Case Study – Carrying out a Market Study Focus Group

Who was involved?

ICI Initiatives Conseil International

Research firm

Nafa Naana – retailer of energy products
(LPG cookstoves, solar lamps, and solar home systems)

Location

Goudoubo refugee camp

Duration

2 to 3 hours

Structure

2 focus groups of 12 women over 2.5 days

What was the purpose of the ‘focus group’?

Carry out a (mini) market study to identify customer expectations of energy products

Do a demonstration of the different types of products

Ask the focus group to describe their interest, the desired payment methods, the reasons for the choices, etc.

Better understand customer finances and willingness to pay and need for financial services
**Why a ‘focus group’?**

- Allows researchers to observe the perceptions, behaviours and reactions
- The atmosphere of a focus group is often more convivial than a face-to-face interviews
- More precise and honest answers are given thanks to greater freedom of speech
- Time allocated for a focus group is important and offers the opportunity to carry out other activities (here: a presentation of products for example)

**How are tasks distributed?**

ICI and Nafa Naana jointly developed the facilitation guide

ICI introduced the context and objectives of the focus group to the participants

ICI led the focus group by following an facilitation guide and then writing a report

Nafa Naana introduced the energy products to the participants

**What tools did you use during the discussion?**

- A sample of products
- A commercial sales and marketing agent for product presentation
- A facilitation guide

**Reflections**

- Focus groups provided a better understanding of the ability and willingness to pay for energy products and to capture the expectations of **staggered repayment plans** from different groups of women
- For some products the willingness to pay was close to the real cost of the product, for others the difference was important for two main reasons: **a lack of knowledge of the product** and/or insufficient purchasing power
- The participants (in this case, the refugees) also had the opportunity to propose solutions to facilitate their access to these products: they thus unanimously suggested the presence of a **commercial agent** on the camp of refugees
- It would have been interesting to survey a larger sample of women and **introduce new types of products** (powerbank and PAYGO solutions in particular)

**Contact**

The results of the focus groups have been integrated in the summary section of the report **Research mission on the mechanisms of customer financing** published by Initiatives Conseil International and available by sending an email to the following address: ici@mail-bf.com