



**Aga Khan Foundation (Afghanistan)
Safeguarding Unit**

Focused Group Discussions Guidelines:

Voluntary Participation:

All participation in the FGD is voluntary. The participants are free to decide if anyone of them want to take part or not in the FGD. The participants can also change their mind to participate in the FGD or not to participate at any point in time during the discussion. They can also decide to contribute or not to contribute to a particular question or topic without any repercussions.

Timings/Nature of Questions to be asked:

The FGD can take place for about 45 to 90 minutes and will include questions about the experience of the participants with AKF activities', engagement in their community and the feedback/community-based complaint mechanisms (CBCMs). There are no right or wrong answers, it is about the participants contributing to the discussion based on their experiences.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:

The information shared during the FGD will not be linked to individual participants rather the responses will be considered as coming from the overall FGD and all information the participant will provide for the study will be treated confidentially. The names will remain anonymous and any identity details about the participants or the people that the FGD participant speak about will be disguised. The disclosures about the participant or someone else is at risk shared with the FGD moderator or notetaker may be reported to relevant authorities but it will be discussed with the participant first but may be required to share with or without his/her permission. The consent forms, audio recordings, participants' information form and the FGD forms will be retained in AKF (Afg) office with access to only relevant safeguarding and MERL staff until Dec 2022.

Selection of participants and Recording Participant's Information:

The participants in the FGDS both male and female have to be above 18 years old and for each of the focused group discussions (FGDs) outlined, the following template for recording the participant's information has to be used.

Code 1-11	Gender	Age	Occupation

Province_____

District_____

Village_____

Date_____

Starting time of FGDs_____

Ending time_____

Benefits to the Participants:

The information generated from the FGDs, based on the participants' participation, will inform future activities and interventions that AKF (Afg) is hoping to implement in this area, particularly with the aim of CBCM so that everyone can raise their concerns safely. Please note that there are no individual benefits for participation in this discussion. However, refreshments and transport reimbursement will be provided.

Materials Required for Each FGD:

- Recorder (to audio record with participants' consent)
- Pens and clip board for Note Taker.
- Note Taker Template
- Printed FGD Guide
- Printed consent forms
- Refreshment for FGD participants

Note to Moderator.

- Ensure participants meet the selection requirement.
- Follow the instructions indicated for each question.
- Select a location that ensures privacy, security, and safe space for participants to speak freely - only those participating in the discussion should be in the FGD space.
- Welcome each participant as they arrive.

Introduction to the FGD & Informed Consent from the participant:

Start the FGD by introducing the Moderator and Note-Taker and presenting the objectives of the FGD to all participants (Use below text for it)

{Moderator: Salam, my name is _____ and I am working with the Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan, AKF (Afg) along with my colleague whose name is _____.

Note Taker: Salam. My name is _____. I am a member of a group of researchers from Aga Khan Foundation conducting community-based complaint mechanism consultations in your area.

Thank you for sparing the time to talk with us today. As you know, AKF (Afg) is working in this area on [add information on programmes here].

AKF is here to help people, and we want to make sure that our staff and programmes are not causing people any harm. By this, we mean that our staff, or people working on our behalf, should not harass or abuse you, or ask for anything in return for providing services to you. It also means that our programmes should not put you at risk of harm or injury.

We know that sometimes people might feel afraid or worried to tell AKF about these things happening. For this reason, we would like to find ways that you can tell us about this that are safe and confidential for you, as well as being easy for you to access.

we would like to ask you some questions about how you usually give feedback, what might prevent you from giving feedback to AKF, and your recommendations on what we can put in place.

Remember that what we are discussing today, is specifically about AKF staff and programmes. Unfortunately, AKF cannot help with issues that are not caused by AKF staff or programmes}.

- Read the informed consent statement outlining all aspects of the study.
- Share information with participants about the use of the audio recorder and who will listen to the information.
- Obtain informed consent from each participant, including consent for audio recording (if consent is not provided, do not audio record).
- Prior to the FGD, ask participants to fill in the **participant information form** (provide assistance as required). Ensure that all participants meet the required FGD criteria. During this time refreshments can be distributed.
- Conduct a short icebreaker to help participants feel comfortable.

Written Consent Statement from the FGD participant:

- I have read the preceding information, or it has been read to me.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and they have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this discussion and understand that I have the right to withdraw from the discussion at any time.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this interview/study.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous, this will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that if I inform the FGD moderator or the notetaker that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities, but they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms, the original audio recordings, participant's information form and FGD forms will be retained in AKF (Afg) office with access to only relevant safeguarding and MERL staff until Dec 2022.
- I agree to my interview being audio recorded.

I agree to participate (*please tick*) ☐ and I also agree to have the discussion recorded (*please tick*) ☐

I do not agree to participate (*please tick*) ☐

Respondent's Signature: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

Verbal Consent Statement (Not able to write)

I have read the preceding information to the participant. They have had the opportunity to ask questions about it. The respondent has provided verbal consent to participate voluntarily.

Agrees to participate (*please tick*) ☐, Agrees for a recording to be used (*please tick*) ☐

Does not agree to participate (*please tick*) ☐

FGD Moderator's or Note Taker's name: _____

FGD Moderator's or Note Taker's signature: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____