

LEBANON DISCUSSION GUIDE

Introduction (5 minutes)

SCRIPT: *We are meeting today to discuss the recent developments in the country, mainly the protests that recently began in Lebanon. Many persons consider that these protests may present an important moment to reflect about the future of this country regardless of their outcome.*

We have invited you here today to engage in a discussion with members from [SAME/DIFFERENT] sectarian groups [BUT/AND] [SAME/DIFFERENT] economic classes so that you can share with each other your thoughts and feelings about your economic and political hopes and concerns. Some of what we discuss today could be sensitive and at times people might disagree—that is ok. We just ask that you engage with one another with honesty and respect so that we can all learn more about how people who we do not know personally are thinking and feeling on the issues that we all face.

Our agenda for today is to have a discussion on these issues and then after that we will talk about one political action that you can choose to take as individuals. Finally, before you leave today we will also ask you to complete a questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire is to better understand your perceptions of economic, political, and confessional issues in Lebanon so that LCPS can use its position as an independent, non-partisan, non-governmental organization to better inform the public debate on what changes (if any) people would like to see made to the current system.

We anticipate that the total time for our activities today will be about 2 hours. We would like to thank you in advance for taking all activities that we engage in today seriously.

Moderator notes

After reading the introductory script, you should ask questions that further illuminate the identities present in the group, such as:

- What is your name? (As they tell you their names, write them on name plates and hand these to the participants so that they will be identified by name at all times by everyone in the group.)
- Where are you from?
- What do you do?

Public goods game, Part I (25 minutes)

INTRODUCTION KEY POINTS:

- **Participatory exercise that reflects real world choices that people sometimes have to make**
- **Already earned an additional 10,000 LL** (for filling out the pre-survey)
- Can use all, none, or some of it in this group activity
- Doing this twice, once before our group discussion, and once again afterwards
- ***We will not reveal the results of either round of the exercise until the end of the session***
- Only one of the two rounds will “count” in terms of how much extra money you earn today
- The round that “counts” will be determined randomly after the second round

EXERCISE RULES:

- ***No talking to each other!*** Clarifying questions about how the activity works only
- Each have earned your own 10,000 LL
- Contribute any amount from 0 up to 10,000 LL in increments of 1,000 LL
- I will add up everything you individually contribute and increase it by half (multiply by 1.5)
- Then redistribute this new total back to all 6 members of the group, whether they contributed or not
- Your share of the group pot plus whatever you did not contribute will be your total extra earnings
- ***This means that how much you stand to gain or to lose from contributing to the group pot depends both on your private decision about what to contribute, as well as on the private decisions made by every other member of this group***

LOOK AT SOME EXAMPLES:

- **Remove the “Examples Worksheet” from your packets**

** Moderator Copy of the “Examples Worksheet” inserted here **

[EXAMPLES WORKSHEET \(Asst. Mod. Copy\)](#)

Example 1 [Note: This is an extreme example where Participant 1 contributes a lot and everyone else contributes little.]

Contributors	To Group Pot	Keep privately	Earned from Group Pot	Total Earned
Participant 1	8,000	2,000	4,000	6,000
Participant 2	0	10,000	4,000	14,000
Participant 3	0	10,000	4,000	14,000
Participant 4	2,000	8,000	4,000	12,000
Participant 5	2,000	8,000	4,000	12,000
Participant 6	4,000	6,000	4,000	10,000
Total in group pot				
	16,000			
Multiplied by 1.5				
	24,000			
Each person’s share from Group Pot				
	24,000/6=			
	4,000			

- Demonstrate EXAMPLE 1 with cash

Example 2 [Note: This is an extreme example where Participant 1 contributes little and everyone else contributes a lot.]

Contributors	To Group Pot	Keep privately	Earned from Group Pot	Total Earned
Participant 1	1,000	9,000	12,000	21,000
Participant 2	9,000	1,000	12,000	13,000
Participant 3	9,000	1,000	12,000	13,000
Participant 4	9,000	1,000	12,000	13,000
Participant 5	10,000	0	12,000	12,000
Participant 6	10,000	0	12,000	12,000
Total in group pot				
	48,000			
Multiplied by 1.5				
	72,000			
Each person’s share from Group Pot				
	72,000/6=			
	12,000			

- Demonstrate EXAMPLE 2 with cash

EXAMPLES FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- **When do participants take home the least money?**
 - Answer: When they contribute a lot but no one else does.

- **When do participants take home the most money?**
 - Answer: When they keep everything but other people in the group contribute a lot.

REPEAT KEY POINTS:

- **Possible for everyone to contribute different amounts.**
- **The “bonus” of 1.5 is only applied to money that is contributed to the Group Pot, and not to the amount that individuals choose to keep privately.**
- **Everyone will benefit equally from the Group Pot earnings, regardless of whether they contributed or not (like in Example 1).**
- **No one will ever know what anyone else contributed – totally anonymous.**

PRACTICE PROBLEM:

- **Fill in the blank columns in the “Practice Problem” exercise at the bottom of the “Examples Worksheet.”**
- **Complete this practice problem quietly on your own.**

Practice Problem

Contributors	To Group Pot	Keep privately	Earned from Group Pot	Total Earned
You	6,000	4,000	10,000	14,000
Other participant 1	5,000	5,000	10,000	15,000
Other participant 2	5,000	5,000	10,000	15,000
Other participant 3	7,000	3,000	10,000	13,000
Other participant 4	7,000	3,000	10,000	13,000
Other participant 5	10,000	0	10,000	10,000
<hr/>				
Total in group pot	40,000			
Multiplied by 1.5	60,000			
Each person’s share from Group Pot?	60,000/6 = 10,000			

**** Note for the Asst. Moderator:** The Participant Copy of the “Examples Worksheet” is blank in all of the places where you have values highlighted in **RED** above. Briefly compare each person’s answers to the correct answers you have here. If you see consistent issues across participants, make sure to clarify again how the activity works. **

BEFORE ROUND #1:

- Collect each person's "Examples Worksheet."
- Check answers to the practice problem. If you notice that some people are struggling to understand how the exercise works, make a note of what the issue seems to be and clarify how the activity works a final time before proceeding.
- Set the Examples Worksheets facedown and off to the side. **DO NOT** hand them back to the participants.

COMPLETE PRACTICE GRIDS:

- Direct participants to remove the "Practice Grid" handout from their packets and to fill them out quietly.
- Collect Practice Grids and set them facedown and off to the side.

ROUND 1 SCRIPT:

- Any questions?
- Remember, **no talking!**
- [Pass out envelopes with slip of paper inside]
- Circle the option corresponding to **how many LL you would like to contribute to the group pot**
- **No right or wrong answer**
- **Your decision will remain anonymous**
- Put slip of paper back into the envelope and pass it to me

[Put the envelopes in box labeled "Round 1" at the front of the room.]

[Take the Examples Worksheets **AND** the Practice Grids with you when you exit the moderation space.]

Discussion (60 minutes)

Moderator notes

- Make sure that everyone participates
- Maintain salience of group representations throughout—meaning that even though we are asking people to draw on their personal experience the moderator should continually refer to them as members of economic or sectarian groups.
- Do not refer to a common Lebanese identity “We are all Lebanese”
- Highlight economic and sectarian divergence and convergence where it emerges but do not force it

1 Reactions to the Protest (10 minutes)

SCRIPT: *As I mentioned in the beginning, we have invited you here today to engage in a discussion with members from [SAME/DIFFERENT] sectarian groups [BUT/AND] [SAME/DIFFERENT] economic classes so that you can share with each other your thoughts and feelings about your economic and political hopes and concerns. Some of what we discuss today could be sensitive and at times people might disagree—that is ok. We just ask that you engage with one another with honesty and respect so that we can all learn more about how people who we do not know personally are thinking and feeling on the issues that we all face...*

Moderator Note: Present Visual #1 on a large board or via Power Point through an LCD projector



1. Do you remember that day? When was it?
2. Were you there? Why or why not?
3. When you see this image, how do you feel? (Probe about hope, fear, apprehension, distrust, indifference, etc.) Why?

2 Economic Concerns/Interests (20 minutes)

SCRIPT: Some people might say that concerns about social and economic welfare were at the root of the protests.

4. What are your major economic concerns today? Please feel free to share with us examples from your personal experience so that we can better understand your concerns.

Moderator Note:

- Go around and discuss the different economic concerns.
- Encourage people to draw on stories from their personal experience to illustrate their points.
- Underscore similarities and differences in concerns by asking others if they share that concern or if they have a different concern they would like to share.
- If participants mention broad issues like 'education' probe to get more specifics that will also illuminate similarities and differences. For instance, probe if their concern is related to access to university education or access to primary or secondary education, cost or availability etc. Similarly, if 'electricity' or 'water' is mentioned, go into more detail on the reliability/quality of the service for different participants, and how they cope or deal with this (private supply...). Water and electricity are likely to be an issue for the majority of the population, but similarities/differences will only really arise when these issues are looked at in more detail.
- Continue this exercise until you feel that there are examples of both similarities and differences in economic concerns on the table.

SCRIPT: I am now going to describe for you two different characters that represent different types of people in Lebanon. I'd like you to think about which character you feel closest to.

Moderator Note: Show visual and be sure to use the cards representing male/female characters as appropriate to the group.

For women's groups:

- **Character 1:** Ms. Hind lives in Beirut. Her parents could not afford to give her university education, so she underwent some vocational training. She works on a part-time basis in a medium enterprise in Lebanon, does not have health coverage, and earns an income but often has trouble making her ends meet.
- **Character 2:** Ms. Roula also lives in Beirut. Her parents were able to pay for her education in a private university in Lebanon. She occupies a high position in a well-established company in Lebanon, has a private insurance and earns an income that allows her to afford a comfortable living.

For men's groups:

- **Character 1:** Mr. Karim lives in Beirut. His parents could not afford to give him university education, so he underwent some vocational training. He works on a part-time basis in a medium enterprise in Lebanon, does not have health coverage, and earns an income but often has trouble making her ends meet.

- **Character 2:** *Mr. Ibrahim also lives in Beirut. His parents were able to pay for his education in a private university in Lebanon. He occupies a high position in a well-established company in Lebanon, has a private insurance, and earns an income that allows him to afford a comfortable living.*

5. In your opinion, what are the economic concerns of each of these two characters? [moderator probes about differences and similarities trying to elicit as much as possible under each column - writes them in two separate columns on the flipchart]
6. Which of these characters do you feel closest to? Why?
7. **Transition question:** Now I am going to ask you a question and I do **not** want you to immediately answer out loud but I want you to think about this privately. Imagine that you were to learn that the character you just said that you feel closest to is from a different confessional group and the character you said you feel less close to is from your same confessional group. Would the character that you feel closest to change or remain the same? [AGAIN, DO NOT RESPOND AND JUST CONSIDER PRIVATELY FIRST]
8. [AFTER A MOMENT] Who answered that the character to whom they feel closest changed? Who answered that the character to whom they feel closest remained the same? Why?
9. **Transition question to next section:** If socio-economic issues are so important, then why do you think confession dominates politics in Lebanon?

3 Sectarian Politics (20 minutes)

SCRIPT: *The recent protests in Lebanon raise important questions about how people view their economic and their confessional interests and what changes (if any) people would like to see made to the current system.*

10. When thinking of all these protests and the overall movement recently taking place in Lebanon, what is the slogan that you remember the most? Why? Does it bring hope or despair / confidence or fear?
11. How did you feel when protesters started chanting: "The people want to abolish the system"?
 - a. What system do they mean in your opinion? Why?
12. Please give me one aspect that brings hope and another that generates fear for you personally with regards to possible major changes that would occur to the current system (discuss).

4 Oil and Gas (10 minutes)

SCRIPT: *You may have heard about the recent announcement regarding Lebanon’s potential significant reserves of oil and gas. This resource, if developed, could bring in significant revenue in the future that could be used to finance public services and attract investment vital to the development of the country*

13. How would you like these revenues to be spent? Please indicate regions, confessions, communities, sectors, etc. What did you base your choice upon? Discuss.
14. In your opinion, how will these revenues eventually be allocated given the current system?
15. When it comes to the allocation of future oil and gas revenue, would you rather have future revenue from oil and gas allocated on the basis of confession (as in the current system) or allocated based on socio-economic need and priorities without any regard for confession. Why or why not?

5 Discussion Wrap-up (10 minutes)

SCRIPT: Now *I would like you all to discuss as a group what kinds of changes, if any, you would like to see to the confessional system based on what we have discussed today. Would you prefer an alternative to the current political system or would you prefer to keep things as they are? If you prefer to change the system, please describe what this alternative would look like. If you prefer to keep the system the way it is, please describe the main reasons for why you feel this way. Please take 10 minutes to discuss and see whether you agree or not and, if you do agree, what kind of changes you would like to make. It is also perfectly ok if you cannot agree—these are big questions and we only have a short time.*

Moderator Note:

- Let them discuss with minimal involvement on your part.
- Interject to make sure the conversation stays civil, respectful, and that everyone’s voice is heard.

16. **Final question:** In your opinion, to what extent would this alternative / these alternatives to the current political system [depending on the outcome] would help address the kinds of socio-economic concerns you raised earlier including ensuring that oil and gas revenues are spent well? Why or why not?

Map Exercise (10 minutes)

SCRIPT: *Thank you very much for your participation in the discussion today. We have now officially concluded our discussion. As we mentioned at the outset, we have a few more activities that we would like to do with you before concluding our session today.*

First, as we mentioned at the outset, an important purpose of the discussion today is to encourage participants to think about how they feel about economic, social, and political conditions in Lebanon so that your opinions and preferences can be shared with political leaders in the country. Remember, this is confidential, all answers will be aggregated and no one will know how you individually responded. But this is a chance for you to convey your preferences to those in power.

A few minutes ago, we were discussing the potential discovery of oil and gas offshore. These natural resources have the potential to bring substantial revenue in the future. We would like to know your individual preferences for how you think that revenue should be allocated across different regions in Lebanon, and we will eventually use this information to inform policymakers on people's preferences with regards to the oil and gas sector.

In front of you is a map and table that will help you understand the 26 districts with regard to their majority confession and development and prosperity levels. A low score or light yellow color (on the map) indicates high levels of development and prosperity, and a high score or dark red color indicates underdevelopment and high levels of poverty for that district. Please allocate the revenue out of 100% as you see fit. You may choose to allocate revenue to all districts, only to some districts, or all to one district. This means you may allocate anything from zero to 100% of the revenue to a district, as long as the total for all the 26 districts adds up to 100%.

[PROCEED TO MAP EXERCISE]

Public Goods Game, part II (5 minutes)

Thank you all for your participation in this group discussion. As I mentioned before, we will now perform the “participatory exercise” a second time.

ROUND 2 SCRIPT:

- Works the same way that it worked the first time
- Remember, **no talking!**
- All have **10,000 LL that you earned** already today
- Decide **how much to keep for yourself or to contribute to the group pot**
- Everything contributed to the **group pot will get increased by half** (multiplied by 1.5) and **distributed back equally** to all members of the group.
- **How much you stand to gain or to lose from contributing to the group pot depends both on your private decision about what to contribute, as well as on the private decisions made by every other member of this group**
- You can **make whatever decision you want**, it can be the same or different from the first round
- **No one will ever know who contributed what** – all contributions are anonymous
- Afterwards, **will flip a coin to see which round will count** for actual earnings
- Any questions?
- [Pass out envelopes] Inside your envelope there is a slip of paper just like in the first round – **circle the amount you want to contribute to the group pot**

[Do the exercise. Collect the envelopes and place them in the second labeled shoebox.]

[Do the coin flip and take only that box of envelopes from the room. Collect other envelopes after all of the participants leave.]

Questionnaire

SCRIPT: *The final activity that we are going to ask you to complete today is the post-discussion survey. As we mentioned at the beginning, this is very important to provide a better sense of your opinions and perspectives. This data will be analyzed and shared with key actors to inform policy debates over what changes, if any, people want to see in the country. Again, your responses will be aggregated with the more than 700 people participating in these discussions so that no one—including those of us at R'ai and LCPS will be able to connect your responses to your identity. In order for this to be useful though we ask that you take it seriously and provide honest answers.*

The post-discussion questionnaire is similar in format to the pre-discussion questionnaire.

- *Please read all answers carefully before responding.*
- *If any questions are confusing or unclear, please ask me for clarification.*
- *Please only use the special codes as a last resort.*
- *Please do not talk or discuss your answers with anyone during the survey.*
- *Please write clearly.*

Inform about petition

Finally, when you have completed the questionnaire you will have one more decision to make. I would like everyone to take out the blank envelope that is in your packet. You do not have to open this envelope yet but it contains a petition on an important political issue. You should be aware that if you choose to sign this petition you might be taking a stand that some would consider controversial, so please be sure to read the cover sheet and petition closely before making a decision.

When you are done with the survey, please read the instructions and the petition itself carefully before making a decision on whether or not you want to sign. Please note that regardless of whether you want to sign or not, you should return an envelope at the end along with your questionnaire. If you choose not to sign, you can return the blank petition. If you choose to sign, you should complete the information at the bottom of the petition. By everyone returning an envelope no one in this room today will be able to tell whether you chose to sign or not so your decision will be confidential.

[ASK THEM TO BEGIN THE SURVEY]