



Terms of Reference

Call for an International Lead Researcher

REGIONAL RESEARCH ON SUPERVISION of social workers and other care workers working in integrated and multi-disciplinary teams setting in child protection

Terre des hommes is seeking a highly professional lead researcher, to lead a team of researchers working in 8 countries of South East Europe.

Project Title: Child Protection Hub (ChildHub)

Countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary (project coordination work only), Kosovo, Moldova, Romania and Serbia

Project Number: 8309-00/2018

Name of Organisation: Terre des hommes Hungary

I. Introduction

About Terre des hommes

Terre des hommes (Tdh) is the **leading Swiss organization for children's aid**. In 2019, our **health, child protection** and **emergency programmes** have supported over four million children and members of their communities around the world through innovative and sustainable solutions.

In **Europe**, Tdh helps children who are affected by migration, who come in contact with the law as a victim, witness or offender, and who need general protection including from the risk of abuse, trafficking or exploitation. In 2020, more than 39,600 children and 6,570 parents benefitted from Tdh's support and over 20,700 child protection professionals were trained in Europe. Our key activities include, among many others:

1. supporting countries in developing and strengthening comprehensive and well-coordinated child protection systems;
2. building the capacities of professionals working for children;
3. mobilising communities and educating families to create safe and nurturing environments for children and youth
4. empowering and increasing the resilience of children through mental health and psycho-social support and self-led art initiatives.



Introduction to the Child Protection Hub

The **Child Protection Hub** (in short **ChildHub**) is an **interactive and innovative network of child protection professionals** in Central, East and Southeast Europe. ChildHub promotes the **sharing of knowledge and good practices**, offers specific **professional trainings and skills development opportunities** and informs and **advocates with policy-makers to influence policies and practices** related to child protection. ChildHub ensures a space for constant learning and communication with the opportunity for professionals to become part of a strong regional community of practice. The **online platform of ChildHub** is available in nine languages and is open to a range of professionals from social and healthcare workers through justice and law enforcement professionals to policy-makers.

ChildHub conducts activities in **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary** (only project coordination work), **Kosovo, Moldova, Romania and Serbia**. The project is coordinated by Terre des hommes` Regional Support Hub Budapest (located in Hungary), with dedicated local project associates/coordinators in Terre des hommes country offices in Albania, Kosovo, Moldova and Romania, and in the external partner organizations of Brave Phone in Croatia, the Center for Youth Integration in Serbia, the Know-How Centre for the Alternative Care of Children of the New Bulgaria University, and Save the Children North-West Balkans in Bosnia and Herzegovina. **ChildHub`s overall objective** (as a long-term vision) is to contribute to the realization of children`s fundamental rights across the region, in particular the right to be protected from abuse and violence. **ChildHub`s mid-term objective** is to contribute, together with child protection actors, to a functional child protection system and exert influence on the development of policies, structures, and accountability mechanisms for child protection.

II. Background and context of the research on supervision

Issues of child protection are very complex, difficult and often overwhelming to deal with for front line professionals in every context. Learning from supervised practice is an essential component of the education and training of frontline workers (members of multidisciplinary teams) in direct work with children and families in risk. Supervision is the “cornerstone” of a good practice for these professionals and is geared toward efficiency, accountability, professional standards and high performance of workers. Professional supervision is key as it enables both supervisor and supervisee to reflect on, scrutinize and evaluate the work carried out, assessing the strengths and challenges of the practitioner by providing coaching and mentoring.

Research has demonstrated that provision of supervision is associated with job satisfaction, commitment to the organization and overall wellbeing. Also, research shows that in an inter-professional context, workers relate job satisfaction and professional development to their supervisor`s expert knowledge, regardless whether they share the same professional background (Carpenter et al,2012). The emotionally charged nature of work can place particular demands on school psychologists, school social workers, child protection workers, health workers, police officers and it is important to provide opportunities for reflective supervision oriented to case management, problem solving, emotional support and quality of their work in addressing issues of child abuse, neglect etc. Professional supervision is an important source of advice and expertise and may be required to endorse judgments at certain key points in time for professionals dealing directly with cases on their day to day practice, and identify the factors who promote or hinder the multidisciplinary team work . Through this process, supervisors should also record key decisions within the child`s case records.

Practice and research show that in the field of social work and education there is a need of different types of supervision: organizational, team support, clinical support for better understanding of the



children/family behavior patterns, emotional support for the practitioners working directly with children and families etc. Supervision is both educative and supportive and facilitates the supervisee to explore their feelings about the work and the family. Effective supervision related to issues of child protection needs to be regular and provide continuity, so that the relationship between supervisor and supervisee develops.

Examples of existing practices from South East Europe

In **Albania**, direct supervisors of Child Protection Units, provide mainly administrative supervision and are not qualified or trained in providing professional supervision related directly to case management and emotional support to the staff. A similar situation characterises also the work of the psycho-social unit workers in schools where the supervisors role is seen as crucial in the case work of the professionals but the high numbers of the later under the supervision of only one person makes it impossible to become an effective process. Several child focused organisations have sporadically offered some sessions of emotional supervision but just for short periods of time and always with the risk of terminating, because of the funds shortfall. Meanwhile the professionals are very aware of their need to be under supervision and always ask for it (the Baseline study on the needs of Social Workforce of Childhub confirm this). In the last year several modest actions have been taken by the faculty of the social science and the Childhub to offer professional supervision to both categories of child protection and welfare professionals, mentioned above, but these actions need to become part of the institutional culture and practice, based on a solid structure/organisation and becoming longlasting.

In **Moldova** the practice of supervision in social assistance has developed over the last ten years based on the intention to contribute to the solution of several problems, including understanding of the professional/beneficiary relationships, continuous improvement in the professional level, improving the welfare practices offered to the various social categories, monitoring / evaluation of the professional activity process. This practice is regulated by "The Mechanism of Professional Supervision in Social Assistance" which aims to improve the professional supervision process and broaden the coverage of professional support needs for staff providing social assistance, including community-based social assistants and social workers.

In **Bulgaria** the supervision is recognized only in the field of social work, but the effective case management requires multidisciplinary cooperation. Thus, involving educational, medical and police specialist which share different standards sets difficulties both in the case management process and multidisciplinary team coordination.

In **Croatia**, supervision has been trying to integrate into the work of social work centers since 2002. Many changes have taken place since then. Supervision is now on a voluntary basis, organized either by the directors of the centers for their teams or by NGOs providing this opportunity. Also, some research has been done on this topic. Now, after 20 years, it would be useful to make a kind of summary of what has been done so far from several perspectives: different needs of experts in different departments, differences in needs between older and more experienced colleagues and younger professionals, types of supervision used, usefulness and benefits of supervisory work, in how many cycles they were involved and whether they wanted more but could not get, the readiness of the directors to organize and constantly provide supervision, etc.

In **Romania**, supervision in social work is very well regulated, being mentioned as one of the minimum quality standards in case management (quality standard no. 12, order 288/2006), with clear indicators



and work procedures. Every social welfare institution establishes internally if supervision for case managers and social workers is provided by an external body or internally. Nonetheless, no assessment reports were found on the functioning, quality and current structure of supervision in public institutions in Romania. In one best practice booklet on this topic, it is mentioned that in many social welfare institutions, supervision is seen only as an administrative task to control and monitor the work of the social workers, and less on offering support, reducing stress, professional and personal development. Since 2011 the methodological framework on prevention and intervention of multidisciplinary team in situations of violence against children and domestic violence, clearly states the roles and responsibilities of all involved parties. The purpose and objectives of supervision are described, as well the role of a supervisor but there is no mentioning of those in charge of taking on this role within the multidisciplinary team. The case manager is the one forming and leading the multidisciplinary team, most likely he/she benefits from supervision as regulated within his/her institution. The evaluation report carried out by Tdh in 2015 to assess the status of continuous training of social workers, showed that less than 8,5% of the respondents (227 online surveys filled in) benefitted from supervision, 54,9% of respondents indicated that support is received mostly from their colleagues, but would want to receive supervision from an external body or internal specialized staff.

Supervision in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** comes with post-war, international support to the social protection system within the engagements and activities undertaken in the Swedish international organizations SWEBiH and SIDA. In this process, it is possible to single out four specific, significant stages of development:

1) Introduction of the concept of supervision in the social protection system, the first education for supervision and the first book on supervision

The first legal basis for implementing supervision is the Law on Social Protection, Protection of Civilian Victims of War and Families with Children of Tuzla Canton, adopted in 2000, as part of this first “wave of supervision” in BiH. Although it recognizes supervision only as a possibility, not a duty and a right, it represents an essential preparatory point for creating a place for supervision in the legal-institutional framework of social protection in both entities.

2) Introduction of supervision in the formal education of social workers and the first literature on supervision in the mother tongue

3) Master’s studies on supervision in social work

4) Recognizing the need for supervision and developing supervisory practice

Within the development of the legal-institutional framework, the first major “step” is the recognition of supervision in the RS Law on Social Protection (2012) as a “duty” or “obligation” for social protection institutions. After the first training and legal preconditions, it took almost two decades for supervision in BiH to be recognized as a necessary form of professional support by the “critical mass” of social workers and other professionals employed in social protection. However, the professional social welfare community in BiH has not yet moved far from the stage of “recognizing” the importance of supervision. The active involvement of process supervisors in the professional support of social welfare employees is still, more or less, patiently awaited (Puhalić (2019), “Supervision in Social Work” (Belgrade: Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade, 2019: pp. 63-79)).

In **Serbia**, The Strategy for the Development of Social Protection (2005) introduces a quality system, as one of the most important goals in the social protection system. This goal is realized through a



strategic commitment to the continuous strengthening of the professional capacities of employees in social protection and the improvement of the welfare of beneficiaries. Among the various types of support, a special place belongs to supervision, which began its practical realization in practice in 2008, with the introduction of the Method of Case Management and Supervision in Centers for Social Work. Supervision as a formal process ensures that, by applying certain standards, work tasks in social protection services are realized through professional support and professional development of employees.

Supervision should provide:

- workflow monitoring in relation to each beneficiary in the system
- support for professionals
- and continuous improvement of professional competencies of employees.

The special purpose of supervision is to enable professionals to develop knowledge and competence, take responsibility for their own practice and raise to a higher level the protection of beneficiaries and their safety in the process of providing services. It is an interaction process in which one experienced and educated expert takes responsibility to work with another expert in order to achieve appropriate personal, professional and methodological-organizational standards in working with beneficiary and families.

In **Kosovo** supervision is a relatively new concept which is not regulated by any official document or law. As such there are no documented supervision practices in institutions. Terre des hommes has designed the first supervisory training module entitled "Supervising professionals involved in child protection in Kosovo" and has trained several groups of professionals. These individuals have continued to practice supervision in the institutions where they work on a voluntary basis. CSWs have reported lack of professional training of existing staff, and lack of supervision makes this situation even more difficult.

III. Objectives of the research

In spite of all practice established so far, there is a need to further develop and deepen knowledge, skills and practice in the field of supervision. There is a need to explore the different understandings, needs, standards, challenges of supervision faced by social workers and other social care workers involved in the multidisciplinary case management work. Furthermore, it will be for a great benefit to compare these needs, standards and understandings existing in the South-Eastern countries by fostering the mutual exchange and learning in order to provided research based evidence for the ones being in the process of establishing a child- and family-oriented social care system.

Also, there is a need to establish professional supervision as a prerequisite to quality services within the practice of child protection, for multidisciplinary team members. Such need has come naturally in a from the field where such practice is almost inexistent and when there is an increased focus on child protection issues.

In this context, the **Child Protection Hub seeks to conduct a qualitative research across the region to explore the different understandings, needs and standards, factors hindering or promoting supervision mostly involved in the multidisciplinary case management work.** Such research will



target members of multidisciplinary teams and other responsible structures for offering and ensuring close professional supervision for child protection workers, school psychologists/social workers and other multidisciplinary teams' members.

The research aims to answer primary research questions to achieve the following objectives:

- To provide a snapshot of supervision for social workers and other social care workers in the multidisciplinary team setting in child protection for 8 countries Areas: multidisciplinary work (social assistance, education, health, police)
- To explore the attitudes, behaviours and perceptions of social workers and other workers working in an MDT context regarding supervision
- To identify key factors that hinder and promote supervision practices in the multidisciplinary teams' contexts
- To provide a comparative analysis in the region
- To identify good practices in supervision
- To provide recommendations for strengthening supervision across the region and specific countries

In order to conduct this regional research, ChildHub is looking for a **highly professional lead researcher**, to lead a team of researchers working in 8 countries of South East Europe (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Serbia).

IV. Scope of Service

The International lead researcher in close collaboration with the Europe Child Protection and Safeguarding Adviser and the ChildHub team, will be responsible to:

- Support the development and provide technical oversight of the research at the regional level;
- Develop the research methodology that can be followed by each participating country, including desk review, interview and/or survey with target group;
- Develop with the ChildHub team, the study frame, questions, research protocol and methodologies with all related tools;
- Conduct a regional workshop for the national the researchers for the countries involved;

Oversee the 8 in-country qualitative studies with the respective local researchers;

- Develop the regional synthesis of the 8 country studies and recommendations for designing interventions to improve supervision in the MDT settings (in English)

The research report is expected to be presented at ChildHub's next regional conference (date TBC).

Expected timeframe (tentative)

- Selection of candidates: early November 2021
- Methodology and desk research: November-December 2021



- Field work: December 2021-January 2022
- Report writing: January- February 2022
- First draft report: within 1 March 2022
- Final report: within 20 March 2022

The **final schedule** will be mutually agreed based on Tdh's expected timeframe (above) and the evaluator's proposed work plan in the offer.

Conditions

- The position is remote. The consultant will be expected to work from its current location and attend virtual meetings in support of research activities.
- The consultant will be expected to work 30 days until March 2022. The exact working hours and days can be flexible, but a candidate should split the work into 20 days for drafting the methodology and research tools and data collection from country level researchers and 10 days for analysis over the course of 5 months, primarily to support the qualitative component of the research.
- Based on differences in time zones, successful consultants may be required to be available for meetings outside of regular working hours to support research activities.
- There may be a possibility of extension based on the availability of funding, which would mean that the contract could be extended.

Profile

- Demonstrated knowledge and experience in child protection/ child rights, supervision, and development of a welfare system for children.
- Substantial research experience, and publications in the field of child protection, child welfare
- Sound knowledge of research methodologies
- Proficiency in English both in writing and orally
- Ability to work with an international team of researchers
- Very good writing skills
- Ability to work with tight deadlines
- Have strong interpersonal skills
- Availability

V. To Apply

Please submit the following information to info@childhub.org

- CV
- List of relevant publications



- Contacts of 3 professional references;
- Technical Offer: Methodological approach to implementing research design and analysis, with a timeline of activities – max 10 pages
- Price Offer: with a detailed line item budget, indicating costs in EUR. VAT should also be indicated if applicable, separately
- Confirmation of legal registration (e.g. tax number) of the applicant for providing research services and the ability to issue an invoice

The applications will be submitted in English language no later than **26th October 2021**. Please refer to the service you are applying to in the subject section of the application e-mail.

Please note that only the selected candidates will be contacted. Any application received after the deadline will not be considered.

The Child Protection Hub is a regional initiative providing knowledge and capacity building as well as networking opportunities for thousands of child protection workers in South East Europe.