and social, physical, psychological or economic well-being.

Last but not least, one of the volunteers revealed to be interested in French language training as the majority of immigrants that arrive at the south of Spain speak French and language is one of the main barriers they find.

Low skilled and low qualified adults with migrant background experience

The group consist in five participants from two different nationalities, Morocco (4) and Germany (1). Ages of participants vary from 32 to 58 years old. The group is very heterogeneous in terms of educational background: 1 migrant is illiterate, 1 migrant completed primary school and a vocational course in hairdressing, 2 migrants completed secondary school (one of them is also fluent in French language) and 1 migrant completed a university bachelor in International Cultural and Business Studies.

Despite the quite long-time participants have been living in Spain - amongst 5 and 15 years – only two of them have attended educational/vocational courses in Spain. One of them completed a course in Informatics offered by the Red Cross and the other one completed a master's degree. The other 3 participants never attended any public or private educational or vocational training course in Spain.

Only two out of five migrants are currently employed but two of them mentioned to have been working in the past as freelancers (construction and hairdressing).

They all confirmed not to have any mayor problem to understand written communications in Spanish. In the event of not understanding part of the communication they appeal for assistance in first instance to their sons who are minor but fully bilingual and/or in second instance to their neighbors both immigrants and nationals. None of them mentioned to have asked for assistance to any official or supportive body in this regard. All participants feel secure when they communicate in person with public officials, schools, doctors, etc.

When participants were asked about their interest to attend Spanish courses to improve their level, only two of them revealed interest and find it useful.

In terms of managing finances, all participants confirmed to be competent enough in basic math applied to domestic finances. None of them used credit cards and only one has a mortgage that fully understands. One of the participants answered that he found troubles when calculating and submitting the Income Tax Return.

When participants were asked about their interest to attend numeracy courses to increase their level of security when doing budgets, managing their finances and calculating interest on mortgages, credit



cards and similar, only one of the participants showed clear interest and a second one affirmed that she would attend it if the course would teach numeracy skills to help their children with the school contents.

Participants were asked about their view of apps to manage bank operations, managing medical and other personal appointments, etc. and only one of the participants use apps to manage his finances and bank operations, the agenda and to look for flights. The rest, despite they all have mobile phones, do not use apps these kinds of apps. The level of digitalization, in terms of device availability, is high but the level of proficiency is low.

The main reasons to not use these apps is that they do not feel confident with these technologies, they prefer the personal contact to deal with important issues and they have all the relevant offices close to their homes. Regarding Social Media, they all do use WhatsApp and Telegram but only for communication purposes (Family above all). None of them uses them to socialize in other sense.

Two of them (both women) revealed to also use YouTube to search for video tutorials helpful to learn things they do not know like food recipes, social and religious protocols, to build/reform part of their how houses and also to help children to do their homework.

All participants consume news mainly from television. They all are confident to distinguish fake news, especially if are transmitted through social networks (WhatsApp, etc.) because they are aware that some communications are disseminated by certain people with a specific and partial purpose. The same thing is much more difficult when the news comes from a national or regional newspaper. They all agree that this issue is of paramount for young people from 16 to 20 years old since they do not have the experience to allow them to understand the motivation and interests behind these communications.

Italy

Volunteers

Out of the five participants, four have graduated. Most of the respondents have a background directly related to their social work with migrants (graduation in Psychology, Education or Social Work) even if in most of cases they decided to volunteer in this field after different experiences with other vulnerable people (disabled, prisoners etc.). They are not doing any other training course to support their activity and would appreciate to do it. They are all employed and engaged in civic participation.

2 out of 5 persons come from a history of scouting and they grew up in the culture of volunteering in social issues. For the other 3 the driving force behind their volunteering seem to be a political and civic choice to work with migrants, especially in a difficult situation of raising racism as in Italy is in this moment. They all agree that it is a difficult work actually in Italy, and quite often *"the motivation must be found day by day"* since the environment is not favorable and it is more challenging to work with migrants, rather than other vulnerable people (less prejudices and stereotypes to be faced). The best sides of volunteering are related obviously to the relations with migrants and their families. All are happy with their work, they all have stories and example of good things done and people really helped. 3 out of 5 say they are physically exhausted, sometimes they feel to be underestimated considering their skills and capacities (since they



have to do everything quite often in an "emergency mood"). One of them say she's afraid to get used to the suffering and tragedies of the stories she deals with... she would appreciate more support under the psychological point of view.

No one of them received any specific training for the activities they are realizing. And in some moments, this is a problem and they would appreciate some support not only for legislative and practical issues but also for the management of relations, conflict management etc...

They all say that they "learn by doing" every day, in a very horizontal and collaborative way with other colleagues within the small groups they work in.

They ask for continuous support and training and would appreciate tools to be used also by themselves to learn more and get updated on different topics: law and procedures (even if they sometimes do it), anthropology of migration, teaching Italian as L2 (for the teachers), conflict management, problem solving, emotional intelligence, children care. The discussion was also about the needed training for migrants. In their opinion what would be needed is an increase of training/courses for professional skills for migrants/asylum seekers, with the aim of supporting them in the job search (welders, bakers, mechanics etc.)

Low skilled and low qualified adults with migrant background experience

4 migrants out of 5 are illiterate (the fifth is graduated in high school and started the university in social anthropology but did not complete it, in Mali). All of them are from Mali and Senegal. Three of them are in Italy since 2017 and they attended literacy and math courses to get the first level diploma (necessary to get a job in Italy). One is actually doing this path for the diploma. All of them attended several courses of Italian within the welcoming system SPRAR and speak quite a good level of Italian.

The group stated that they have no problem in understanding the written documents since most of them are living in Italy for a long time. Basically, when they don't understand something they refer to the operators of the welcoming project where they are hosted. There's a very efficient informal network of exchange of information and explanations that is part of their way of facing difficulties and misunderstanding with the official communication from institutions/services/offices. They are afraid when they meet police, as in those cases their capacity of understanding is affected by the fear of being jailed or sanctioned for something.

In Italy migrants hosted within the national welcoming system (refugees or asylum seekers) do not manage money directly unless they find a job and exit the system. The five participants say they have no problem in dealing with money or cards. Numeracy is a competence they developed informally, first, and in Italy attending the school in Italy to have their skills confirmed.

The participants are highly digitalized. They all have a mobile and three of them have a laptop which they use for job searches, to study and to communicate with their families in Africa and across Europe. They use mobile in many situations of daily life.

They all get information and news from their mobile, basically, and from the online papers and website in their mother language. They don't read Italian newspapers unless requested by teachers or operators of the



SPRAR project. They have no television individually, they sometimes watch satellite television (Al Jazeera for example) through friends. Regarding fake news, they do not know exactly what it is... they consider FB and social media only as a tool to contact their friends and families in Africa, and as a tool to show their life in Europe with pictures etc., not as a source of information.

Greece

Volunteers

All five participants have an academic educational background and all of them hold a master's degree which was the highest educational qualification. Three out of five participants are social scientists, while the rest two belong to the applied scientific fields. Regarding their occupational status, while all participants replied that they are currently employed, two of them have not provided more information while the other three said that they work in civil society sector – in national or international level.

One of the reasons for volunteering referred by the majority – three out of five – of the participants, was the will to support members of “vulnerable” or “deprived” population groups. Furthermore, three out of five participants highlighted that making a “difference or change” to peoples’ lives and, similarly, “contribute to a better world” is one of the main reasons for volunteering.

As the best and worst sides of volunteering, two participants suggested that the best side of volunteering are the positive results from your work and efforts, while another participant suggested that the best side is inspiring other people to follow your example. Regarding the worst side of volunteering, three out of five participants, gave different answers: obstacles to the social integration of vulnerable groups created from citizens of hosting societies, the possibility of transformation of volunteering to an economic profit source and the feeling of “wasted” “time and efforts”.

Two participants referred that they have got their subject skills for their area of volunteering while working on the “field” and “practicing” while another participant similarly responded that he learned “next to experienced staff”, thus while practicing next to them. Moreover, only two participants referred to “trainings”, thus organized and focused training procedures. It should be highlighted that it is not clear by the participants’ responses if the trainings were provided by the organizations (“job training”) they currently work on a voluntary basis. Most of the participants highlighted the importance of continuous training and studying in order to keep these skills updated, while two participants referred to practice as means to updating their skills.

Finally, when asked about which trainings and tools would the participants need to develop as volunteers (or continue), two participants responded that they would need to be trained in order to develop skills which would help them “communicate”, “interact” and “assess” the “behavior” of other people – one of the participants referred specifically to members of vulnerable population groups and his/her need for “relevant tools”. Moreover, three out of five participants would like to be trained in order to develop other social and communication skills such as “team work”, “campaigning”, “awareness raising” and “advocating”. One of these participants added that he/she would particularly need tools “for effective advocacy campaigns”. Finally, two participants referred to their need for trainings which would enhance their organizational and managerial skills – namely, “time management”, “performance measuring” and “human



resources management” – while one of them added that he/she would find “very useful” any “related” tool.

Low skilled and low qualified adults with migrant background experience

Out of the five participants who partook in the discussion, only one participant holds a university degree while two participants have managed to complete secondary education. The other two participants left school when they were high school students. None of the participants has provided any information regarding his/her professional/occupational background. A possible explanation for this lack of information is that many migrants in Greece work in the informal sector of economy and/or often change jobs.

Most of the participants – three out of five – are able to read and understand official letters from banks, public services etc. and they are able to communicate with public officials, schools, doctors. On the other hand, one participant said that he/she does not feel confident that he/she will manage to communicate efficiently with public officials, schools etc. so he/she tries to “avoid such contacts”. Another participant said that he/she prefers to have “personal contact with public officials or bank” than reading or replying to “written correspondence”.

Only one participant has answered how he/she consumes news.

Only one out of five participants said that he/she feels secure when doing budgets, managing his/her finances and calculating interests on mortgage/ credit cards. Most of the participants – three out of five – said that when it comes to financial issues, they only deal with plans and managements of their families’ “finances” and “expenses”. Another participant said that he/she seeks the support of his/her son regarding his/her “financials”. A possible conclusion from these answers is that most participants manage to deal only with financial management which is linked to the very basic and every day needs and expenses of their household, avoiding at the same time any “complex” issues such as loans.

Finally, the majority of participants – three out of five - uses social media as well as charge free communication applications, namely “Skype”, “Viber” and e-mail. One participant also referred that he/she uses office applications (namely Microsoft Office). Finally, again the majority of participants said that they use their mobile phones to use the above-mentioned media and applications, thus they are familiar to new and modern technologies.



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Addendum 1



Focus Groups – Questions & tips and tricks

1, Professionals

Selection questions (to be eligible, they have to answer “no” on both).

1, Do you receive any payment for volunteering activities (note that expenses such as petrol, meals and other outlays are excluded)?

2, Do you have any access to training in your field of volunteering?

Questions:

1, Can you tell us a bit about your education and current work situation?

Goal here is to check which backgrounds volunteers have. Do they have degrees? Also, worth finding out is if they are currently employed (or are self-employed)?

2, What motivates you to volunteer?

Here, we want to find out the driving force behind their volunteering: Also, try to find out the best and the worst sides of volunteering.

3, Where did you get the (subject skills) for your area of volunteering? How do you keep them updated?

On question 3, we want to find out how they received necessary knowledge to volunteer in subject. We also want to know how they stay updated in their respective fields.

4, Which trainings and tools would you need to develop as a volunteer (or continue)?

Here, we want to know which trainings and support they need to develop or need support with (it could also be that they need training and support to continue as volunteers).

2, Low skilled and low qualified adults with migrant background experience

Selection questions: part of target group. Note that low skilled and low qualified doesn't necessary equal unemployment/low wage. As an example, people building scaffolds in Stockholm, or clear snow of roofs during winter both have approx. 3000 € a month in salary in Sweden. Many of the employees are a low skilled and low qualified adult with migrant background experience.

1, Can you tell us a bit about your background?



The aim here is to find out the educational background of the person.

2, Do you feel assured when reading official letters from banks, schools and other public functions? How do you consume news? Do you feel secure when communicating with public officials, schools, doctors et cetera?

Goal here is to find out how they receive and take part of “official” communications? Also, we would like to know if it’s the language or the communication (my grandmother, for example, would never question what a doctor said, nor would she argue a bank employee or similar. Important for us to know if it’s competence or attitude).

3, Do you feel secure when doing budgets, managing your finances and calculating interest on mortgages, credit cards and similar?

Numeracy comes in many forms. For the target group, managing finances and calculating interests and such are of importance and hence should be focus.

4, Do you use any digital tools today?

Here, it’s important to make a quick desk research in respective country to find out how level of digitalization. In Sweden, it’s quite common to file tax returns and do all your banking errands via apps. This might not be the case in other countries.

Separate between apps needed to make life easier “for real” and social media apps. Whilst they might be fun, they are not needed to manage your everyday life.

5, Source critique

It could be useful for us to know how target group selects sources of information and manages fake news.

Helpful before holding a focus group:

1, Choose moderator carefully.

The persons taking part in the focus group has to be able to relate and feel confident with the moderator. The moderator has to be knowledgeable about the subject and to be able to create a sense of trust. It is also important that the moderator keeps the discussion focused.

2, Location and Catering

A minimum to be served is tea/coffee/water (don’t forget milk and sugar). Then, depending on time of day, sandwiches, cake, fruits and sweets might be served. Just remember to be “appropriate”. What you serve is not to “pay” for their time, but to ease conversation.



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Also make sure that there's easy access to rest rooms, electrical sockets and other amenities. However, do not allow phones on table and request phones to be on "mute". Do not give out wi-fi password.

3, Recording

Try to record the focus group (sound only). Make sure to test equipment before.

4, Rewards

Participating in a focus group is to ask for someone's time and opinions and should be rewarded. This can come in many forms (but seldom in cash). At the minimum, a token of appreciation should be given. This could be cinema vouchers, gift cards at popular store or such. This, however is at your discretion.

Starting a focus group

Start with introducing yourself. Remember to smile and remind participants that there are no right or wrong answer and that it is important that every one's opinion is of equal importance and that their replies are anonymous. Make sure that the participants introduce themselves with first name only. Tell participants expected end time.

Present the project briefly and what their replies will be used for.

Keep track of time so you manage to go through all the questions.

Keep short notes and follow up immediately if there are replies you want to know more about.

Sum up discussion at the end.

Remember that there are often one or two persons who take more space than others in a discussion. All persons should be given close to equal time.

End with handing out business card or contact details if they have questions or such.