TOOL 11

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE - POST DISTRIBUTION MONITORING (PDM)

**Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in Emergencies** / IFRC / Pilot version

OVERVIEW

This tool provides example questions for a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with women and adolescent girls for post-distribution monitoring (PDM). The aim is to get a detailed understanding on the use of menstrual items (e.g. the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions), satisfaction, experiences and challenges, cultural taboos and restrictions etc. Qualitative methods are the only way to collect meaningful and in-depth information on use, satisfaction, preferences and challenges which can be used to adapt and improve programming.

The questions include the key things you should ask during post-distribution monitoring of MHM (or dignity kits). The questions should be adapted so they are appropriate and context specific. Introduction/background, consent, ice-breaker and probing questions should be added.

**Important details:**

* **FGDs should be age-disaggregated**, for example 12 to 18 years, 19 to 35 years, and 36 to 55 years.
* The number of FGDs to be held depends on the scale, geographical spread, time available and context. It is recommended to have ***at least* 2 FGDs with each age group**; if operation or programme is larger then more may be needed.
* See Section 3 of the Guide for more information on selecting volunteers for MHM activities.

Depending on how much time and resources you have, these questions can be integrated as part of other activities (for example, asked as part of a FGD on hygiene promotion, PGI or health) – or a separate FGD just for MHM can be held.

EXAMPLE FGD QUESTIONS

A. **Items / kits received and their use** (Introduction)

- Which items / kit have you received? Do you know who gave you these items?

- Have you used any of the items? Which ones? Why or why not?

B. **Distribution**

- Can you explain how the distribution of the kits was done?

- Did you feel safe or embarrassed during the distribution? Why or why not? What could help you to feel safer or less embarrassed?

- Were all women and girls that you know able to go to the distribution? If some were unable to, what restricted them? What could support or help them to attend next time?

- Were you given a demonstration on how to use and care for your pads? Was any information missing?

- Were you given information on who you could contact for more information on sexual and reproductive health? Was any information missing?

C. **Menstrual hygiene practices and WASH facilities**

- What did you use to manage your last monthly period? (E.g. find out if they have actually used the cloth/pads that were distributed)

\**Questions below assume that some or all actually used the pads/cloth that were distributed*\*

- Did you like to use the pad/cloth? Was it comfortable and absorbent? Did you have enough cloth/pads to use during your period?

- Did you have any difficulties using the pad/cloth? How or why?

- Where do you change your cloth / materials / pads? How often do you change the cloth/pad?

- *If disposable pads*: Where do you dispose of or throw used pads? Why? Probe on challenges, beliefs, if they do it at night etc.

- *If cloth or washable pads*: Where and how do you wash the cloth? Why? Probe on challenges, including with bloody wastewater etc.

- *If cloth or washable pads*: Where and how do you dry the cloth? Why? Probe on challenges, including with privacy, taboos etc.

- *If cloth or washable pads*: Once it is worn out, where do you dispose of or throw the old cloth? Why? Probe on challenges, beliefs, if they do it at night etc.

D. **Preferences and improvements**

- Would you prefer another type of pad / cloth now? If so, why? Ask about colour, absorbency, type of pad or cloth etc. – would they like any changes? *(You can also discuss aspects of sustainability / reuse (how long the types of pads last), washing, drying, privacy issues, access to water etc.)*

- For underwear and soap: discuss the colour, size, smell, brand etc. – any changes?

- Are you missing any items or things that would help you manage your menstrual period?

- What changes or improvements would you make to WASH facilities here, so that you can better manage your menstruation? [latrines, bathing areas, waste management facilities]

- Have you recently purchased any pads or other items to use during your period? What did you buy? Where from and how much did it cost? What are the main sources of income now?

E. **Health, socio-cultural aspects**

- During your last monthly period, did you experience any pain (before or during), itching or irritation? Any discharge or smell? How did you deal with this?

- During your last monthly period, did you feel embarrassed or anxious at all? Why? What could help you to feel less embarrassed or anxious?

- What are the beliefs and customs with menstruation in your culture/community? How do they affect you? Is there anything that you are restricted from or can’t do during your period?

F. **Closing**

- What are the main challenges you face in managing your monthly period now? If there are many, get women and girls to vote (by show of hands) or rank them in order of importance.

- Is there anything else you would like to share about MHM or your experiences?

* Do you have any questions?

***\*\*\* Thank participants and explain next steps. Make sure they know how they can access support (e.g. about sexual and reproductive health or about sexual and gender based violence) \*\*\****