SW15

**Interviewer:** Please, good afternoon.

**Interviewee:** Good afternoon. Thank you.

**Demographic information**

**Name:** SW15

**Age:** 44 years old

**Educational background:** Currently I hold a degree in guidance and counseling. I started with diploma and social work.

**Interviewer:** Okay, please do you plan on taking your education to another level or you are okay with it?

**Interviewee:** No, I am planning to further it.

**Interviewer:** Please, what field do you plan on furthering your education in?

**Interviewee:** I want to further it to doing Masters in guidance and counseling.

**Interviewer:** Thank you. That was very good. How long have you been working with Social Welfare?

**Interviewee:** It's about 16 years.

**Interviewer:** All right. Please, can you tell us a bit about your experience when you started working with social welfare, how it was comparing then and now?

**Interviewee:** Oh, okay. So when I started with work, I was then quite young. So what I noticed was, clients coming in were not comfortable seeing me, and some other colleagues who were younger. They don't feel comfortable disclosing their issues to us, so that was a bit problematic. So they come and it's like you have to wait for your boss or the elderly ones to come before you attend to them but as time went on, with my current age, I realized they come and they are okay.

**Interviewer:** I understand how you feel because I've also had similar experiences. So please, how long have you worked on child maintenance cases?

**Interviewee:** I would say ever since I started work, but I think I wasn't contributing, it was like I was understudying my boss but now, I have mastered.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I understand. Okay, so I want to know, you said when people come, they feel uncomfortable. How are the reactions that make you know that they're uncomfortable?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, sometimes when you ask them to talk, they wouldn't want to talk but then you realize that when your boss or somebody who is a bit mature is around, they open up. They look straight into the person's face and talk and even you asking them the question, they wouldn't want to direct the answers to you but then at the end of the day, so you realize that they feel more comfortable with those people.

**Interviewer:** Okay so comparing, I want to know if this is your first station when you started social welfare, please where did you start?

**Interviewee:** No. Actually, I started with NYEP by then, so I was placed in Teshie Orphanage, where I was helping the kids. Then, later, when I had a permanent employment, I was sent to our district office at Accra, passport office area. Then, over there, I was told that I need to go to the grassroots and learn, and that is how I was brought to the Local government.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so in every, per my experience, I know that there are SOPs, case management SOPs for every child maintenance cases. So I want to know how you handle the case management SOPs because then when you started things are quite different from now. So I want to know the difference, how the SOPs are then and now.

**Interviewee:** Okay so just as you said when we started, those ones were not there so just as we learn those things that we learned from the beginning it’s the same thing i think we are using now. It's becoming difficult for us to use this SOPs especially the case management form, filing even though we've been trained over and over i think we are not getting used to using it, because sometimes it's even cumbersome for us to use it so we, i think we we are still holding on to the old ways of

**Interviewer:** Okay so please you mentioned that you find difficulty. I want to know what is the actual difficulty you find when you are dealing with the case management SOPs?

**Interviewee:** I think it's bulky, it is bulky, so I am thinking that if it is child maintenance, we should have a summarized form for child maintenance, which would not be like you seeing the form being so, and then like over here we have problems with stationery and other things, so the photocopying and sometimes the client will come, you don't have it, so you need to go back to the old thing and you were doing.

**Interviewer:** I understand because we've had similar experiences with the photocopying and the stationary. I think it’s a problem with the local government. So what do you think about the need to create a checklist dedicated to assessing child maintenance cases only?

I think you mentioned it earlier. So what do you think about the need to create an SOP for child maintenance only instead of making it a whole?

**Interviewee:** So, you know, with that one, we will all have a uniform way of handling child maintenance cases. I wouldn't do anything different here from another place, you understand? And then it will be quite simple for us. You will know the procedure that this is how it's supposed to be. You don't do something different from what another person will do and then also, if, it's a gradual thing, when you are not there and another person comes, he will know that, this is where you have gotten to.

**Interviewer:** Okay so per what you’ve just said it means that, sometimes there's a problem with continuity when someone comes. They are not able to get a hand of what's the previous person has done, so that is the problem with it.

**Interviewee:** Meanwhile in our old system where, which we want to change now when someone come, we just go back to your notebook, write today’s date, record the problem the person brings. So if I am not here and the person comes again, the next officer that time knows that this is where, so if something of that sort could be done to the new cases, I think it will help to promote continuity.

**Interviewer:** Yes, exactly and I've had a look at the child maintenance SOPs. Mostly it's just SOPs and then you have to look for which one is relating to child maintenance. So do you think attention is paid to the child in itself looking at the case, child maintenance? Do you think attention is paid to the child or the parents?

**Interviewee:** Since it's child maintenance, I think attention is paid to the child. Most of the things they ask is about the child even though you ask of the mothers or parents biostats, it's all about it.

**Interviewer:** I’m asking because when, I've had a look at the child maintenance SOP and then you realize that mostly the parents, the statements of the respondents and the complainants is about themselves. It's about the small, small quarrels or the misunderstanding they have before the separation or before the child non maintenance came in. So mostly you realize that the parents do not take care of the kids because of the anger that they have towards the other parents. That is what I want you to explain. Have you had instances such like that over here?

**Interviewee:** Yes, we do. Mostly they hold on to their differences and it comes to affect the children and that is what even encourage me to go and do counseling. So I could come back and help the clients know that, know much about how to handle issues like that. To counsel them, to just let go and think more about

**Interviewer:** The child.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Because mostly you read the statement and it's like there are differences. Please going on, what are the key issues you consider when assessing a child maintenance case?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I, for me, I look at the current economic situation. I look at the situation, I look at where you put your child. If it is the two of you who agreed to put the child in that particular school, then it means that is what you can afford, okay?

I also look at what the man does and what the woman, what they do and then I look at where the child is living, the economic standard over there. Example, Teshie here, we have this side of Teshie, which is like where the strangers are and then the indigenes are in Maamli. When you go there, you can buy kenkey I cedi, GHc 1.50p but over here, 3 cedis, 4 cedis, so I look at where the child is living.

**Interviewer:** So you know how to, okay

**Interviewee:** And then also you look at the other responsibilities on the man.

**Interviewer:** Okay, alright. So how different would you want a child maintenance assessment checklist to be from the case management SOPs? You take out the child maintenance SOP, how different do you want to be from the case management in itself?

**Interviewee:** This your question is quite difficult for me to answer.

**Interviewer:** Let me bring it down for you. You see when you take the child maintenance, the case management SOPs in itself. We have sections, they haven't cleared out the sections. It's up to the officer to know which one is for case management and the rest. So how do you want it to be like, how do you want the child maintenance SOP in the whole case management, how do you want it to be like?

**Interviewee:** I think it should be separated from the whole and then just as I said earlier, we should do things in a uniform way.

**Interviewer:** So, you said you would like it to be separated. Separated in?

**Interviewee:** Simple, like it should beon its own and when you pick it, you know that this is a child maintenance case.

**Interviewer:** So if I should get you right, you don't want it to be, you’d wish that it will not be part of the case management SOP, it should be a different document in its own. Is that what you want?

Okay, why do you want to be like that?

**Interviewee:**  To make things a bit easier, because over here, when I give you a record, we handle child maintenance, child custody, family welfare. Child maintenance is the highest case we handle here, so it needs much attention and to be given some speciality.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so I want to know because you stated earlier that, you find, you encounter some challenges using the SOPs because you find the one you were using before more easier. So I want you to, I want to know the specific challenges that you find using this one as compared to the old one if it's continuity, simplicity, I want to

**Interviewee:** It’s the simplicity. It's quite, which word do I use?

**Interviewer:** Complicated.

**Interviewee:** Yes and bulky, you understand. If they could make it quite simpler and

**Interviewer:** Okay, with the SOP I think it all comes down to the kind of training that maybe they didn't do in-depth training because at my place, when you come, for me as a National Service Personnel, I'm really abreast with it. So I think maybe if you should get someone here to teach you instead of maybe a whole

**Interviewee:** Going for a workshop?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Interviewee:** That is it. Some of us, we are slow learners. I was part of the team that went for the training. You see so and I am not that fast. Yes. The first time we came, we were able to do something but as time we went on. So I think the idea you’re bringing is very good. If we could get somebody who can be teaching us one on one, maybe a week or a month, the person would be with us, helping us to fill and then we’ll become used to it and becomes part of us.

**Interviewer:** Yes. So if you should get someone who should bring the file like this and sit it down and says, this is how it is done.

**Interviewee:** So we’ll think about how we can transport you every week, maybe twice in a week, from Ashaiman to this place to help us, maybe for a month. If you take your transport, it will really help us because we would love to use it.

**Interviewer:** If not me, someone else can, because there are people who are more experience than me in this whole SOP management. So you can get, I'm sure if your concerns are heard about the training, they'll get someone to come and teach you one -on-one, because I understand sometimes, the workshop, they are teaching a lot of you, so don't won’t take time to teach you.

**Interviewee:** Yes and some are very smart, so when they talk, you think everyone understands.

**Interviewer:** Yes, exactly. So I think that getting some one-on-one should help. It will help a lot and some stations too, their officers are quite abreast with it, so when the juniors come, they teach them, and then, and so I think that if you could also get abreast with it, you can teach the others that, so even if you are not here, there is someone who is able to carry down the information for you.

Okay, so what are the kind of information that you want included in the checklist to assess child maintenance?

**Interviewee:** For the information, I think it's enough, but then they should give an aspect where further complaints could be lodged. Let's say the person comes back after the first, the person comes back another time to lodge a continuous complain. There should be an aspect to record all that.

**Interviewer:** Okay. I understand because like when you write the statements that's all. When the person comes, you'd have to look for another way too. Yes, that's very fine. Please can I have a look at the SOP?

**Interviewee:** We don't close it, for most of our cases are adjourned.

**Interviewer:** Okay so when it’s adjourned, then the person comes back for re -hearing of the case, there is no space for the for information to be recorded again.

**Interviewee:** Yeah, so mostly we use the old this thing. So, this tells you that we don't

**Interviewer**: Yes, you are not abreast with it.

**Interviewee:** What we usually, when we take this book, then it means we have a missing child, we have an abandoned

**Interviewer:** Abandonment

**Interviewee:** You see. Okay. So this one, maintenance, we don’t do this one

**Interviewer:** I understand because you feel like it is. So would you want to go back to the old system?

**Interviewee:** No, if we could be okay with this one it will help.

**Interviewer:** Okay so, with the old one, are there spaces for a lot of information like this or it’s just?

**Interviewee:** No. with that one, you will have to create it, it’s a note book and so, you will create whatever. So we have a case register, where you get the particulars of the complainants, the respondents, and the child. Then when you come to case hearing, we have the case record book, where you do your recording and that is where when you are done with the case, the person comes back another time, you just write your date, which complains the person brings.

**Interviewer:** So that is where the issue of continuity is, because in the notebook, you just, okay, I understand. It makes sense, because a lot of people find it difficult to use the, I think that’s what the research is more about.

**Interviewee:** Looking at the number of maintenance cases we do here, if we say we will be using this book, then we’ll not even know where to pack or keep them. We'll need multiples of cabinets and other things.

**Interviewer:** So you feel like it takes space.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** It takes space. So you would want it to be a bit smaller, so that there can be space.

**Interviewee:** Yes. So that may be like this file, it takes maybe hundreds of cases.

**Interviewer:** Okay, instead of, just about 50 or 20.

**Interviewee:** This is even not up to. It’s less than 20.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so that brings my next, do you think it takes time to take the details of the child, the respondents?

**Interviewee:** No it doesn’t

**Interviewer:** It doesn't take time, it's just the feeling of the other details that is okay. So you are okay with the kind of information that is put inside.

**Interviewee:** Yes. We are okay with that.

**Interviewer:** Okay and there are no key issues that you consider. Okay I’ve asked you that one already. The issues that you consider while assessing a child maintenance case.

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So the question here is what do you like most about the simplified child maintenance assessment checklist?

Meaning, like even though you have problems with it, there must be something you like about it.

**Interviewee:** I like the details, the registration details, that's about the complainants, the child and other members involved in the case. I really like that one, so in future or anytime you need any of these persons, their contacts and everything is there for you to trace.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so this one is more in-depth than the one you used to use before? **Interviewee:** Exactly.

**Interviewer:** Okay so would you recommend that it should be used by other social warfare officers?

**Interviewee:** I recommend that we use it but then just as I said,it should be simplified.

**Interviewer:** Because, you see, we are in the Greater Accra Region. We are in an urban place, so I don't know if it has been able to get to the rural areas. That is why I ask that, if you recommend that we send it to them.

**Interviewee:** But then it should be simplified

**Interviewer:** Simplified for you.

**Interviewee:** Yeah

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you very much.

**Interviewer:** You are welcome.

**Interviewer:** Thank you very much for your time.

**Interviewee:** You are welcome.

**Interviewer:** Madam, so I want you to throw more light. I want you to enlighten me more about the differences. How different do you want the Child Maintenance Assessment Checklist to be from the case management SOP?

Which differences would you like to see more, how different do you want the questions to be like?

**Interviewee:** With the question is, I think they are ok. My only concern is that there should be a space for continuity, and then it should be simplified. It shouldn't be bulky.

**Interviewer:** Okay so you want it to be simple, especially for those of you who are a bit of, okay.

**Interviewee:** Yeah

**Interviewer:** Because when the younger generation, they have, they don't have any difficulty accessing it. Okay, so you want it to be simple?

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So, like you want them to consider the age differences over here so that when, they'll make it simple for you?

**Interviewee:** No that is not it, that's not what I mean but you see, sometimes when you open the form, you need to have to go through and see whether this has to do with child maintenance or not. So, if we could make it straight away, that when I open this place, it is child maintenance.

**Interviewer:** Okay, if you open to this place, family welfare. You want it to be sectioned out, instead of

**Interviewee:** Yes, it should be sectioned out.

**Interviewer:** Madam, please thank you for your time. God bless you.

**Interviewee:** You are welcome. I didn’t even ask your name.