

## *Terms of Reference*

### **Joining Forces Romania: School-Climate Assessment**

In the context of the Joining Forces Romania initiative, Terre des hommes – Elvetia Foundation (Tdh), Save the Children Romania, SOS Children’s Villages Romania and World Vision Romania, **are looking for a consultant/ team of consultants, to design and conduct a school-climate assessment in 12 Romanian schools and high-schools.** A central part of the approach will consist of **a child participatory research methodology**, actively involving a group of children in all the stages of the assessment.

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

In 2017, the six largest child-focused agencies – ChildFund Alliance; Plan International; Save the Children International; SOS Children’s Villages International; Terre des Hommes International Federation; and World Vision International – joined forces to use the collective power of our six agencies to accelerate change to secure children their rights and end violence against them, by piloting and scaling innovative and effective approaches worldwide that are driven by the voices and needs of children.

As **Joining Forces**, our approach is to put children at the centre of what we do; we are committed to supporting children to raise their voices, to take action as agents of change and to hold us to account, ensuring children’s experiences and views shape the solutions for the problems they face. We have adopted a rights-based approach by placing the principles of participation and inclusion, non-discrimination and equality at the centre of our work to ensure that all children’s needs are addressed, and that no child is left behind. Together, we will ensure that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the child-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) deliver a step change in the realisation of children’s rights, as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), with a specific focus on ending all forms of violence against children and improving outcomes for the most left behind.

#### **2. NATIONAL CONTEXT**

Since 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 2019, the education law was amended, banning all forms of psychological violence - bullying. The secondary legislation needed to enable its implementation (the methodological norms<sup>1</sup>) came into effect on 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2020.

The new regulations set the framework for a flexible mechanism of intervention to prevent and fight against bullying in schools. In each educational-unit, an anti-bullying group should be created, with the participation of all the relevant stakeholders: the principal of the educational unit, the school counsellor, three teachers trained on the matter of violence (including psychological violence – bullying), two or more students’ representatives, a representative of parents, representatives of the local authority. The purpose of this anti-bullying group is to promote activities aimed at preventing and fighting all forms of bullying (including

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<sup>1</sup> The content of the norms is based on the direct experience and conclusions of the prevention and intervention activities in bullying cases carried out by Save the Children Romania in more than 50 schools from Târgoviște and Bucharest in the period 2018-2020.



cyberbullying) at the primary and secondary educational levels, to ensure identification of bullying situations and proper intervention. Furthermore, the legislative act compels the schools to draw up their own strategies and plans to ensure and maintain a school climate suited for quality education, as a prerequisite to prevent bullying.

### 3. PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTANCY

Operating under the global EVAC workstream (Ending Violence Against Children), Joining Forces Romania will continue the national advocacy efforts on fighting all forms of psychological violence – bullying. More specifically, **the partner organisations will hire a consultant/ team of consultants to design and conduct a school-climate assessment in 12 educational units in Romania.** The schools and high-schools will be selected from the following counties, in which the four organisations have strong local partnerships: Bacău, Iași, Suceava, Vaslui, Cluj, Mureș, Sibiu, Ialomița, Ilfov, Bucharest, Dolj, Gorj, Olt. The selected units will cover both urban and rural areas, as well as all the three educational levels covered by compulsory education in Romania: primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary.

By putting children at the centre of our work, we believe that the quality of our interventions is increased when children's voices and experiences really shape the solutions for the problems they are facing. In the context of the current consultancy, this implies that the assessment will use **a child participatory research methodology.** The consultant(s) and the four Child Protection (CP) organisations will work together with a board of children from the 12 schools and will facilitate their meaningful participation in all the stages of the research. This will also cover their involvement in the more technical aspects of the assessment, such as methodological design, data collection, data analysis & reporting.

JF partners will use the results of the assessment to advocate for the amendment of the education law (secondary legislation), aiming for the standardised assessment tool to be periodically implemented in all Romanian schools. In order to ensure institutional ownership of the overall process, an independent researcher (working in a public University or an Institute for Research in education) will be invited to participate as a methodological advisor for all the key stages of the process.

#### The main tasks of the consultant(s) are:

- a) Participate, together with the four CP organisation in a joint workshop on child participatory research methods (the workshop will be facilitated by Joining Forces experts at the global level);
- b) Desk research on school-climate conceptualisation and measurement. A set of initial resources will be provided by the four partner organisations;
- c) Work closely with the four CP organisations and the local schools, throughout the entire period of the consultancy. The 4 NGOs will facilitate the initial access of the researchers in the 12 educational units included in the assessment, while the consultant(s) will coordinate afterwards with each school for organising the data collection activities. Given the context of the COVID-19 global pandemic, solutions for on-line data collection might also be considered;
- d) Participate in meetings with the independent researcher and the Ministry of Education. Our aim is that the methodological package produced during the consultancy will be officially endorsed by the authorities;



- e) Co-facilitate the meetings for the board of children and ensure their meaningful participation throughout all the stages of the school-climate assessment. All the deliverables should be elaborated taking into account the results and conclusions of the children's board meetings. (Identifying the interested children and organising the board will fall under the responsibility of the four CP organisations);
- f) Develop monitoring and evaluation tools for tracking the level and quality of participation for the children who are members in the board.
- g) Develop the instruments for the school-climate assessment (survey among students and qualitative interviews/ focus group discussions with educational staff or other relevant stakeholders). Exploring gender and diversity differences related to violence against children is an important dimension of the assessment;
- h) Conducting the school-climate assessment in the 12 schools (data collection);
- i) Produce reports on the school-climate for each school;
- j) Develop recommendations on how the local strategy and plan for preventing bullying should be designed in each of the 12 schools;
- k) Develop a methodological package and a set of general recommendations on how the school-climate assessment can be replicated by educational staff and students from other schools.

#### 4. DELIVERABLES

The consultant is expected to deliver:

- i. **A report on the current state of the school-climate for each of the 12 educational units** included in the pilot;
- ii. A **set of recommendations** on how the local strategy and plan for preventing bullying should be designed in each of the 12 schools;
- iii. A **methodological package** with all the research instruments used for child participation, data collection and analysis. The package should also present step-by-step instructions on how the tools can be used by students and educational staff from other schools.
- iv. **General recommendations** on how the school-climate assessment can be replicated by educational staff and students from other schools.

#### 5. TIME FRAME

Duration: 90 days

Tentative starting date: 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2020

#### 6. REQUIRED/ PREFERRED EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS OF THE RESEARCHER:

- In-depth knowledge on Child Rights and Child protection (with a special focus on educational settings and/or bullying);
- Proven competency in child participatory research methods;



- Demonstrated experience in collecting and analysing quantitative/ survey data;
- Demonstrated experience in collecting and analysing qualitative data;
- Expertise in working and consulting with different educational stakeholders, in similar researches or direct work;
- Excellent analytical and report writing skills;
- Ability to prepare materials and conduct activities in educational settings;
- Ability to be creative and open;
- Very good planning and time management skills;
- Ability to work under time constraints;

## 7. APPLICATION PROCESS:

The applicants are invited to submit:

1. CV (no more than 3 pages),
2. List of publications/ reports of a similar nature and scope.
3. Expression of interest (no more than 3 pages) explaining how they fit the qualifications required and outlining the approach and methods that the consultant will use and implement in the course of the research process
4. Financial offer

Qualified applicants should submit their application package to the following email addresses [laura.savaghica@tdh.ch](mailto:laura.savaghica@tdh.ch); [george.matu@tdh.ch](mailto:george.matu@tdh.ch) by **September 18<sup>th</sup> 2020, 18:00 PM**. Please reference “*Joining Forces Romania: School-Climat Assessment\_Constanta*” and your full name” in the subject line.

*The selected consultant will be required to agree and comply with Tdh Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding standards, as well as to adhere to and follow Tdh administrative and logistical regulations and procedures.*

