



A SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE ENDORSEMENT PROGRAMME
ST. GEORGE PARISH, GRENADA

Focus Group Facilitation Guide

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Organization of
American States



Introduction

In the coming weeks, five focus groups of 8-10 people each (1 on Carriacou and 4 in various locations in Grenada) will be held to present a selection of Photovoice images to the assembled participants and solicit their comments about the values they represent. This guide is designed to acquaint you with the purpose of these focus groups and to guide you through the procedure that should be followed.

The Context

The overall goal of this project is to encourage creative heritage entrepreneurship in Grenada that will develop products and services for both international visitors and local residents can a.) authentically convey Grenada and Carriacou's core cultural values and b.) offer equitable financial benefits to local guides, vendors, and craft practitioners.

In order to identify the core cultural values that will be embodied in products and services to be endorsed and publicized by the Grenada National Trust, the five Photovoice groups and two Mobile Oral History teams produced a large number of images and several hours of interviews, which have been classified according to recurring themes. The purpose of the focus groups is to check whether the common themes have been correctly identified and to solicit the participants' opinions about which types of sites or products may not be appropriate to show or market to tourists.

The focus group discussions will provide a final check on the analyzed Photovoice and Mobile History Interview material for the formulation of "authenticity" criteria for endorsed products and services.

Meeting Format

Each focus group meeting should last approximately one-and-a-half hours and will be recorded in its entirety so that transcripts can be produced.

Following a brief introduction, two sets of images and corresponding questions will be presented. Each focus group will be shown the same set of images and asked the same questions.

Time is short, so you must monitor the discussions of each image. We have suggested timing below.

Below, are the sequence of actions and suggested talking points for each phase of the focus group meeting.

BEGINNING THE MEETING (5 MINS)

DISPLAY SLIDE 1 ON SCREEN

- ◆ Greet everyone
- ◆ Thank everyone for attending
- ◆ Introduce yourself
- ◆ Explain that the meeting will be no more than 1.5 hours, and that you'll spend the time looking at photographs of Grenada and Carriacou and reacting to them. These photographs were taken as part of a project of the Grenada National Trust to develop a tourism program that promotes the culture of Grenada and Carriacou in a meaningful way.
- ◆ Stress that you're interested in hearing their gut reactions and opinions. You just want to hear what they think. You can contrast this to being in school, like, "there are no right or wrong answers - it's not like in school".
- ◆ Explain that everyone's answers are valid - that the goal isn't to reach a consensus, but to hear the range of opinions. (e.g. "We all think about things differently, so we'll all hear different opinions today, which is great.")
- ◆ Explain that the meeting will be recorded so that you won't have to take notes and that we'll have an accurate record of what everyone said.
- ◆ Their opinions will remain anonymous and will only be used by the Trust and its team to understand how to promote Grenada's culture to tourists.

QUESTION 1 (45 MINS=3 MIN INTRO+6 IMAGES@7 MINS EACH)

TURN ON THE RECORDING DEVICE

MOVE TO SLIDE NUMBER 2

Introduce the first question: “Imagine you’re taking a small group of tourists to see the ‘real Grenada’ and the following places and sights are on your tour. What does each say about who we, as Grenadians and Carriacouans, are?”

MOVE TO SLIDE NUMBER 3 (little girl)

Explain the type of answer you’re looking for: For instance, if you saw this young lady on the street during your tour, you may explain to the tourists that “We Grenadians really value education.”

MOVE THROUGH SLIDES 4-9, allowing 7 minutes of discussion for each. (Repeat the question briefly for each of the 6 images as needed.)

QUESTION 2 (25 MINS=1 MIN INTRO+3 IMAGES@8 MINS EACH)

MOVE TO SLIDE 10 (blank)

Introduce the second question: “Still imagining you’re giving the tour, would you feel uncomfortable taking the tourists to any of the following sights? Why or why not?”

MOVE THROUGH SLIDES 11-13, allowing 8 minutes of discussion for each. (Repeat the question briefly for each of the 3 images as needed.)

CONCLUSION AND THANKS

After all images have been presented and commented on, bring the meeting to an informal and friendly close.

Tips on Facilitating

CREATING AN INFORMAL ATMOSPHERE

- ◆ Stress you're looking for gut reactions and that this is not a test
- ◆ Lighten the explanatory language by referring to the focus group as a "chat" rather than "focus group"
- ◆ Set up the room in the most comfortable way possible-- in a semicircle for instance -- and place yourself as part of the group (rather than at the head of the class)
- ◆ Encourage spontaneity in reactions to the questions - if there's a lot of silence after first showing an image, just say, "first thoughts? -- what came to mind first?" or something like that.

ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION

- ◆ The guiding question should be briefly reiterated before every image, i.e. for Question 1: "So now you've brought your visitors here... what does this place/sight say about Grenadians/ Carriacouans?"
- ◆ Pay attention to the participants. Watch how attentive they are to you and to each other and how eager or reluctant they are to speak up. Show even the quiet participants that you are paying attention to them.
- ◆ Time is limited so tactfully cut off extended remarks by more talkative participants and give the quieter participants a chance to contribute. If there is still time left after all have responded, follow-ups and clarifications can be sought.

PRODUCING USEFUL OPINIONS

- ◆ The goal of the focus group is to encourage participants to share their PERCEPTIONS, BELIEFS, OPINIONS, and ATTITUDES - not factual information about Grenadian culture.
- ◆ When participants argue or contradict the factual basis of a statement, refocus them on the the need for reactions, not facts.
- ◆ Keep participants on topic (remember: focus group...)
- ◆ When a participant says "I don't know" encourage them to say what has come to mind.
- ◆ Quickly follow-up general statements like "it's very nice" or "it's very beautiful" with a request for more specific qualities - like, "what do you think makes it beautiful?"
- ◆ Discourage personal anecdotes and stories

- ◆ Discourage arguments, by stressing that all opinions are valid and laugh off conflict and get back on to safer ground quickly
- ◆ When a participant voices a subjective judgment like, “I don’t like farming” try to follow up with a “why?” question. It’s more useful for us to know for instance that the person sees farming as indicative of poverty or struggling rather than just “not liking farming.”