**Guidance for baseline interviews (Smart Urban Intermediaries)**

**Practical guidance**

Allow 1.5-2 hours, arrange a convenient venue where practitioner feels safe and comfortable, and where you are not likely to be interrupted.

Bring consent forms, check OK to record. Explain/negotiate issues around confidentiality and anonymity and voluntary participation.

Emphasise the collaborative nature of our approach – them as ‘experts by experience’. We are being curious, critical but not judgemental. Shared learning – journey of joint discovery and appreciation. Mutual respect, etc.

This interview is to get to know intermediaries, understand how they operate, talk about their motivation and impact in relation to life in the neighbourhood (liveability, public value, resilience, etc.), establish a baseline

Try to include concrete examples (such as “could you tell me about a specific incident that illustrates this point”). Many interviewees tend to talk in general and abstract terms. So please indicate at the beginning we are interested in understanding the details of how things have been done and that we need concrete examples. Every time it is possible steer interviewees towards concreteness and ask for examples and elaborations at all stages of the interview. Also invite people to share their emotions, reactions and thoughts, not just descriptions of what they do or what happened as a result. [Please read Weiss’ Chapter 4 in *Learning from strangers*, available for free online, in advance of the interviews]

**Draft schedule (topic guide) for baseline interview *(to be sent to interviewee at least one week in advance)***

1. Brief reminder of purpose and parameters of the research.
   1. For example, *“We are interested in how people like you contribute to improving life for people living in X neighbourhood. Your work has been mentioned as helping to bring people and resources together in new and effective ways to make things happen. In particular, we want to understand how you use your connections within communities, and between communities and local institutions/organisations to encourage collaboration and innovation”.*
   2. This interview is about getting a sense of your current thinking and practices (how you work) so that we can assess what changes over the period of the research
2. Can we start with you telling me how you see your role in relation to neighbourhood X or as an intermediary?
   1. What motivates you and what do you see as vitally important in how you go about your work, especially with regard to how it benefits this neighbourhood?
   2. Please describe a typical example (from the last 6 months) of how you have been working together.
   3. What was it about how you worked that influenced (affected?) decisions that were made or how resources became available to make things happen?
   4. Who was involved in creating and developing this initiative/change?
3. As someone involved in urban development, what helps or hinders you in your work?
   1. Can you talk me through a specific moment/encounter/exchange you experienced that resulted in things moving forward or being done differently?
   2. Tell me about some surprises or dilemmas that you have ran into in your recent work in projects and collaborations.
   3. What are the opportunities and challenges for you in working across boundaries, for example, with people from other backgrounds or employed in other sectors/professions?
4. Who do you mostly work with, for example over the last two years?
   1. Can you name up 10 individuals who you cooperate the most in order to benefit X neighbourhood. Which 10 are most useful to you and your work?
   2. Going through each name in turn, can you tell me how you know them and what is the nature of your connection with them?
   3. What do you achieve by working together that you couldn’t do separately?
   4. Are there organisations, forums or spaces that seem to particularly facilitate these kinds of relationships and support good communication/co-operation?
5. Finally, our research has a number of questions we are hoping to find answers to. Our intention is that by the end of the project the role of ‘urban intermediaries’ will be better understood and valued. We want to identify how the role of people like yourself, who are successful in working across boundaries, can be well supported and more widely encouraged.
   1. Are there issues to do with ‘intermediary’ practices that you are particularly interested in that we should investigate further through the fieldwork and living labs?
   2. What would be your priority?
6. Thank you very much for your time. Explain what happens next, i.e. interviews transcribed and initial analysis for themes. I’ll send you a copy to check that you are happy with what’s included. The next stages of the research project cover:
   1. Ideas emerging from these 10 baseline conversations will feed into the first living lab which will be on DDth February. Please put this date in your diary and make sure you can come along.
   2. After that event I will contact you to arrange a day when I can accompany you for a few hours while you go about your everyday work/activities, and we will take a few photos to talk about at the end of the day or soon after.
   3. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me if you have any further thoughts or queries about the research. This is my phone number: TTTTTTTT or you can contact me by email.