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Field Guide to Enumerator Excellence

A pocket guide for the people who collect Tsavone's field evidence

GROUND → DATA → INSIGHT → DECISION

TSV-PUB-010

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> **A practical pocket guide for enumerators, written in plain language. It covers preparation, community entry, sampling, informed consent with a model script, interview techniques, data quality, data protection, safeguarding, safety, device care and daily checklists, with simple do and don't tables throughout.**

About this publication

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1. Welcome to the team

This guide is for you, the enumerator. You are the most important person in any survey. Every number in a final report started as an answer you heard, understood and recorded. If you do your work well, decision-makers get evidence they can trust, and the people you interview are treated with respect. If corners are cut, no amount of analysis can fix it.

Keep this guide with you in the field. Read it before training, use it during practice, and check it whenever you are unsure. It is written in plain language and kept short on purpose. Your assignment field manual and your supervisor give you the details for each survey: the questionnaire, the sample, the area and the timetable.

> **Three promises every Tsavone enumerator keeps: I ask every question exactly as written. I record only what I hear. I protect the person in front of me.**

1.1 How this guide fits with other rules

This guide explains in simple words the rules you will follow. The full rules are in Tsavone's field data collection procedures, its Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct, its data protection and research ethics policy, and its health, safety and security policy. Your training follows Tsavone's standard enumerator course. If anything in this guide seems different from those rules or from your supervisor's instructions for a specific survey, ask your supervisor. The policy wins.

1.2 What makes an excellent enumerator

Quality	What it looks like
Honest	Never invents, copies or guesses an answer. Reports mistakes at once.
Respectful	Greets properly, explains clearly, accepts "no" without pressure, protects privacy.
Accurate	Reads questions word for word, probes neutrally, checks entries before moving on.
Prepared	Knows the questionnaire, the device and the area before the first interview.
Calm	Handles refusals, difficult questions and long days without losing patience.
Safe	Follows travel and security rules, works with others and speaks up about risks.

2. Before you go to the field

2.1 Your contract and paperwork

Before your first field day you must have:

- A signed engagement letter or contract with Tsavone, showing your daily rate, days and payment method.
- A signed Code of Conduct and confidentiality undertaking. Read it. It is a condition of your work.
- Completed safeguarding and data protection training, and passed the end-of-training test.
- A Tsavone identity card or letter of introduction, and any research permit or district introduction letter the survey needs.
- A mobile money or bank account in your own name for payment. Tsavone does not pay into another person's account.

2.2 Your field kit

Item	Check
Tablet or phone with the survey form loaded and tested	Charged to 100%, survey version matches your supervisor's
Power bank and charging cable	Charged, cable works
Identity card and introduction letters	In a plastic sleeve
Consent and information cards with Tsavone contacts	Enough for the day, plus spares
Referral pathway card for your area	Names and numbers of local services for survivors and people in need
Notebook and pen (no personal data written in it)	For directions, call-backs and field notes only
Water, rain jacket, sun protection, simple first-aid items	Ready for long days and changing weather
Emergency contacts: supervisor, Safeguarding Focal Point, safety focal point	Saved in your phone and written on a card

2.3 Know your questionnaire

You should know the questionnaire well enough to explain the purpose of every question in your own words, without looking. You will practise in training through role plays and mock interviews in the local language. Use the question-by-question notes in your field manual. If any question seems confusing, offensive or hard to translate, say so in training. That is how tools get better.

3. Arriving in a community

First impressions shape every interview that follows. Communities often decide whether to trust you in the first few minutes.

1. Your supervisor will have met the local leaders first, such as the LC1 chairperson, the settlement commandant or block leader, or the parish chief. Never start interviewing in a village before your supervisor confirms that entry has been agreed.
2. Greet people in the local way and in the local language. Introduce yourself, show your identity card and say you work for Tsavone Consulting, a research company.
3. Explain the study in one or two plain sentences, using the words in your field manual.
4. Never promise benefits, money, aid, jobs or follow-up projects. Say clearly that Tsavone does not decide who gets help.
5. Follow local customs on dress, greeting elders and entering compounds. Dress neutrally, without political, religious or client branding unless the client requires branding.

Do	Don't
Arrive at the agreed time and move with your team	Wander into homes or areas you have not been assigned
Greet elders and leaders respectfully	Discuss politics, religion or local disputes
Answer questions about the study honestly	Make promises or guess what the client will do
Accept refreshments politely if offered, as local custom expects	Ask for food, transport, gifts or favours
Keep your phone on silent during interviews	Take photographs without permission

4. Finding the right respondent

The sample is chosen so that the results represent everyone in the area. If you interview whoever is easiest to find, the results will be wrong. Follow the sampling instructions in your field manual exactly.

- Go to the household, farm, business or person on your list or chosen by the method you were trained in, such as a random walk or a list from the supervisor.
- Identify the right respondent using the definitions in the questionnaire, for example "the person who makes most decisions about crops" or "a household member aged 18 or over".
- If the respondent is not available, ask when they will return and arrange a call-back. Make the number of attempts your manual requires, at least three attempts (the first visit and two call-backs) at different times of day, with at least one on a different day, before recording them as not found.
- Never replace a respondent yourself. Only your supervisor may approve a replacement, using the replacement list.

- Record every visit, including refusals and households not found, with the correct outcome code.

> **A refusal recorded honestly is good data. A replacement made without permission is a data quality failure.**

5. Informed consent

Every person has the right to decide freely whether to take part. Consent is not a form to rush through. It is the start of a respectful conversation. You must read the approved consent script in full, in a language the respondent understands, before asking any survey question.

5.1 The model adult consent script

Your field manual contains the final, approved script for your survey. It will be close to this model. Text in brackets is filled in for each survey.

"Good [morning or afternoon]. My name is [name]. I work for Tsavone Consulting, a research company. Here is my identity card. We are doing a study for [client] about [topic in plain words]. The information will help [purpose in plain words].

You have been chosen by chance from households in this area. If you agree, I will ask you questions about [topics]. It will take about [number] minutes. Some questions are about [sensitive topics, if any]. You can skip any question you do not want to answer, and you can stop at any time.

Taking part is your choice. Saying no, skipping questions or stopping will not affect any help, service, payment or job you receive now or in the future, from [client] or anyone else. Tsavone does not decide who receives assistance.

There are no direct benefits to you. [State any refund or refreshment.] We will keep your answers private. Your name will be stored separately from your answers, and reports will not name you.

A supervisor may call or visit you later to check that I did my work properly. If you have questions or a complaint, you can contact Tsavone Consulting on +256704579186 or info@tsavone.com. This card has the numbers. Do you have any questions? Do you agree to take part?"

5.2 Consent rules

Do	Don't
Read the whole script, slowly, in the respondent's language	Summarise, skip parts or read it as fast as possible
Pause and invite questions	Pressure, persuade or argue with someone who hesitates
Record "yes" or "no" in the consent question yourself, truthfully	Record consent that was not clearly given
Use a literate witness from outside the team for respondents who cannot read, where the protocol requires	Ask a family member who benefits from the answer to act as witness
Ask separately for permission to record audio or take photographs	Assume that agreeing to the interview means agreeing to photos

Do	Don't
Thank people who say no, and leave politely	Return to someone who refused unless your supervisor approves a second visit

5.3 Children

You will only interview children if your survey includes them and you have been specially trained. For a child aged 8 to 17, you need the consent of a parent or guardian first, and then the child's own agreement (assent). If the child says no, the answer is no, even if the parent agreed. Silence, hesitation or a shake of the head means no. Interview children where others can see you but not hear the answers. Never be alone in a closed room with a child.

Use simple words: "Hello, my name is [name]. I am asking children some questions about [topic]. Your [parent or guardian] said it is fine to talk with you, but you can decide for yourself. You do not have to talk to me. Nobody will be angry if you say no. You can stop at any time. I will not tell your family or teachers what you say. The only time I would tell someone is if you tell me someone is hurting you, so we can get help to keep you safe. Would you like to talk with me?"

5.4 Refugees and persons with disabilities

In refugee settlements, say clearly that Tsavone has no role in registration, food, cash, shelter or resettlement, and that taking part will not change any of these. With persons with disabilities, seek the person's own consent wherever possible, adapt how you communicate, allow more time, and involve a support person only if the respondent chooses.

6. Interview techniques

6.1 Setting up the interview

- Find a place where others cannot hear the answers but can see you. Ask politely if others can give you privacy, for example: "Some questions are personal. Would it be possible to talk here, just the two of us, where your family can still see us?"
- Sit at the same level as the respondent, facing them, not too close.
- Put your device where you can read it easily without hiding your face.
- If privacy is not possible for sensitive questions, skip those questions or arrange to return, and record why.

6.2 Asking questions

Do	Don't
Read each question exactly as written, in the approved translation	Rephrase, shorten or explain in your own words unless the manual allows
Read all answer options when the instruction says "read options"	Read options when the instruction says "do not read"
Keep a neutral face and voice for every answer	Show surprise, approval or disapproval
Ask every question, even if you think you know the answer	Skip a question because the answer seems obvious

Do	Don't
Repeat the question slowly if it is not understood	Suggest an answer: "You mean about five, yes?"
Record the answer given, in the respondent's terms	Record what you think the respondent meant to say

6.3 Neutral probes

A probe helps the respondent give a complete answer without leading them. Use only neutral probes:

- "Anything else?"
- "Can you tell me more about that?"
- "What do you mean by [their word]?"
- "Which answer is closest to your situation?"
- Silence: wait a few seconds. People often add more when given time.

Never use leading probes such as "Surely you earn more than that?" or "Don't you think the programme helped?"

6.4 Numbers, dates and money

Many survey answers are numbers: acres, kilograms, bags, shillings, ages, days. Respondents often estimate. Help them recall without suggesting a number.

- Use local units first, then convert using the conversion table in your manual. For example, ask how many basins or bags were harvested, then record the unit exactly.
- Use a local events calendar for dates and ages, such as national events, seasons or school terms.
- Break large amounts into parts: "How much did you get from coffee? From beans? From casual work?"
- Repeat the number back: "So that is twenty-five thousand shillings each week, is that right?"

6.5 Sensitive questions

Questions about income, land disputes, health, violence, mental health or sexual and reproductive health need extra care. Only enumerators trained for these modules ask them. Women interview women for questions on gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health, unless the respondent chooses otherwise. If someone enters during a sensitive section, switch to the agreed neutral topic until you are alone again. If the respondent becomes upset, pause, offer to stop, and give the referral card if they want it.

6.6 Interpreters

Translated questionnaires are always better than interpreting. Where an interpreter is approved, they must have signed the Code of Conduct, be briefed on the questionnaire, and interpret exactly, without adding or summarising. Never use a child as an interpreter.

6.7 Closing the interview

1. Check the form for blanks, errors and skipped sections before you leave.
2. Thank the respondent sincerely for their time.
3. Give them the information card with Tsavone's contacts.
4. Tell them a supervisor may call or visit to check the interview.
5. Do not discuss their answers with neighbours or other respondents.

7. Getting the data right

Most data errors are small and avoidable. A wrong unit, a missed zero or an answer entered in the wrong place can change the results of a whole study. Your supervisor and the data manager check your work every day, but the best check is yours, at the moment you record the answer.

7.1 Daily data quality checks you should expect

What is checked	Why it matters
Interview length	Very short interviews suggest skipped questions or invented answers. Very long ones may show confusion.
GPS location and time stamps	Confirms the interview took place at the right place and time.
Skips, blanks and "don't know" answers	Too many may show poor probing or a problem with a question.
Unusual or impossible values	For example, a yield far above anything possible for the area.
Patterns by enumerator	If your answers look very different from others in the same area, your supervisor will ask why.
Back-checks	At least one in ten respondents (10%, more on some surveys) is contacted again by an independent back-checker who asks a few questions again.

> **Being checked is normal. It protects you, because honest work is shown to be honest.**

7.2 Your own checks

- Read the answer back to the respondent when it is a number or a choice from a long list.
- Look at the screen before you swipe forward.
- Use the comments field to explain unusual answers, for example "Household harvested twice this season because of irrigation".
- Upload completed interviews every evening, or as soon as you have a network.
- If you make a mistake after leaving, tell your supervisor. Do not try to fix it by guessing.

7.3 Data fabrication is never acceptable

Inventing an interview, filling in answers you did not hear, copying answers between forms, interviewing the wrong person on purpose, or changing answers to finish faster is fabrication. It is serious misconduct. It leads to immediate removal from the survey, loss of payment for the affected work, removal from the Tsavone roster and, where fraud is involved, possible reporting to the client and authorities.

If a quota feels impossible, the area is unsafe, or respondents cannot be found, tell your supervisor. Tsavone would always rather have fewer, honest interviews than more, false ones. No one will be punished for reporting a problem honestly.

8. Protecting personal data

Uganda's Data Protection and Privacy Act 2019 protects people's personal information, such as names, phone numbers, locations, photographs and their answers. You are trusted with this information. Treat it as you would want your own information treated.

Do	Don't
Keep your device locked with a PIN or password at all times	Share your password or let others use your device
Upload data to the secure server as instructed and let the system delete it from the device	Copy data to your personal phone, a memory card, WhatsApp or email
Write call-back details only in the survey app or on the supervisor's form	Write respondents' names or phone numbers in your notebook
Report a lost or stolen device to your supervisor immediately	Wait to see whether the device turns up
Keep paper forms, if any, in the sealed folder provided	Leave forms in a vehicle, guesthouse or on a table
Talk about the study in general terms only	Discuss what any respondent said, even with friends or family, during or after the survey

Your confidentiality duty continues after the survey ends. Breaking it is misconduct and may break the law.

9. Safeguarding: keeping people safe from harm

Safeguarding means preventing harm, abuse and exploitation of the people you meet, especially children and vulnerable adults, and responding properly if you learn of it. Tsavone has zero tolerance for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

9.1 Rules you must always follow

- Never ask for or accept sex, favours, money, gifts or services in exchange for anything, including taking part in the survey.
- Never have sexual contact with anyone under 18, whatever the local age of consent or what they say about their age.
- Never use your position to pressure or exploit anyone.
- Never be alone with a child in a closed space, and avoid closed-room interviews alone with a respondent of the opposite sex.
- Never take or share photographs of children or respondents unless the survey allows it and separate consent has been given.
- Report any concern about a colleague, partner or anyone connected to the survey, even if you are not sure.

9.2 If someone tells you about abuse or violence

1. **Listen.** Stop the interview if the person wishes. Listen calmly. Do not ask for details or try to investigate.

2. **Believe and reassure.** Say: "Thank you for telling me. It is not your fault." Do not promise to keep it secret if a child is at risk; explain who you will need to tell and why.
3. **Offer help.** Give information about services on the referral pathway card. Refer only with the person's consent, except where a child is at risk.
4. **Record only the minimum.** Note only basic facts, in the person's words, on the incident form, never in the survey data.
5. **Report the same day** to your supervisor and the Safeguarding Focal Point. If anyone is in immediate danger, act to protect them and call at once.

If the concern is about Tsavone personnel or a client or partner worker, report within 24 hours, or immediately if someone is at risk. You can also report confidentially to safeguarding@tsavone.com. You will be protected from retaliation for reporting in good faith.

10. Your safety and wellbeing

No interview is worth your safety. You have the right to stop work or refuse travel if you face serious and imminent danger, and you will not be punished for doing so.

Rule	Why
No travel between towns from 19:00 to 06:30	Most serious road accidents and attacks happen at night
Always wear a seat belt; use a boda boda only where approved, and always with a helmet	Road crashes are the biggest risk in fieldwork
Work in pairs or within sight and calling distance of a colleague in higher-risk areas, and do not interview alone after 17:30 there	Help is close if something goes wrong
Check in with your supervisor at the agreed times	Someone always knows where you are
At least one rest day in every seven	Tired enumerators make mistakes and have accidents
Stay out of crowds, demonstrations and disputes	Researchers can be mistaken for officials or campaigners
Never carry large amounts of cash	Transport refunds are usually paid by mobile money

10.1 If something happens

1. Make yourself and others safe. Get medical help if needed.
2. Call your supervisor or the safety focal point immediately, and within two hours at most.
3. Complete a written incident report within 24 hours with your supervisor.
4. Note the incident, without personal details, in the daily field report.

10.2 Looking after yourself

Fieldwork can be tiring and some stories you hear will be hard. Drink water, eat properly and sleep. Talk to your supervisor if you feel overwhelmed, unwell or unsafe. Your supervisor can tell you about the support Tsavone offers. Asking for help is a sign of professionalism, not weakness.

10.3 Bribes and pressure

If anyone asks you for money or a favour to allow the survey, to pass a checkpoint or to access a respondent, politely refuse and call your supervisor. Never pay a bribe, however small. Report it to your supervisor or confidentially to integrity@tsavone.com.

11. Caring for your device

Your tablet or phone holds the questionnaire and the data. Losing it, or the data on it, can cost days of work and put respondents' privacy at risk.

Do	Don't
Charge it every night and carry a charged power bank	Start a field day with less than a full charge
Keep it in its case and away from rain, dust and direct sun	Leave it on a car dashboard or in a hot vehicle
Use only the apps installed by Tsavone	Install games, social media or other apps
Check that the survey version matches your supervisor's each morning	Ignore update messages from the data manager
Upload completed forms daily and check they have arrived	Delete forms yourself unless told to
Report damage, loss or theft at once	Try to repair the device yourself or hide damage

11.1 Common device problems

Problem	What to do
Form will not open or crashes	Restart the app, then the device. If it still fails, call the data manager. Do not reinstall.
GPS will not lock	Move into the open, away from buildings and trees, and wait two minutes. Record a comment if it still fails.
Upload fails	Check data or Wi-Fi; try again at the next network point. Never send data by WhatsApp or email instead.
Battery dying mid-interview	Save the form, connect the power bank, and continue. Never complete answers from memory later.

12. Working with your supervisor and team

- Attend the morning briefing. It covers the day's sample, safety and yesterday's data issues.
- Accept feedback from spot checks, accompanied interviews and data checks as a normal part of quality work.
- Share problems early: confusing questions, translation issues, refusals, access problems.
- Respect your colleagues. Harassment, bullying and discrimination are not tolerated.
- Complete the daily field report with your supervisor every evening.

12.1 Being paid

You will be paid the rate in your contract, by mobile money or bank transfer into your own account, after your work and timesheet are verified. Deductions or withheld payments only happen for the reasons written in your contract, for example confirmed fabrication. If you have a payment problem, raise it with your supervisor first, then with info@tsavone.com. Tsavone aims to pay field teams promptly.

12.2 Growing with Tsavone

Good enumerators are rated after each survey and the rating is kept on Tsavone's roster of field staff. Consistently high ratings lead to more work, lead enumerator and field supervisor roles, and places on courses such as Field Data Collection and Enumerator Excellence.

13. Daily checklists

13.1 Morning

No.	Check	Done
1	Device charged to 100%, power bank charged	
2	Survey version matches supervisor's	
3	Identity card, letters, consent and referral cards with me	
4	Today's sample list and call-backs confirmed with supervisor	
5	Safety briefing attended; check-in times and emergency numbers known	
6	Transport arranged and approved	

13.2 Each interview

No.	Check	Done
1	Right respondent, found by the sampling rule	
2	Consent script read in full; answer recorded truthfully	
3	Private place, within view of others	
4	Questions read exactly as written; neutral probes only	
5	Form checked for blanks and errors before leaving	
6	Respondent thanked and given the information card	

13.3 Evening

No.	Check	Done
1	All completed forms uploaded and confirmed received	
2	Call-backs and refusals reported with correct codes	
3	Any incident, disclosure or concern reported	

No.	Check	Done
4	Daily field report completed with supervisor	
5	Device on charge; power bank on charge	
6	Rested, fed and ready for tomorrow	

14. Quick reference

If this happens	Do this
Respondent refuses	Thank them, leave politely, record the refusal code
Respondent is not at home	Arrange a call-back; record the attempt
Someone discloses abuse	Listen, reassure, offer referral, report to supervisor and Safeguarding Focal Point the same day
You feel unsafe	Stop, move to safety, call your supervisor
Device lost or stolen	Tell your supervisor immediately
Someone asks for a bribe	Refuse politely, call your supervisor, report
You made a data mistake	Tell your supervisor; never guess a correction
A question does not work in the local language	Note it and tell your supervisor the same day

Contact	How
Your supervisor	Name and number given at training
Safeguarding concerns (confidential)	safeguarding@tsavone.com, or the Safeguarding Focal Point number on your card
Integrity concerns, fraud or bribery (confidential)	integrity@tsavone.com
Tsavone Consulting office	info@tsavone.com; +256704579186

15. Related publications

These Tsavone publications are free to download from www.tsavone.com/publications:

- Training Catalogue, which describes the Field Data Collection and Enumerator Excellence course for supervisors and the Enumerator Training course
- Humanitarian and Displacement Research Practice Prospectus
- Youth Skills and Jobs Barometer

More about Tsavone's field evidence work is at www.tsavone.com. Detailed field procedures and method guides are shared with clients and partners on request.

Annex A: Enumerator pledge

I have read this Field Guide and the Code of Conduct. I promise to:

- ask every question exactly as written and record only what I hear;
- read the consent script in full and respect every refusal;
- never invent, copy or change data;
- protect respondents' privacy and personal data during and after the survey;
- never exploit, abuse or harass anyone, and report any concern the same day;
- follow safety rules and speak up about risks;
- never offer or accept a bribe.

Pledge

Field	Entry
Enumerator name	
Survey or assignment code	
Signature	
Date	
Trainer or supervisor name and signature	

Annex B: Self-assessment after your first week

Skill	I am confident	I need practice	Note for supervisor
Reading consent in full and naturally			
Finding the right respondent			
Reading questions exactly as written			
Using neutral probes			
Recording numbers, units and dates			
Handling sensitive questions			
Using the device and uploading data			
Responding to a disclosure			

TSAVONE
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Trusted evidence from the field.

Tsavone Consulting is a Ugandan consulting firm built around one capability: trusted field evidence. We reach the people and places a decision is about, collect data to a known quality, say what it shows and how sure we are, and give clients something they can act on.

Our methods work across sectors, with depth in agrifood, nature, climate and energy, youth skills and jobs, and humanitarian and displacement research. Rooted in Uganda, working worldwide.

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