

# FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

FLA FGD: a standardized qualitative assessment



## FLA FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

using training methodology for topics related workers' surveys

The FLA is continuously looking for ways to better integrate workers' perspectives into its assessment work. A new standardized approach is the **Focus Groups Discussion (FGD)** using FLA training methodology, an independent program to obtain a more nuanced understanding of an issue and its possible solutions from a worker's point of view.

### Method & Organization

The FLA FGD provide a standardized qualitative survey design. These discussions, which ideally involve six to ten participants led by a facilitator who is trained to direct the conversation and encourage dialogue through interactive activities, often reveal challenges to compliance and employee satisfaction that traditional methods do not, and provide a safe environment for feedback and thoughts. The discussions are completely anonymous, less threatening than one-on-one interviews and lead to candid conversation that the factory can use to improve their systems.

### Workers' Protection

Participants do not need to introduce themselves and the notes that are circulated afterwards do not identify speakers. This is to protect workers who might fear recrimination. The workers' names are listed separately and the facilitators provide their contact details to workers in case they suffer any recriminations for participating in the discussions. A team of two meet with these workers to conduct the FGD and no factory staff or management is present. Generally the FGD takes place at the factory, but off-sight may be suitable in certain cases.

### How it works:

1. All FLA affiliates and their factories can request the FLA to perform an FGD at their factories. The FGD can be combined with other assessments, workers surveys, self-assessments monitoring and incorporated into the affiliates capacity building action plan.
2. The FLA conducts the FGD using FLA instruments and methods. Depending on the country we may outsource this part to third party service providers who have completed the FLA training-of-trainers program.
3. The facilitators structure the gathered information in the FLA FGD grid and provide translation into English if necessary.
4. The results are analyzed, structured and presented in a simple report. Main findings are uploaded to the FLA portal depending on the circumstances of the agreement.

### Sample

The workers are chosen randomly from a list of factory workers. A sample of around 40 workers is the minimum size so as to identify trends in the discussion. Please note that unlike the Workers' Survey (SCOPE), this is not a fully representative sample. However, the random sample can be manipulated to mirror the proportion of men versus women in the factory and to reflect other variables such as length of employment and the department.

### Tools used in FLA FGD:

The discussion guide used in the FLA FGD aims at four aspects of the issue in question:

- Basic facts about the current situation at the factory
- The impact of this issue on workers' lives
- The perception and awareness of workers - to what level the situation is problematic if at all, are workers aware of potential risks.
- Workers' needs - what the workers hope and wish for regarding the discussed issue.

The tool guides the discussion leader to touch upon these different aspects indirectly, through games and other interactive methods including sticker votes and stitch-on-board cards, to create an environment that allows the workers to express their feeling and views. This method is effective for sensitive issue like wages, working hours, and freedom of association. The structure for an Hours of Work FGD is available and a Wages structure will be available from March 2011.