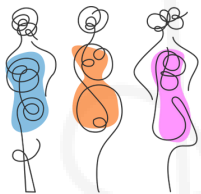


# RECOMMENDATIONS TO FACILITATE LOCAL MEETINGS



**EPF**  
EUROPE  
PLURAL  
FEMININE



Funded by the  
European Union

PROJECT FUNDED BY THE EU'S CERV-2023-CITIZENS-REM PROGRAMME ID 101143820

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# 01. Framework and scope of the project

The *CERV programme - Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values* - aims to safeguard and promote rights and values enshrined in the EU Treaties, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and international human rights conventions, to support and contribute to the development of open, democratic, fair and inclusive societies, based on the rule of law.

The program is developed through **4 specific objectives:**

- safeguard and promote the **values of the Union;**
- promote **rights, non-discrimination and equality;**
- promote the **involvement and participation** of citizens;
- combat **violence**, including **gender-based violence.**

The Europe Plural Feminine (EPF) project focuses on the promotion of rights and non-discrimination based on sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, addressing issues from a gender perspective.

It has long been shown in many economic studies that in the absence of definition and recognition of gender differences there is a lack of 'development'.

Therefore, the issue of "equal opportunities for men and women" cannot be approached thinking it is a "feminine" issue: it is a matter involving everyone.

To enhance equal opportunities, we need to thoroughly change the systems of social and economic relations between men and women and to do so it is essential to act on several levels: strengthen the social and economic empowerment of women, create conditions that facilitate the recognition of their social role in the family and in local communities (cultural/social level) and in the public sphere (legal/ legislative level and representation).



## 02. Vision and approach

EPF applies a gender lens with an **intersectional approach** that finds roots in feminist and de-colonial gender studies. The concept of intersectionality emphasizes the question on the position of subjects within systems of power and domination; a position continuously defined and redefined by multiple axes of differentiation of sex, race, class, identity, sexual choice and orientation, religion, age, etc.

With this approach, the project aims to highlight the limits in the real acquisition, recognition and protection for all of the rights enshrined and the opportunities, still not sufficiently known and widespread, of rights and values promoted by the European Union.

# 03. EPF Local Community Meetings

EPF meetings are an **opportunity** to circulate knowledge, skills and exchange points of view based on the experiences of each person. They are a kind of focus group on issues of **rights** and **gender inequalities**.

The focus group is a **tool** in **social research methodology**, used with small groups of people to stimulate discussion on a specific topic and moderated by expert facilitators. It is a participatory tool that facilitates people to express themselves, to share, not to feel "alone" with respect to the problem that is often perceived as "mine only". The purpose of a focus group is to collect qualitative data that provides insight into the attitudes and opinions of participants on a given topic. In the case of EPF, the aim is to develop circular information in local communities on gender rights and equality and to create forms of communication with the European institutions on the state of knowledge, perception and implementation of gender equity policies in the countries participating in the project.

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# 03. EPF Local Community Meetings

Group discussion can change the sometime static balance of a phenomenon, help decrease resistance to change, allow people in the group to learn **new strategies and tools** to prevent and deal with problematic situations. It allows you to see the **collective dimension of the problem** and the **possible social solutions**. In particular, with respect to the condition of inequality between men and women, it should be noted that if the "female subject" cannot decline her own interests, it is not possible to create analyses that understand and make her interact in a complementary way with the other different interests.

If there is no willingness - of men, colleagues, businesses and institutions - to include women's interests as part of everyone's interests, there is no social cohesion, no social equity. EPF, through the meetings and other communication tools of the project, intends to promote the **emergence of the plurality of points of view** and interests of those who participate, in order to make them dialogue in search of possible solutions to overcome inequalities and for the full implementation of the rights of each person.

## 04. Structure of meetings

About **30 people** are expected to attend local EPF meetings. A very large number compared to the standard number of focus groups, but the purpose of EPF is not only to gather opinions, needs, expectations and possible solutions to problems related to gender equality and rights, but also to disseminate information and stimulate insights by involving as many people as possible.

Local groups are a resource of the project and animate the process: they must be valued, nurtured, stimulated and listened to. The composition of the local EPF groups can change according to the topic covered and they are heterogeneous in terms of age, gender, interests, and background, so a two-person facilitation would be desirable to better organize the times and better address all the topics provided, guaranteeing the participation of all.

The local EPF meetings (onsite) last about **1.5 hours**.

The meetings are **recorded** (audio and video); the complete audiovisual materials are stored by the project as a memory of the process and part of them are used for dissemination on EPF's web and social pages, therefore it is necessary to register the participants and acquire the necessary consent forms.

*For these procedures, please refer to the appropriate instructions. **Lunàdigas**, for each meeting, will make available from its archives two short videos and related presentation cards. The first video, useful to open the session - taken from the **Impossible Monologues** - is a sort of artistic cover of the theme of the meeting. The second - taken from **Lunàdigas Live Archive** - will instead be an extract of a testimony relating to the topic covered, to be used as a solicitation for discussion by the group at a given time. The videos will be accompanied by a short descriptive sheet, useful for those who facilitate their introduction.*

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## 04. Structure of meetings

**1. Reception of participants** with a brief description of the project; self presentation of those who facilitate and explanation of their role, the purpose and theme of the meeting, and the methods of participation.

**2. Introduction/contextualization** of the topic, providing information and references on laws, regulations, programs, opportunities/European limits on the topic covered: nothing particularly detailed, but useful to understand whether the legislation facilitates, hinders, or does not favor the implementation of equal opportunities between women and men and the application of rights.

**3. First video from Lunàdigas' Impossible Monologues** (it can also be used before the introduction, at the choice of the facilitator).

**4. Issues/questions** on the topic that serve to stimulate a debate - problems, challenges, contradictions, visions, etc... - that trigger the discussion and give participants the opportunity to express their point of view, their experience and - through mutual exchange - to identify solutions to problems. During the debate, the video testimony of the Live Archive can be used as a facilitating/stimulating element.

**5. Final feedback** to the group.

## 05. Skills Needed for Facilitators of Local Meetings and Recommendations

The concepts outlined in the previous pages give **methodological indications** on the approach in the management of local meetings, **some recommendations** are added below.

Putting into dialogues the differences within the focus groups reveals the complexity of the "gaze" of that community on the topics covered, brings out **questions** and **needs**, critical issues, obstacles and strengths, promotes awareness of the problems and helps to identify transformative processes useful to overcome them. All this is possible if you create a favorable environment in which every subjectivity is recognized and can express its position and interests in a serene climate.

It is recommended to avoid **"frontal" approaches** and postures: the ideal arrangement for a focus group/meeting is in a circle, where everyone has a special place, but no one has a "different place".

Recommended tools that facilitate the exchange are: **images, videos**, power points, **role-playing games**, maps, etc.

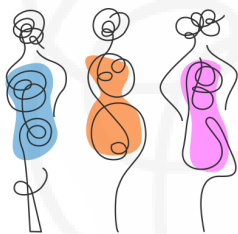
Those who facilitate a focus group must first know the topic being discussed. Those who facilitate observe, participate and **stimulate the conversation**: an empathetic approach is essential, free from judgement, bias and stereotypes. It is necessary to have active listening skills, the ability to stimulate the will to get involved in those who participate, to make sure that all can express themselves freely and without being judged, to know how to enhance the mutual exchange of information, knowledge and skills by feeding a collective cognitive process.

## 05. Skills Needed for Facilitators of Local Meetings and Recommendations

The topics covered are closely related to the real lives of the participants and can involve them at various levels; often these are complex situations with countless variables (gender, age, geographical, cultural, social position, skills, etc.): an open, **welcoming, flexible, sensitive approach** is necessary, which guarantees mutual respect.

Precisely because sensitive issues are touched upon, **delicate issues** may arise or **emotional reactions** may occur; in accepting everyone's moods, those who facilitate the dialogue are invited to bring the dialogue back to a social dimension of the problem, in order to facilitate the exit from a possible impasse and bring the discussion back to the objectives of the project. Encourage the emergence and negotiation between different interests and positions and urge the identification of transformative actions that can lead to changes in perspective and the overcoming the initial obstacles, or the adoption of good practices already tested.

Please note that there **are no right or wrong answers**, but relevant questions. The experiences and opinions of each person are important. What should be encouraged is the expression of one's opinion, whether one agrees or not: we are not trying to reach the consensus of everyone, but gathering opinions, ideas, experiences to make them dialogue with each other.



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