

# Trust Times ISSUE 7

Latest news and updates from Trust Consultancy and Development  
*August 2020*

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Kavaklık Mah. Mehmetçik Cad. No: 48 Öz Bayram Apartmanı Şahinbey  
Gaziantep, Turkey

# Remote Data Collection: Failure or Future?



In the world of Monitoring and Evaluation, face-to-face data collection is typically the method preferred by enumerators, organizations, respondents, and donors. When in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys are conducted in-person, data tends to be more reliable and thorough. This is because the enumerator can interpret and respond to an interviewee's body language, observe non-verbal cues, and build rapport and trust with the respondent more easily. These are things that are difficult, if not impossible, to do on a Skype or Zoom interview.

However, in light of ongoing restrictions and challenges surrounding Covid-19, research and monitoring evaluation firms have been forced to turn to remote data collection as an alternative to conducting work in the field. While this situation is not ideal, the TPM and M&E world has made the most out of remote data collection by identifying best practices and acknowledging the many benefits of remote collection that are not present in more traditional fieldwork. In this article, we want to highlight some of these positives, illustrating why remote fieldwork may be a viable method of collecting data in the future.

**Saving Money:** Remote Data collection saves money... A lot of money! Enumerators do not need to pay for transportation (either public or private) to travel to the field. As site visits may take place in remote areas, removing the need for transportation can be incredibly cost efficient. Furthermore, there is no need to rent

a venue to conduct interviews and FGDs, which is also cost saving for the data collection team. Consequently, there is also less manpower required, particularly among the logistics team, who no longer need to coordinate transportation and site visits.

**Saving Time:** Removing the element of travel also saves time, as field researchers no longer need to spend longer periods of time moving from one location to another. This has multiple benefits, including expanding the number of respondents that can be consulted, and less risk of fatigue among enumerators.

**Comfort:** Both enumerators and respondents may feel more comfortable in a virtual environment. Physically, virtual fieldwork removes the need to contend with interruptions such as bad weather or poor climate conditions. Psychologically, respondents may feel more comfortable and willing to share if they are in their own homes or a space that feels familiar.

**Highly Qualified Enumerators:** Because data collectors are no longer fixed to a particular geographic location, firms can recruit the most highly qualified enumerators to conduct assignments that they may not have previously been able to work on. This is particularly true when conducting data collection in different languages. For example, if beneficiaries in Istanbul need to be interviewed in Farsi, Urdu or Pashto, it is easier to find a highly qualified enumerator living remotely than one living in Istanbul.



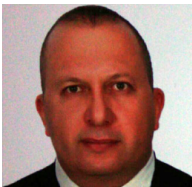
# Junior officers



## Introducing Our New Junior Project Officers

Trust is pleased to introduce our Summer Cohort of Junior Project Officers. Trust's Junior Project Officer Program seeks to provide students, recent graduates, and emerging professionals with the opportunity to advance their knowledge in international development, humanitarian aid, and monitoring and evaluation. Unlike many traditional internship programs, our Junior Project Officers are given purposeful tasks and genuine responsibilities that will enhance their own professional development as well as the mission and goals of the company. Our program is aimed at preparing all participants to embark on successful careers in M&E and humanitarian work.

This summer, 12 new Junior Project Officers are joining the Trust family from Europe, the Middle East, North America, and Africa.



Hamed Abushaweesh

Hamed Abushaweesh : began his career in pharmacy before transitioning into development work, where he focuses on public health. He has served as a Health Field Officer at ICRC and a Medical Data Reporting Manager for IMC. He has joined the Monitoring and Evaluation Department as a Junior Officer in order to learn new skills.



Anna Krainc

Anna Krainc is joining us from Paris, where she is a candidate for M.A. in Human Rights and Humanitarian Action at Sciences Po Paris School of International Affairs, with concentrations in migration and Middle Eastern Studies. She has volunteered in grassroots organizations for migrants, refugees, women, and LGBTQIA individuals. At Trust, she is a Junior Officer in the Business Development Department where she focuses on proposal writing.



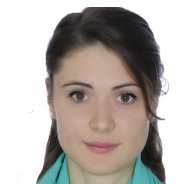
Hannah Rosenwinkel

Hannah Rosenwinkel may have the longest virtual-commute, joining Trust all the way from Minnesota (USA). Hannah is exploring ways to combine her interest in international affairs and creating social impact with her extensive experience in business best practices. She has joined the Business Development Department where she is hard at work refining our internal communications strategy and contributing to proposal development.



Enja Vaario

Enja Vaario is currently based in Helsinki, Finland. She was inspired by her background in psychology to pursue a Master's degree in International Humanitarian Action, which she is currently working towards. She has worked on children's rights with a range of organisations, including private companies, governmental bodies, and NGOs. At Trust, she has been developing the Trust Café to enhance our remote work culture and contributing to proposal development with the Business Development Department.



Michaela Balluff

Michaela Balluff has previously worked in Ghana, Amman, and Beirut, and is currently based in Stuttgart, Germany. She has joined the Research Department as a Junior Officer where she is currently working on a report about the labour market integration of Syrian refugees in Turkey. She also supports the Third-Party Monitoring and Evaluation group on Facebook.

# Junior officers



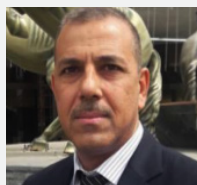
Ona Stodt

Ona Stodt is based in Barcelona, where she completed a BA in English Studies with a focus on Teaching and Translation and a MA in International Relations with a focus on International Political Economy. She is a Junior Officer with our Third-Party Monitoring Department, where she is currently working on a research project focused on Third Party Monitoring best practices in insecure contexts based on field experiences in the Middle East region.



Maya Fawzi

Maya Fawzi has worked in operations, event management and social media marketing, but this is her first time working in the humanitarian sector. She is based in Berlin, and will be joining the Research and Third-Party Monitoring Department at Trust. So far, her time at Trust has been focused on learning and development. Through the Junior Officer Program, she hopes to improve research skills, gain confidence in presenting, learn more about the sector, and improve her regional knowledge.



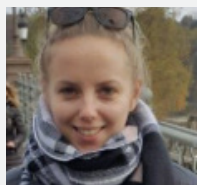
Hussein Jasim Mohammad

Hussein Jasim Mohammad is based in Iraq and has joined Trust in the Capacity Development Department. He hopes to build long-term partnerships through the Junior Officer Program. He holds a degree in engineering and has experience as a capacity building team leader, a M&E specialist, and a research and data analyst focusing on marginalized groups.



Noorhaza Alias

Noorhaza Alias was formerly a project coordinator for MyCorps (National Volunteering Program) with the Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia. She is now based in the Netherlands. Noorhaza is joining the Research and Development Department in order to gain comprehensive experience regarding TPM and Monitoring, to establish herself in MEAL, to polish technical skills in project management, and to gain necessary knowledge to support future humanitarian development in Malaysia. She also helps to support a new LinkedIn TPM Group.



Charlotte Krog

Charlotte Krog is joining the Research Department from where she lives in sunny Bilbao, Spain. She is a trained social worker and her experience includes working with Syrian and Eritrean refugees from their first day in Denmark and throughout the introduction phase. At Trust, she hopes to refine her skills in research and M&E. She also aims to have a better understanding of the sector and the work carried out by NGOs.



Nasser Al-Issa

Nasser Al-Issa is joining Trust from Lebanon, where he has obtained a MA at the Islamic University of Beirut and additional education from the American University of Beirut. He has worked as a data analyst and hopes to gain more experience applying these skills to Monitoring and Evaluation.



Lou Aubay

Lou Aubay has joined the Business Development department as a proposal writer. She recently completed coursework for her Master's degree in Development Management from the London School of Economics, and she has previously worked for a French NGO, a British charity, and the US Embassy in Paris. In addition to working on proposals at Trust, Lou has been conducting research regarding the integration of Syrian Refugees into the Labor market. Lou loves listening to podcasts in her downtime, and she actually contributed to an episode of Citing Africa's second season.



## Sarah Moharram

This month we had the opportunity to sit down with Trust's TPM and Research Department Manager, Sarah Moharram. Sarah is an experienced M&E Specialist who has worked in Egypt, Turkey, Syria, and Timor Leste. Read on to learn more about Sarah's career trajectory, why she has enjoyed her time with Trust, and her advice for people seeking to enter the field of M&E and humanitarian aid.

# STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### Tell me about yourself; What were you doing before you started working for Trust?

I graduated from the faculty of management at the German University in Cairo (GUC) with a double major in marketing and economics, and was almost certain that I had a bright career in marketing ahead of me. But things don't always go as planned. In my last semester, I got accepted into a master's program in economic change in the Arab region (a joint program by Damascus University and Marburg University in Germany at the time) and that's where I met Youssef, Trust's CEO. It was then when my interest completely changed from marketing to development. I started teaching economics at the GUC while writing my thesis, but less than two semesters into teaching, I was craving some hands-on experience in development. So I worked with a few international and local NGOs in Egypt, and did some research in Egypt and Germany. After quitting my last daunting job with a local NGO, I took a break for a few months and deactivated all my social media accounts. And the day I reactivated my Facebook account, the first thing I saw was a post Youssef wrote announcing that he had just established an M&E consultancy and was looking for interns. Having wanted to work in M&E, I dropped him a message telling him I was interested to join the team and that's how the story began.

### How long have you been with Trust, and what do you do in your position?

I joined Trust in August 2016 – around two months after it was established – as an intern, then M&E manager. Back then, there were only four of us in the office and I was responsible for everything related to projects: writing proposals, managing projects, and liaising with the field coordinator. Little by little, the team started getting bigger so my responsibilities also included supervising projects and setting training plans for the team. I stayed in Gaziantep for most of the time, then came back to Egypt and worked with another consultancy. Two years later (October 2019), I joined Trust again as a Research Manager, but remotely this time. And now we've merged the third-party monitoring (TPM) and research departments, so I'm TPM & Research Manager. My responsibilities mainly include supervising our bright team of Project Managers and Junior Project Officers and giving guidance as needed, managing projects, developing research ideas and proposals together with the research team, and working on and supervising research papers.

### How has your time at Trust impacted your perspective of the international development and humanitarian field?

It has certainly been an eye-opening experience. Working on multiple projects with many aid agencies and local NGOs, I got to learn more about their strategic approaches, implementation, what works in what context and what doesn't. One of the things you learn in M&E is being a lot more analytical and not taking things as they are. You learn to dig deeper into the data and connect the dots. For me, it has been interesting to see sides of humanitarian work that are usually unspoken about.

### What is your favorite part of working at Trust?

I like the flexibility – ideas are always welcome. And I like that there are significantly more females on the team compared to 2016/2017!

### Do you have any advice for our new interns, or more generally, people just beginning their careers in this sector?

Keep yourself up to date with news and standards in the field. Read a lot of M&E reports. And most importantly speak up when you have an idea! Our interns/junior officers really do bring lots of fresh ideas to the table that we're happy to discuss and implement. And finally, network with people in the field as much as you can.

# Trust Café



Two of Trust's new Junior Project Officers, Enja and Maya, recently launched an effort to create stronger connections and camaraderie amongst Trust's remote staff members. This initiative, nicknamed "Trust Café" seeks to mimic some of the water cooler conversations that would take place in a traditional office workspace. Every Wednesday, Enja and Maya pose a Community Question to the Trust Café Group. For our first Community Wednesday, they asked: **What is a typical national dish from your country?** Here are the responses they received:



Maya: Here is Iraq's most famous dish, Masgouf! Although I don't personally like fish, my parents and family love it! The fish is usually caught alive and weighed and then with a fire it takes around 1-3 hours to cook. As Carps are quite big, it's usually shared among family and friends!

Ege: I am going to pass the famous ones like kebabs and show something else. This is one of everyone's favorites, pretty sure it exists in neighboring countries too. It is called yaprak sarma and it is vine leaves stuffed with spiced rice. It is eaten cold and sometimes used as a "meze" in the rakı tables.



Susannah: Not a national dish, but pork and corn is definitely the state dish of Iowa



Jeki: tempeh kecap from Indonesia

# Trust Café



Gabby: Bar-b-que is definitely a big deal in the American South, so here is my take on a BBQ Pulled Chicken sandwich with pineapple coleslaw

Sarah: Our famous Koshari! Rice, pasta, lentils, and chickpeas topped with fried onion, chili and garlic vinegar sauce.



Emer: Irish food is mostly not very photogenic but this is the best we can do - fish pie with salmon and shellfish.



Mossab: Syrian Mansaf does not need an explanation!

# Trust Café



Michaela: Maultaschen from the Swabian part of Germany. It's pasta dough with a filling of minced meat, spinach, onions and herbs. They are also called Gottesbescheißerle (literally God-cheaters) since there is an anecdote that they were invented for the fasting time around Easter, because God wouldn't be able to see the meat in-between the dough

Charlotte: So here is a dish from Denmark! It's mainly popular on the islands and Westdenmark where I from. It's smoked salmon and rugbrød - that's the bread that all (almost) Danes eat for lunch with different things on top like veggies, cold meat or fish but this is a dinner plate that's especially popular during summer



Enja: Might not necessarily be the national dish of Finland, but definitely a summer favourite for most people: Fried tiny fish (Vendance, Muikku in Finnish) often eaten with mashed potatoes! Since the fish are so small, by frying it, you can completely eat all its bones and even its tail as it gets nice and crispy. You can buy freshly fried "muikku" at foodtrucks all over the country or local markets - or better yet fish them yourselves from the lakes and start frying them immediately!

Amrutha: India is too big a country for a national dish. I hope to introduce you to a snack/street food which is close to being called 'national' dish. It's called paani puri - a small hollow deep fried bread (puri) stuffed with spicy potato, onion, chickpeas, chilli, chutney and chaat masala and served with a tangy mint+tamarind flavoured water (paani). It is had by dipping the stuffed puri in the paani and taking it all in one bite. One might shed a few tears while having it. It is one of the tests we have to pass as kids to show that we can handle the 'Indian spice'. There are many variations of this as well (cold with curd, sweet with jaggery).





# Trust Café



Anna K.: Voilà, an iconic Chicago treat: our classic deep-dish pizza. Not a national dish nor a personal favorite, but definitely a must-try if you're ever passing through Chicago. Are your arteries up to the challenge?

Anna B.: Sorry Gabby, but there's no barbecue like Kansas City barbecue (and I will fight you!)



Hannah: Here's a Minnesota classic: Tater Tot Hotdish! My family usually makes it with corn, green beans, onion, ground beef, a can of cream of mushroom soup, and tater tots on the top.

If you weren't hungry before, are you hungry now?!

# Remote Work



In March of 2020, we witnessed a sweeping change take place across the globe. Dining room tables were suddenly cleared of candle sticks and decorative placemats, instead replaced with computer monitors and extension cords. Overnight, kitchen tables and spare rooms were converted into makeshift classrooms and playrooms, as nurseries, schools, and universities around the world closed their doors. With the advent of COVID-19, much of the world's population was forced to stay at home. For the first time ever, we saw newscasters reporting from their sitting rooms and we started meeting with doctors over Skype. For months, we barely left our houses, venturing outside only to acquire food and essential goods. Who could have predicted how dramatically the world would change in a few short weeks?

But unlike the “novel” Coronavirus, working from home is not a new concept. In fact, since the arrival of telecommunications and the Internet, people have been working from home and telecommuting to jobs in other cities, countries, and continents. Nowhere is this truer than at Trust, where approximately 50% of our staff work remotely at any given time. Remote work is something that I am personally familiar with. I started my journey with Trust as a remote social media intern, while I was finishing my master's degree in London.

I then continued working for Trust as a project officer in Istanbul. Although I was now geographically in the same country, I worked out of a partner's office, which meant I was still technically a remote staff member. In January of 2020, I moved back to the United States, but continued my work with Trust part-time. Not only was I still remote, but now I had a massive time difference to combat as well.

My 18-month journey with Trust has been entirely remote, relying on Slack, Skype, Zoom, Microsoft, and WhatsApp to keep in touch with my colleagues and supervisors. The lesson many people are learning now, is something that us remote workers of yesteryear have already learned: Remote work is hard! Working in the same place you eat, sleep, and relax can feel oppressive. Especially for those of us living with family members and children, it may feel

like a daily battle to complete the simplest of tasks. Remote work also requires discipline and dedication. It is much easier to ignore an email when your boss is 5,000 miles away, than when you are sitting next to them in an office.

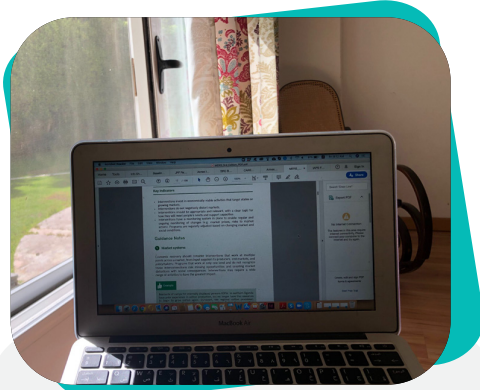
But the benefits of remote work are not to be ignored. With remote work comes the flexibility to set hours that are more conducive to your own schedule. Some people cannot function before 10:00 AM, whereas others (like me!) work best at the crack of dawn. Remote work enables us to spend more time with our families (for better or worse), or our furry friends. Plus, think of all the money we save on petrol, the metro, the bus, or a taxi, now that we are not commuting to work every day!

# Remote Work



In all likelihood, once the immediate threat of COVID-19 has passed, we will see the trend of working from home continue rather than dissipate. Already major U.S. companies including Facebook, Microsoft, Apple, and Twitter, have hinted that their employees may work from home indefinitely. Telecommunication platforms such as Zoom and Skype have thrived in the face of pandemic, while the demand for virtual office space is growing. Virtual office providers allow companies and organizations to design an office space online, complete with virtual conference rooms, virtual meeting rooms, and independent virtual offices. Employees have avatars that can walk around the office and interact with their colleagues. Is this the future we can expect to work in?

While it is impossible to predict what the next ten years will look like, maybe it is possible to look to Trust's remote work experience before, during, and after COVID-19, as a model. Before lockdowns and quarantines started, Trust already had a strong framework in place for remote work, which made the transition to office-wide remote work fairly painless. As we move into a post-COVID-19 world, Trust continues to maintain its office space in Gaziantep, but with more than 10 remote staff members and a flexible remote-work policy. Perhaps this model, a small central office with flexible telework options, is a more realistic model of the future we are headed for? While it is too soon to be certain, one thing is for sure: remote work is not new, and it is not temporary. We can only hope to learn from our experiences in the past, to inform our present and future.



Sarah Workspace



Youssef Workspace



## About the Author:

Gabriella Reimer is the Media Coordinator and a Business Development Officer at Trust and has been working with TCD for a year and a half. She holds an MSc in International Development from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and she is currently based out of Washington D.C. where she lives with her cat Ravioli.