

Interview guidelines

Deliverable 2.1

EnTrust: Enlightened Trust: An Examination of Trust and Distrust in Governance – Conditions, Effects and Remedies

WP2: Trust and distrust at the street-level of public policy

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General Remarks for Interviewers

1. Policy field: we focus on social assistance/welfare benefits and services which are granted to vulnerable families with dependent children¹. These do not have to be benefits or services which are granted only to families with children (such as child benefit), but they need to be the benefits or services for which one's family situation is taken into account (e.g. this is not the case for unemployment benefit).

2. Choice of institutions and frontline workers: We apply a flexible, step-by-step approach to institutions' sampling. However:

a) Please start in the institution which is most relevant to the policy field described in point 1. If there are various units in the institution, please try to appoint the interview in the unit which is most relevant in terms of policy field described in point 1.

b) If applying for abovementioned benefits or services is institutionally detached in your country from social work or practical assistance to families, please include in your sample both welfare officers who process applications and social workers.

3. Choice of citizens: Recruit citizens who have been recipients of social assistance of the institutions where you conducted interviews in the first phase of this study. Please take account of the variety of institutional units and types of frontline workers (e.g. welfare officers processing applications and social workers) if applicable to your sampling choices.

4. Other steps of sampling procedure: please consult ppt "Information on WP2 fieldwork".

5. Important information about conducting the interview: please consult ppt "Information on WP2 fieldwork".

¹ The families which have children in foster care may also be included. However, since these families may be eligible to special forms of assistance, if you decide to include them in the sample, please consider extending frontline workers' sample accordingly (please see ppt "Information on WP2 fieldwork").

WP2 Guidelines for Interviews with Frontline Workers

Note: You may introduce small adjustments to the guidelines at the stage of translation to your country language (e.g. other neutral words instead of “recipients”). Please skip all those follow-up questions which ask about solutions that are not permitted in your country or where, due to legal regulations, there will be no differences among interviewees’ answers. It may refer i.e. to questions marked with *

| Open questions / stimuli | Follow-up questions (and check-list) |
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| I) Interviewee’s background and employment career | |
| 1) Could you please tell me about the path in your life that led you to work in [name of the institution]? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What kind of formal education do you have?* - Where did you work earlier? - Was choice of this work long planned or random? |
| 2) How long have you been working in [name of the institution]? How has your position changed since you started working here, if at all? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If not clear beforehand: what is the name of the institution you work in and the name of your position? |
| 3) What is the scope of the responsibilities in your work? Could you describe your typical working day and week? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the everyday tasks that you do? - How is your work divided into contacts with citizens and purely administrative work or other tasks?* - How many applicants or recipients do you have per day? - Is the group of citizens you work with/for somehow narrowed down, e.g. limited to a sub-area of neighbourhood? |
| 4) Have your responsibilities changed during the restrictions in your country because of Covid-19? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How was your work organised during the pandemic? - How did you communicate with citizens during the pandemic? - Did the restriction measures make your job more difficult? |

| II) Procedures of applying for social assistance benefits and services | |
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| <p>1) [print vignette and give to interviewee] <i>A couple with children aged 3, 12 and 16 fell in poverty/trouble. The father used to have an unstable and low-paid job in a supermarket, but after an injury a few months ago finds it difficult to work and had to cancel his shifts. The mother has been a stay-at-home mother. For some time, she has suffered the symptoms of depression. The family has significant difficulties in making ends meet and they have debts caused by an unpaid flat rent. Their oldest son became aggressive and refrains from attending school. The family has previously used no social assistance schemes and they have little knowledge of what they can apply for.</i></p> <p>What kind of benefits and services would such family be most likely to receive?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the approximate or typical length of time and the (if financial) of using these benefits and services? - What is the amount of these benefits? |
| <p>2) When you first meet such a family and open the case, what would be the next steps? Can you please describe how casework develops from here?²</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do they (one or both parents/carers) need to be interviewed?* - Can you describe the general setting of such an interview? (spatial and temporal framing of the interview situation, type of questions, forms and documents used³) - What kind of information do you give them (in an interview)? |
| <p>3) Can you tell me a little bit more about the kind of information that you need in order to make a decision?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you tell me more about the <u>(eligibility) criteria</u> that are important for casework? How do you verify them? - Are you required to check the eligibility of potential recipients? |

² If this question is too complicated, e.g. due to too many specific ways of applying for various benefits and services, please do not ask for every procedure that precedes granting every benefit or service. Rather, follow prompting questions to check which procedures are used in the institution.

³ Unless these forms are classified, ask for a copy or the possibility to take a photo of them. If you can have a look but not copy, please try to read out typical questions.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there <u>specific documents</u> that citizens would need to provide here? Which ones? In which cases? - According to your experience, what influence does the eligibility-check have on your relationship with potential recipients? - Would you also <u>gather information</u> from third parties to learn more about the family's situation? If so, whom do you contact and what type of information do you try to gather?* - In case a contract or agreement with a recipient is signed, which <u>behaviours are typically required</u> from them: e.g. starting employment or employment training, therapy, visiting other institutions, any other? - <u>How long</u> does it usually take until they receive their first benefit or service (and the other ones)? |
| <p>4) When you think of a typical case, like the family we talked about, what do decisions involve and what form do they take?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there a formal decision issued about admitting or denying specific benefit or service? What is its form?* |
| <p>5) Apart from the described situation, when the family comes here to the office to claim help, are there any other paths which lead to you contacting new recipients? Can you describe these paths?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If there are paths that are intervention-related (e.g. due to domestic violence): can you briefly describe how you further proceed with such a family? |
| <p>6) Does it happen that families, such as the described above lose the eligibility to mentioned benefits or services?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If so, which reasons are typical for that? |
| <p>7) When you think of your daily work with citizens, how would you describe the leeway you have in the handling of cases? *</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you experience some scope of discretion or room for manoeuvre? - Where do you perceive differences between you and your colleagues, maybe in |

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| | <p>style or in practical ways of going about casework?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could you give examples? |
| 8) Could you please tell us how evaluation or supervision of your work is organised? | |
| 9) When you think of your working conditions here, do you experience any significant obstacles in your work? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you experience constraints such as time, financial constraints, bureaucracy or understaffing? - If so, how do they affect your work? |
| 10) Have you experienced any major legal or organisational changes in your work in last three years? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is your general evaluation of these changes? |
| <p>III) Interactions with citizens: the context of dis-/trust</p> <p>Now, I would like to talk with you about direct interactions that you have with citizens who apply for/receive help.</p> | |
| 1) To what extent does the organisation of your work allow you to know the citizens you work with? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the approximate length of your work with one person/family?* - How often do you usually meet one person/family?* |
| 2) When you think of interactions with citizens in your work, can you tell us how you experience them? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you remember any encounter as particularly difficult? - When do interactions become difficult? |
| 3) Could you tell us about your solutions to overcome these difficulties, if you have any? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When do interactions run smoothly? |
| 4) Could you tell us about your own approach to recipients? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perhaps during your work, you have adopted your own principles you follow in meetings with citizens, your own "style" in approaching them. If there is anything like that, could you describe it? [only if unclear: Which values do you find most important when contacting recipients?] - How has your approach to citizens changed during the course of your work, if at all? |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you recall any specific experiences while working here which have contributed to the change? - Has it ever happened that any scientific knowledge, including books, trainings or reports contributed to you changing your approach toward citizens? |
| <p>IV) Explicit reflections on dis/trust Now, I would like to talk with you about whether trust appears in your relations with citizens</p> | |
| <p>1) What does trust mean for you if you were to put it in your own words?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When do you normally experience trust? |
| <p>2) Overall, how does the trust issue appear in your work?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Based on your experience: how important is it for you or for your work to build a <u>trustful relationship</u> with citizens? b) How you do assess the <u>credibility</u> of a potential recipient? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - And how important is the result of this assessment for the subsequent steps you take and the relationship with the recipient? c) What are typical signs/indicators for you to assess if a potential recipient is <u>honest/sincere</u>? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How important is it for your work and the relationship with a potential recipient that you feel that this person is sincere? - Can you describe a typical experience of a situation where you felt that a potential recipient was dishonest? d) How do you assess if the information provided by a citizen and the documents supporting their claims are reliable? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How important is <u>reliable information</u> for your work and your relationship with them? - What steps do you take to gain reliable information? |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you do if a citizen says they cannot provide necessary documents to confirm a situation (e.g. illness or expenditure)? - What do you do if a citizen provides documents which seem doubtful to you (e.g. about the amount of salary)? - How would this affect your trust in them? |
| <p>3) Can you tell us about your factual experiences with trusting or not trusting recipients? Can you think of a particular example where this played an important role?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have you experienced situations when citizens disenchanted you or misused your trust? - Have you experienced situations where citizens positively surprised you or improved your trust? - In which situations does not trusting citizens make sense in your work? - Since you started working here, have you become more trusting or not trusting toward citizens applying for and receiving help? - Do you trust citizens to have complied with the restrictions implemented during the pandemic? |
| <p>4) Can you tell us about your experiences with recipients trusting or not trusting you?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has it ever happened that a citizen said they trusted or did not trust you? - Can you think of examples where citizens actually put too much trust in you? - Can you recall any important situations when you felt that citizens distrusted you? How did you react? - Do you have any particular strategies to deal with the distrust of citizens? |
| <p>5) Now you have told me a lot about the role of trust and distrust in your encounters with citizens. Based on your experience, what kind of changes in the procedures, resources or in society would you recommend?</p> | |

5. Final Question

In this section, we should invite the interviewees to add any reflections we have not touched on, also potentially sensitive issues for our record. If there is nothing to add, a general outlook into the future might be good.

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| 1) Is there something important we have not spoken about, in order to better understand the nature of your work, with its objectives and challenges? | |
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WP2 Guidelines for Interviews with Citizens – Social Assistance Recipients

| Open questions / stimuli | Follow-up questions (and check-list) |
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| I) Interviewee's background | |
| 1) Could you please tell where you live? (No asking about address) Have you been living there for long? Where do you come from? | |
| 2) With whom do you live and have a shared household? | - Do you live with a husband, wife, partner, any other adults? |
| II) Applying for benefits or services | |
| 1) As said, we are interested in experiences of people who get help from social assistance [or: name of the institution]. Could you tell us since when, more or less, have you been receiving benefits or services that [name of the institution] granted to you? | |
| 2) What kind of benefits or services granted by [name of the institution] are you receiving now? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what amount (about benefits) or frequency (about services) are they? - Were you eligible for any new kind of benefits or services as a result of the measures the government implemented because of the pandemic?* - [Only if applicable:] Are these benefits a small or a significant part of your household's budget? - [Only if applicable:] Are these services of small or significant help to you? - Do they arrive on time? |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there any other benefits or services you obtained earlier? |
| <p>3) Can you tell me what it was like to apply for these benefits or services or to apply for keeping them?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did you attend an interview with a social assistance worker? - Can you describe a talk or interview which was important to you, or which you remember well [if relevant: when you applied for benefits or services]? - When was it, where was it, how was the space organised? - Who was present there? - What questions did they ask? - Did they give you any advice or information? - Did they request any documents? - Did you have to fill out or sign anything? - Apart from the interview, were social assistance employees checking your eligibility for benefits or services? If so, what did it look like? - Did you have to accept any kind of contract or agreement with social assistance? If so, what was in it? How much say did you have about its contents? |
| <p>4) Has it happened to you that you were denied a benefit or service you think you should have received?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you describe such a situation? |
| <p>5) Has it happened to you that a benefit or service you were receiving was ceased?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you describe such a situation? |
| <p>6) Overall, how do you assess the procedures you have to go through to obtain or keep benefits or services?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did you feel during the interview? What was the atmosphere like? |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the whole procedure time-consuming or not? If so, could you please explain why? - Is it very stressful or not? If so, could you please explain why? - Is it clear to you or not? Do you feel well-informed about the steps that are taken? Could you explain why/why not? - Do you find it fair or unfair? Could you explain why/why not? - How does it make you feel? |
| <p>7) Do you have any friends, neighbours or relatives who have also been in touch with [name of the institution]? If so, do you talk with them about employees and procedures?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you talk with your family or friends about your experiences with using social assistance? What are these talks about? - Do they advise you or provide you with information about [name of the institution]? In what way is this helpful for you, or not? |
| III) Interactions with frontline workers: the context of dis/trust | |
| <p>1) How often do you have to get in touch with [name of the institution] nowadays?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the purpose of it? - How do you get in touch with them (visit, phone call, mail)? - Did the way you get in touch with them change during the pandemic? |
| <p>2) Is there a person or persons in [name of the institution] you have already got to know personally (you know their name, approach, they know who you are)? If so, how would you describe your relationship?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since you started obtaining social assistance, has the person assigned to work with you been changed?* - Is this person/those people just following the procedures, or is your relationship somehow personal (I mean, can you see any sympathy, anger, malice, etc.)? - How do you see the level of <u>dependence or independence</u> of this person/those people in fulfilling their responsibilities? |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you see any <u>goals or priorities</u> of this person in the manner they work with you? If so, how would you describe them? - How would you describe this person in terms of <u>competence, engagement, willingness to provide information, respectfulness</u> and other features important to you? - How would you describe your attitude toward this person/those people? |
| <p>IV) Explicit reflections on dis/trust Now, I would like to talk with you about how trust may appear in your relations with social assistance officers</p> | |
| <p>1) What does trust mean for you if you were to put it in your own words?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When do you normally experience trust? |
| <p>2) Overall, how does the trust issue appear in your using social assistance?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Could you describe a situation where you had the impression that the social assistance officer was <u>sincere/honest and behaved in an open/transparent manner</u>? - How important was this for your relationship with them? b) Could you describe a situation where you had the impression that the social assistance officer was <u>accountable for their decisions</u>? - How important was this for your relationship with them? c) Could you describe a situation where you had the impression that the social assistance officer was <u>impartial</u>? - How important was this for your relationship with them? |
| <p>3) Can you recall any situation when the person or [name of the institution]</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What situation was that? - Did they literally say they trusted you? |

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| <p>employee trusted you about something?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did such situations happen often? - How did you feel? - Would you agree they trusted you on some issues and not on some others? If so, when did they trust? |
| <p>4) [Unless already discussed earlier]: Can you recall any situation when this person or [name of the institution] employee distrusted you about something?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What situation was that? - Did they literally say they distrusted you? - Did such situations happen often? - How did you feel? |
| <p>5) Speaking of trust, can you tell us about your trust and distrust toward [name of the institution] and its employees?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When, whom, in regard to what do you trust them? - When, whom, in regard to what do you distrust them? - During or after the pandemic, would you say that you trust them more or less than before? |
| <p>6) Can you recall any situation when you trusted someone in [name of the institution] but they disappointed you?</p> | |
| <p>7) Can you recall any situation when you distrusted someone in [name of the institution] but they positively surprised you or gradually you started to trust them?</p> | |
| <p>8) If you were to recommend what should be changed in the social assistance/policy system and more broadly in [your country] to help people seeking social support, what would your recommendations be?</p> | |

| V) Social and political context We were talking about recommendations regarding what should be changed in the system. So, let's see if there are any parties or political groups which care about citizens more than others. | |
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| <p>1) Speaking of politics, would you say there are any parties or groups in [your country] now who care more about people seeking social support than others?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you think that current government at least tries to care about people, especially people who might be in trouble, taking into account all constraints of its activity? - Did the pandemic and its management from the current government change your opinion regarding the party's politics for the people who might be in trouble or in need? - Do you think that the politicians of your country or the state in general are at all able to solve social problems? - Are there any [political] groups which are better than others and whom you tend to trust? |
| <p>2) Do you think that your friends and acquaintances generally share your point of view on this?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you talk with them about social problems, potential solutions and politics in general? - What is their view/opinion on potential solutions to the current situation? - Which party or organisation are they relatively close to? - What kind of Internet sites or TV programmes (associated with some political stance) do they follow? |
| <p>3) How would you describe them as a group? Where do you know them from?</p> | |

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| <p>4) Speaking of likes and dislikes of politicians, can you tell me if you tend to vote for some specific party? [Serbia: either delete this item or rephrase, to avoid clientelistic connotations]</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you vote? - When you decide whom to vote for, how do you make your choice? - Whom do you vote for; have you voted recently? |
| <p>5) And if you were to vote for your country leaving the EU, how would you vote? [Serbia: either delete or ask about joining]</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does it contribute to a better life for people like you, or not? |
| <p>VI) Final Question In this section we should invite the interviewees to add any reflections we have not touched on, also potentially sensitive issues for our record. If there is nothing to add, a general outlook into the future might be good.</p> | |
| <p>1. Is there something important we have not spoken about, in order to better understand your experiences with applying for social assistance benefits or services?</p> | |