

You Ace

Focus Group Plan

Planning the Focus Groups

- the main purpose of the focus groups is to validate findings from the interview phase with a broader, more representative range of NEETs – in particular, do focus group participants agree with the findings regarding needs and learning style preferences from the interviews, or do they offer new insights and ideas?
- once a potential participants have been identified, contact them to explain the purpose of the focus group, the commitment required of them in terms of their time and to outline issues of research ethics (anonymity, right to withdraw, confirmation that the focus group will be recorded)
- if they consent to participating in the focus group, proceed with arrangements
- allow up to 1 hour per focus group (they may last less time but aim for at least 40 mins)
- the focus group should be held in a suitable location – quiet, with flexible seating to facilitate group discussion.
- focus groups should be video recorded (this allows contributions from different participants to be identified clearly and captures any visual elements – e.g. votes / straw polls). Test the recording equipment in advance to ensure good audio / visual quality.
- Note: the purpose of a focus group is to generate group discussion with the aim of drawing out areas of consensus and areas of disagreement amongst participants. Your role is to facilitate discussion and ensure that all participants have the opportunity to contribute. So don't try to 'interview' participants one at a time – don't expect all individual participants to comment on all of the questions. Rather, encourage the group to discuss each question / topic that you introduce to them. Use of 'straw polls' to gauge opinion on key topics can help to bring focus to the discussion and draw in all participants.

Introduction

[script to be read out]

“Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group – your help is very much appreciated. Before we begin, I'd like to remind you that the data collected will only be used for the purposes of this research project. You will not be identified in any publications resulting from the research. Also, you retain the right to withdraw from the research.”

“This focus group follows on from an earlier research phase exploring the attitudes of young people like you to entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship and active citizenship. The aim of today's focus group is to validate earlier results on how the needs of young people wishing to become entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs or active citizens can be supported. We're also interested to know what style of learning and support you would prefer – e.g. formal, informal, face-to-face or online.”

“In order to allow us to capture your answers, we will be video recording the interview. Hopefully this is OK with you?”

“Finally, before we start, are there any questions? If not, we can begin.”

1: Participant Basic Information [to be collected individually in advance of the focus group]:

Gender:	Male/Female/PNTS
Age: [ask to tick band]	Younger/18-34/Older
Place of birth:	
Place where now living:	
Highest educational qualification:	Equivalent to GCSE/A-level/Degree/higher degree

2: Entrepreneurship attitudes and needs

What do you understand by the word 'entrepreneur'?	
What is your attitude to becoming an entrepreneur yourself at some point in the future? [<i>a 'straw poll' on who is interested in becoming an entrepreneur would be useful here</i>]	
Why? (if they have not already done so, prompt participants to explain their answers)	
If you were interested in becoming an entrepreneur in the future, what needs do you think you would have in terms of training and support?	
Why? (if they have not already done so, prompt participants to explain their answers)	
Are there any other needs that you can think of? (prompt the participants to identify further needs – they may need to be prompted a number of times in order to get a full range of views)	

3: Social entrepreneurship attitudes and needs

What do you understand by the term 'social entrepreneur'?	
[if the participants do not know or have limited understanding, explain the term and the main differences compared to an entrepreneur]	
What is your attitude to becoming a social entrepreneur yourself at some point in the future? [<i>a 'straw poll' on who is interested in becoming a social entrepreneur would be useful here</i>]	
Why? (if they have not already done so, prompt participants to explain their answers)	
How does the idea of becoming a social entrepreneur compare to the idea of becoming an entrepreneur? [<i>a 'straw poll' would be useful</i>]	

<i>here – more or less attractive than being an entrepreneur?]</i>	
Why? (if they have not already done so, prompt participants to explain their answers – try to get a feel for whether they view it more or less positively)	
If you were interested in becoming a social entrepreneur in the future, what needs do you think you would have in terms of training and support?	
Why? (if they have not already done so, prompt participants to explain their answers – try to get a feel for whether the needs would be similar to becoming an entrepreneur or if there are any different needs)	
Are there any other needs that you can think of? (prompt the participants to identify further needs – they may need to be prompted a number of times in order to get a full range of views)	

4: Active Citizenship attitudes and needs

What do you understand by the term 'active citizenship'	
[if the participants do not know or have limited understanding, explain the term]	
Now we understand the term, would you consider yourself to be an active citizen? [<i>a 'straw poll' on this question would be useful here]</i>	
Why? (if they have not already done so, prompt participants to explain their answers – including any examples of being an active citizen)	
What is your attitude to becoming a more active citizen in the future? [<i>a 'straw poll' on participant intentions would be useful here]</i>	
Why? (if they have not already done so, prompt participants to explain their answer)	
If you were interested in becoming a more active citizen in the future, what needs do you think you would have in terms of training and support?	
Why? (if they have not already done so, prompt participants to explain their answer)	
Are there any other needs that you can think of? (prompt the participants to	

identify further needs – they may need to be prompted a number of times in order to get a full range of views)	
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5: Learning Styles and Approaches [*‘straw polls’ could be used to gauge opinion on some specific training / support approaches – e.g. ‘who likes learning from educational games?’*]

If you were being trained and supported to help you learn about entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship or active citizenship, what style of learning would you prefer?	
Why?	
What are your views on online learning to support your needs in these areas?	
Why?	
What are your views on learning from educational games?	
Why?	
What are your views on how formal the learning approach should be?	
Why?	
What are your views on how flexible the learning approach should be (e.g. in terms of pace, topics covered, when the learning takes place)?	
Why?	
Do you have any other thoughts on the style of learning you would prefer when learning about these topics?	

6: Close Focus Group

Finally, do you have any other thoughts on any of the issues we have discussed?

“Thank you very much for your help today, it is very much appreciated. If you have any questions about the research, do feel free to contact me.”

[Plus any other informal closing comments as appropriate]