SW10

**Interviewer:** Good morning. If you don't mind, I would want to take your bio data and ask some questions but I would want to introduce what the project is about. This project is purely academic and everything you see here remains here. The project title is on co -producing a child maintenance assessment checklist for the Department of Social Welfare. The main purpose is for us to have a tool for social workers to be able to assess child maintenance cases in Ghana. Like I said, it will take about 40 to one hour and at the end of the day you will be compensated with a 50cedis Melcom voucher but you need to fill the consent form, I will take your details and then later it will be compensated.

The questions are six. You are free to stop the interview at any point in time nd at the end of the day, if you want us to stop, even in the middle, you are free to do so but if you don't mind, I would want to ask you this few questions.

This is quite private. If you are going to move your age, you can see you are a man, you always know the district that you are. Then your educational background, how long have you worked as a social worker and how long have you worked on the child maintenance cases? So for your districts, I know you are coming from La Nkwantanang. Then I know you are male, so your educational background. How long have you worked as a social worker?

**Demographic information**

**Age:** 42

**Educational background:** 1st Degree

**How long have you worked as a social worker:** Five years.

**How long have you been working on child maintenance:** Five years

**Interviewer:** Okay, so the questions are 6 and they are brief. I wanted my colleague to ask, but we shall be probing. Yes. So, the first question we want to ask you is to describe your experience in using the case management standard operating procedure.

**Interviewee:** Okay, in using, my experience in using the case management standard procedure has been since I started using it. It's been so far, it's better than the usual case management that we've been using and it has brought some sort of uniformity in managing cases that are related to children who are in need or who are vulnerable, if I may say.

Yeah. That has been my experience so far, it's better. Yes. From what I was saying that **Interviewee:** it's been better. You know, during the previous ways of managing cases, we had our own ways where you write what the child came with, the information that especially when you get missing children. I mean, you write what the child, what happened and there are certain information that we're missing but with the introduction of the case management forms or the usage of the case management procedure.

As I was saying, you know there are certain information that you won’t capture as a social worker working on issues related to missing children. Yes, but with the usage of the case management forms with the SOP, I mean, certain informations, you're able to get certain information, then you're able to work with those information to assist the child and now there is an introduction of these SWIMS and so that one, it is able to give you a standardized questions that are related to the child.

**Interviewer:** Okay, were you only facing this problem only based on missing child or sometimes case management?

**Interviewee:** Oh, it is case management in general. Yes, we don't use the case management form only for missing children. You get abandoned children, at times, this maintenance case although there are little information that you get to support the kids but I mean dealing with children, missing children, and children at the residential homes, I mean, these particular forms have been of help.

**Interviewer:** Thank you.

**Interviewee:** You're welcome.

**Interviewer:** So what do you think about the need to create a checklist dedicated to assessing child maintenance cases?

**Interviewee:** Please come again.

**Interviewer:** Okay, I was asking, what do you think about the need to create a checklist dedicated to assessing child maintenance cases?

**Interviewee:** Yes. I think there is a need for a checklist for child maintenance cases, because you know, the case management forms, that's SOP forms, you could see that when you are solving these child maintenance cases, there are certain informations that you won't find in the case management forms.

**Interviewer:** So some of the information are?

**Interviewee:** Some of the information are, you know after maybe one child, you know, maybe the case does involve only one child. The case involves more than two or three and those children, you need to know their conditions and other things so that you can just input it there.

**Interviewer:** Okay, I'm not interjecting, you made mention of condition. So the condition as in, I want to know the conditions.

**Interviewee:** Yes, in maintaining these children, like when you are dealing with these maintenance cases, their conditions as in how they are faring, how, are they schooling, like even as they are schooling, what is the environmental care for them?

All those things are not captured in there.

**Interviewer:** How they feed their family, how they survive?

**Interviewee:** Yes, all those things are not being captured there.

**Interviewer:** Is that all, I would like you to add more.

**Interviewee:** Yes, that's so far and there are others that, when it comes to the decision that you are going to take, you know, at every point in time, you must be able to have this that this child, when you are dealing with case management child maintenance, you must ensure that maybe the child has health insurance, education, maybe does the child has a birth certificate, all those things, you can't find it in the case management.

You understand? Yes, and moreover, when you talk of this, even the amount, maybe you have sat and you have arbitrated and you have agreed on a particular amount that you are going to use. There must be a standardized amount that's must be quoted, maybe from 100 to 200, from 300 to 400, those things are not there.

**Interviewer:** You want such information should also be captured.

**Interviewee:** Yes, they need to be captured. Yes, the amount of money that are to be used for the, by the caregiver to the child, it needs to be captured in the case management for maintenance related matters and they must create a system where, I mean, you can easily follow up, you can easily follow up on the maintenance, yes, whether truly the respondent or the caregiver or whoever is responsible is changed. Yes.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so what are the key issues you consider when assessing a child maintenance cases? The key issues that you do consider when you're assessing a child maintenance cases?

**Interviewee:** I consider the health, health conditions, whether the child has any health-related matters or the child has a health insurance card to assess any health facilities in case there is a child.

**Interviewer:** So the health, please, I want you to go into details. As in are you trying to say maybe the health of that particular child or those children, as in maybe are there any disability among the children or they have any chronic disease?

**Interviewee:** Okay. You know, every child is entitled to, you know, be of good condition by way of health, yes, from their caregivers. So when that is missing, it means the child's right is being denied in some ways, yes.

So when, as a case worker, when I'm assessing issues related to child maintenance, the first thing I assess, does the child has a medical insurance, is he able to assess the medical facility or is he being taken good care of when it comes to health issues?

And there is another issue that I do consider, whether, you know, every child is entitled to a name. So that's another key issue that I also, you know, we have instances where due to problem by way of maybe a tribal or conflict between the man and the woman. The man may deny giving name to the child or the woman will give another name to the child, which isn't, you know, so at the end of the day, the child doesn't have a name nor even have a birth certificate. So at times, I normally ask whether the child has been named, does he have a birth certificate. Yes, when, if there is something like that, then it means the child's right is being promoted. If there is none.

**Interviewer:** So please, can you hit or can you give us some of the things that hinder the, maybe the respondent as in, being the man, preventing the man from giving name to that child in question, as you’ve hit on the name issue?

**Interviewer:** Yes. At times, due to these sociocultural issues that bothers around, you know, a man having a child, maybe at times they are not legally married and through that, I mean, we have certain customs demand that if a man goes in for a woman, whom we haven’t married, there is, you know, some rights that you need to perform before the family of the woman will allow him to name the child and so on and so forth.

So these are some of the, you know, circumstances that surrounds and it hinders a man not to name the child. Yes.

**Interviewer:** So do you have any other issue, key issues?

**Interviewee:** Yes, there is another key issue that I also try to, you know, and that aspect has to do with shelter, whether the child is being taken care of in a shelter, in a proper environment or, you know, these are basic things that the child needs to go with.

If the child doesn't have a place of good sleep, like a place of stay, it will hinder the child's growth. The child can grow up on the street and at the end of the day, I mean, his rights is being denied and two, he himself will also become a misfit to the society because there is a possibility that he will join bad companies.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so if I may understand you mentioning shelter, It's like maybe there are some families that are living in the slums.

**Interviewee:** Oh, well, as for the slums, one I won't say that it's bad, but I mean, there are some places, there are some places that you see that this condition is not good for a child you know to be. At times there are some environments, you realize that it is totally no -no -no for a child.

**Interviewer:** So you want that to also be captured in the SOP?

**Interviewee:** Yes. Even like shelter, where is it located?

Yes, I mean, is it conducive for the child to be and there is another issue that I find it good for it to be considered. The amount that each party is committing to care for the child, you understand? That’s the amount, that’s the maintenance support among that each parent or the caregiver is willing to, that side need to be considered.

Yes. Although it's not been captured in the SOP,

**Interviewer:** So the amount or the, how prepared a family is to focus on the case, please I want you to go into detail for me because in our society or in this particular environment, as in we are in Africa and Ghana to be prescribed, you know, since the systems are not in place, some parents find it very difficult to even provide three square meals for their wards. So I would like you to explain, like, give us the exact thing, how you want it to be captured so that.

**Interviewee:** Yes, I want this. I want the system whereby maybe if we have our required amount that we are taking as a social welfare institution, the, you know, every environment and its cost and standard of living. But you know, there are certain amount when they mention that this is how much we are going to use to care for each other. You see that no, with this amount, the living condition of the child is going to be worse or even the nutritional, you know, aside all things we must also consider nutrition. So, if something like that is going to be low, or it is going to affect the child, we as case workers, times it becomes a need for us to also find other means to, yes, alternatives for them.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Interviewee:** Yes, based on what, but I mean, at times you just do that persuasive, you know argument and you'll be able to get a good this thing and at times because of broken homes, the man will be adamant like due to his anger is angry and he's not ready to but at times

**Interviewer:** because he has gone to meet another family elsewhere so and sometimes **Interviewee:** yes and you realize that this child too when he's been given a good you know, so it is good for a social worker or a case worker to know so that I mean if there are other community -based supports you know programs that you can be put on so that this child will grow up to be responsible.

**Interviewer:** So like which program, some of the programs you think should be considered like

**Interviewee:** Yes okay

**Interviewer:** Do you think LEAP will be?

**Interviewee:** LEAP it's one, but you know and we have these NGOs that do support children such as SKY ME, yes they look at conditions of the family and see how they can intervene. Myself I’ve connected some children through this means although it's a maintenance case. I mean things are getting better small small, although they get, from where I am coming from, they get the support from the father, the money which is not adequate and then they get other support. At a point, the woman we enroll them in skills training and it's been able to take care of them.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so is there any other, so all these, you want all this should be considered?

**Interviewee:** Yes and education, education it’s good, it’s another issue that we have whether the child is schooling or is not schooling or even if he's schooling how is the condition? You see, are they taking care of those basic educational needs because at times they can put the child in school but you realize that the child doesn't have a book to write in, doesn't have those petty petty, you know things that will, even his uniform it's not good. So aside the education, we must go into it and know whether the child is always regular in school

**Interviewer:** Performance of the child

**Interviewee:** Yes, and even the child's you know, that do they give him money to school like supports. I mean yes

**Interviewer:** Is the child okay when he or she is studying and all that

**Interviewee:** Yes because he’s entitled to, the child is entitled to, that's his right.

**Interviewer:** So please is that okay?

**Interviewee:** So far yes.

**Interviewer:** If you have more you want to add, I’d be very pleased if you can add more.

**Interviewee:** Okay I've spoken about child's education, naming that’s the birth certificate, health. I’ve spoken about the maintenance support by way of money expect that you can add if it becomes a need for you to probably, because we normally do it, but we don't write. At times, when the need comes, we invite the child to come. We talk to the child, because maybe the child is not being maintained because the child is insolent, or the child doesn't respect or something like that. At times, it comes up and as a case worker, you have to invite the child to you know, then you will talk to the child from time to time to conform to whatever that is. At times, they have to be involved in the decision making. They need to know that this is the decision that is being taken for them. So that psychosocial aspect, it is very key and it's need to be captured in the maintenance cases. Yes, and the follow -up actions.

**Interviewer:** So when you mean the follow -up actions, please can you explain a little? **Interviewee:** Yes, the follow -up actions, as in, for instance, this psychosocial counseling services that you administer on the child. With time, you have to follow up to see whether the child is conforming to certain things that you spoke to, about. So if it is happening, fine, if it isn’t happening, you can diverse other interventionary measures to help the child.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you so much. How different will you find a child maintenance assessment checklist to be from the case management SOP?

**Interviewee:** For the child maintenance assessment checklist, I don't expect any further questions and I expect that it will follow an order of chronology, like it will follow a particular, you know

**Interviewer:** That's for the child maintenance assessment?

**Interviewee:** Yes, you know, the case management forms, you can fill one, you’ll move from one page to the other, you can jump from one page to the other but with the case management, it follows a certain pattern. You understand? And one procedure, like from the case registration and picking the bio data of the this thing after the children, decision is being taken. After the decision taken, the follow up actions that need to be, you know, it must follow and there must be a portion of commitment, like agreement between the caregivers towards the child, you know. So that at least there will be a history of this and that.

With the complainant statements and the respondent’s statements, everything yeah.

**Interviewer:** So that means all of what you are saying, that the child maintenance assessment should be different from the case management SOP is issues about the child's welfare should be more detailed.

**Interviewee:** That is correct.

**Interviewer:** Very detailed?

**Interviewee:** It should be detailed because it is not only related to the caregiver, like the parent, but issues concerning the child. We are looking at the, paramount in things is the child's interest. So everything that we discuss must be on the child, so it is better we do everything. Everything about the child needs to be captured so that you can better serve the child.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you so much. So what are the challenges you encounter using the case management SOP?

**Interviewee:** Okay, some of the challenges that I encountered using the case management SOP. At times, some of them, because it doesn’t follow a particular, you know, else I find it difficult. When it comes to the case management, when it comes to the child maintenance aspect, you see that certain information that you expect to enter in, you don't find any questions about it and hence you leave it hanging. Yes. For instance, this respondents with maintenance, you know, they hasn't been any, although they have case management notes, but you know, it is between parties. What did this person say, what did the other person say, even there must be a provision for the child. What did the child also say if there is a need for you to also listen to the child

**Interviewer:** Like interrogation.

**Interviewee:** Yes, those questions haven't been created. You understand and you know, and in entering it, it's a bit cumbersome.

**Interviewer:** Do you think maybe there are lack of confidentiality?

**Interviewee:** In terms of what?

**Interviewer:** As in some of the information since maybe based on the parent, the parent not willing to give some information out about the child in question or they might think maybe the officer in charge might trace them in terms of like being confindent

**Interviewee:** Yes, that's right.

**Interviewer:** So are some willing, are they willing to give information?

**Interviewer:** Oh, Okay, at times it is difficult. At times when you are asking them certain questions, it's true. They find they feel that maybe you need it to be able to trace them or something so some of them

**Interviewer:** Because the reason I'm asking this, because some might feel that they are not doing the right thing, maybe taking care of the child. So they try not to, maybe they might need help, maybe the officer might help them in so many ways by following on some of the NGOs but because maybe they are scared that when they let certain information out, they might be arrested or something. That's why I'm just trying to ask whether, do they lack any form of confidentiality?

**Interviewee:** That's what I'm saying but normally when you are talking you assure them as a case worker that whatever information that they are going to provide is not going to be out there or it isn't going to be used against them.

Yes but still, at times you even request them for their Ghana card, you see, they feel some way, some of them will tell you they didn't bring it. Meanwhile, you need it to fill a particular portion of it so at times it becomes a challenge, but it's manageable.

Yes and another challenge that I have is that at times, it's cumbersome. You’ll fill the hard copy, you know, when you finish, you have to go and enter into SWIMS, which is the application and in entering the SWIMS, you realize that the SWIMS has an expanded version of the hard copy. For which I always suggest if things are well, if we have logistics by way of every case worker has his own laptop or something like that. I mean, you can enter the case, do the needed entries, when you need certain, you just print it and you file it.

**Interviewer:** So if I might interject, do you think that maybe information from the software, from the soft copy, should be exactly on the hard copy?

**Interviewee:** Yes

**Interviewer:** But are there instances that information from the hard copy, you might not find it on the soft copy? Your soft copy also have different questionnaires, which you might need both parent or both party to

**Interviewee:** Yes. The soft copy has an expanded version of this because the soft copy information such as, they will ask you whether this case is a high-risk case or they don't ask from this form but when you go to SWIMS, it is there. So in my suggestion, I am thinking that if you are to enter, if you’re going paperless, we should enter into the SWIMS. If we need any information, we can print it, we can export it and then print it out and put it on the file rather than using the pen, you will feel when you finish, you have to enter. Then I mean, no. So I see the SWIMS to be more like better. Yes. It is an expanded version of this but the SWIMS, they must have an aspect that has to do with child maintenance.

**Interviewer:** Please, do you have any other information you want to share as in more challenges that you face when you are?

**Interviewee:** Yes, they are only challenge, I don't have but they are only challenge I would prefer that, you know, the case management this thing for instance, it needs to be taught in schools. Those people who are learning social work at the University of Ghana and other institutions, they need to teach. Yes, because it is good. It's a very good initiative and it is going to ensure uniformity. So, if before they come out from the University and they find themselves, they already know.

**Interviewer:** It should be introduced, so that it will not be something new.

**Interviewer:** That is correct. Although we are doing our part by introducing internships students and service students that we have something like this that is fine. But it is good they know before they even you know, Yes. So, that is the contribution is that I can make towards it and we must work hard to ensure that all case workers will have their own laptops sponsored one, all case workers.

**Interviewer:** In terms of language barrier, do you face any issues?

**Interviewee:** Maybe converting what the person is saying into

**Interviewer:** Yes, maybe communication. Before there’re instances, maybe the client or the parties don't maybe you only understand a particular language and you need to convey such languages to them.

**Interviewee:** Yes good. At times it is another challenge. I remember in some cases I had to go and search for somebody who speaks because the language that we are coming to use to do their arbitration on the case management. I mean, they weren’t familiar with it. So, I had to go and bring somebody who is good in doing that interpretation not just understands the language but doing interpretation and the person did it very well. But I know it is a challenge, it’s a challenge for which I always pray that at least there will be someone who is there.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you so much. Okay, so what are the information you want include in a checklist to assess child maintenance cases? What are the information you won't include

**Interviewee:** I want an aspect where whether the case has been handled at the family level before. That's one aspect and going forward

**Interviewer:** Okay, whether the case has been handled at the family level, please can you expatiate, can you explain further?

**Interviewee:** Yes. When in the case management process, at times you have to know, if it is marriage or just cohabitation. It is good as a case worker to know whether other means in arbitrating or ensuring the child welfare is being upheld. You have to know, If there is none, then you see how best and yes, you can include those community -based supports like the relative this thing to get the child interest being sorted. So, it is good we know that whether you have used other means to deal with the case, you have to find out from the parties. Although at times they will mention it, but there is no portion in this thing that shows that the case has been handled before. At where, yes, those things you need to know

**Interviewer:** You need to know so that you know how to go about it.

**Interviewee:** Yes and at times you can rely on some of these relatives to get this child being cared for. So whether the child maintenance case has been handled at the family level and also there should be an aspect where I mean,

**Interviewer:** What else?

**Interviewer:** There should be an aspect where parties who, whatever they will agree, there must be what, the agreement, the parties, what, their commitment towards the child.

You understand?

**Interviewer:** Please explain further.

**Interviewee:** Like what do they commit to do for the child's welfare to be taken care of? Maybe the man doesn't pay money, you know

**Interviewer:** For upkeep?

**Interviewee:** Yes. How much has the man agreed to pay?

**Interviewer:** So there should be a portion created, included. As in money, the father or maybe monthly since both parents are not together.

**Interviewee:** Yes. What mode, like is it going to be directly to the mother, Is it going to be through the social welfare institution? All these things must be captured. You understand?

What are the, you know, and even at that particular moment, his education, I mean, what did you agree on the education? If things are not, if his education is not good or whatever, maybe they are not paying school fees and others. What follow -up actions is one going to do? There must be a portion for that.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Whether the child is also in either a government school or a private school, all should be captured.

**Interviewee:** Yes and at times it's good to get the details of the school. So that as a social welfare, if you are conducting a follow -up action, it will be easy. You just a call can do to the headmaster. You can, yes, if you want to even go further by following, you can go to the school.

**Interviewer:** So whether the child is always in school regularly?

**Interviewee:** Yes. So that it will help you. So that it will help you

**Interviewer:** To know what's going on in the families?

**Interviewee:** Yes. If you are to administer counseling services to the child as well.

**Interviewer:** Or the both parents?

**Interviewee:** Yes. Both parents or even the child. Yes. There should be a portion that should capture that in that order. Okay. So, so far, these are the

**Interviewer:** Or you want to give us more?

**Interviewee:** For now, that's what I would say.

**Interviewer:** So you don't have anyone to add up to?

**Interviewee:** For now, that's what I would say.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Thank you so much.

**Interviewee:** You’re welcome.

**Interviewer:** Thank you for all the information you've given us. We are so grateful for all the information. We would like to, in case of anything, fall back for other information, we'll give you a call or we'll come personally. So, thank you once again.

**Interviewee:** You’re welcome.