

Step 3

Listening and learning through consultations



How to conduct Community Consultations

Background: What are Community Consultations for?

As you prepare for the Community Consultations remind yourself what they are meant for:

- **Involving the whole community:** Community Consultations are a way of involving as many community members as possible in the Generation Dialogue process. They are also a way of showing that you have not come to preach or teach, but to listen and learn what men and women, young and old, think about the issues the Generation Dialogue will address. It is important that everyone who has something to say on the matter feels that the facilitators are interested in their views and take them seriously.
- **Learning about main opinions and concerns before you design the Dialogue sessions:** In the Community Consultations with these four groups, you will learn a lot about people's particular convictions, hopes and concerns, and also about current conflicts and tensions between these groups. You will come to understand how community members understand particular practices which are common in the community -- and which values and belief systems underpin them. All of this will help you to design effective Dialogue sessions, and to be prepared for issues that are likely to arise during the Dialogue sessions.
- **Monitoring the changes that the Dialogue brings about:** Community Consultations are conducted *at the beginning* and *at the end* of the Generation Dialogue process. Comparing the views the groups express at these two points in time will show how the Dialogue has influenced intergenerational relationships and communication, as well as beliefs, attitudes and practices and in the community. To undertake this comparison, a team of independent researchers will normally observe both Community Consultations.

Step 3 - Listening and learning through consultations



How to conduct Community Consultations step-by-step: Guidance for facilitators

- At the beginning, **introduce yourselves** and explain that you are part of a team that is engaging this community in a Generation Dialogue.
- Explain that the Generation Dialogue is a process that aims to **improve relationships and understanding** between older and younger generations in the community. Through the Dialogue, community members will explore the values and traditions which are important to them, and will listen to others as they do the same.
- Throughout the Consultation session, **show interest and respect** for the different views that are being expressed, whether you agree with them or not.
- **Ask questions about all the topics** on the discussion guide. Do not read them from the document; it is better to ask the questions using your own words.
- Always **ask several people** to give their views, not just one. Make sure to invite many different people to contribute their points of view. Ensure that every participant has the opportunity to contribute.
- If one of the participants talks too often or for too long, **respectfully interrupt**, thank him or her, and then invite someone else to speak.
- At the end of each Consultation session, make sure to **thank everybody** for sharing their views. Tell the participants that you learned a lot from them.
- The Community Consultations are a good opportunity to **identify participants for the Dialogue sessions**. Look out for community members who are motivated to become agents of change in the community, who can express themselves and show initiative in discussion, and who are able to listen respectfully to others.

This document is part of the Generation Dialogue toolkit which is available at health.bmz.de/generation_dialogue_toolkit