

## Organisation LOGO



**Salvați Copiii**

Type: Non-profit organisation

## Organisation Full Name

**SAVE THE CHILDREN ROMANIA**

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## Expression of interest

of (University/Institution/Business) to join a Consortium on HORIZON EUROPE calls

**HORIZON:** HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-03: Tackling child poverty and ensuring disadvantaged children's access to ECEC

*(Please indicate here the topic ID of the call of interest; one or many)*

### Organization details:

**Country:** ROMANIA

**Name of the organization:** SAVE THE CHILDREN ROMANIA (ORGANIZAȚIA SALVAȚI COPIII)

**Contact person short description and contact details:**

### Short description of the organization

*Incl. cooperation with other research, industry, business etc., profile of the main researchers, previous research projects related to the topic (last 3 years)*

### Short description of Save the Children Romania

For 36 years, Save the Children Romania has been developing social and educational programs and public policies for the benefit of children in Romania. The organization's expertise and the complexity of its nationwide projects make it an essential social institution, whose role is to mediate between society and public authorities in the best interest of the child.

Throughout more than three decades of activity, Save the Children Romania has actively intervened in society, identifying concrete solutions to protect and support vulnerable children, while also advocating for viable collaboration with decision-making authorities to ensure the child's best interests. Save the Children Romania has assumed the role of vigilant watchdog of public authorities, ensuring that they implement sustainable public policies aimed at addressing the root causes that lead to children's vulnerability. At the same time, the organization has

succeeded in creating active networks of solidarity by encouraging corporate social responsibility and broader societal engagement.

As a member of Save the Children, the world's largest independent organization promoting children's rights — comprising 30 members and currently running programs in over 100 countries — our VISION is a world that respects every child's right to survival, education, protection, and participation. We are committed to our MISSION to achieve significant progress in the way children are treated and to bring about immediate and lasting changes in their lives.

Over 4,522,000 children have been involved in the programs and campaigns of Save the Children Romania.

### **Save the Children Romania and its work on Educational Poverty**

Save the Children is implementing programmes aimed at reducing school dropout and supporting access of children to quality education by coordinating the work of more than 20 educational centers, located across the country, in Bucharest and in 12 other counties. Throughout 2024, 46.000 children, their families and experts in education and welfare benefited from the activities carried out in these centers.

Save the Children Romania has been coordinating for 20 years the Summer Kindergartens that bring together over the summer months children aged 4-7 from vulnerable backgrounds in order to catch-up on the curricula and enroll in the first grade. For children from the communities that Save the Children Romania works in, this type of early education intervention is in many cases the only option that is available. After the summer months, Save the Children Romania support families to enroll their children in school and monitors their evolution. The data that has been collected in the last 20 years is extensive and indicates clearly the benefits that early education interventions have on the long-term integration of the child in the educational system and later on in the local community.

### **Possible main contributions of organization to the project proposal**

#### ➤ Work Package leader

Save the Children Romania can lead a work package dedicated to the design and implementation of the pilot intervention on ECEC tailored to the needs of the most vulnerable and systemically marginalised communities.

#### ➤ Task leader

Save the Children can lead tasks related to data collection, coordination of participatory research activities involving children, parents, educators and local authorities, integration of research findings into the national operation work and into national and EU advocacy on child poverty.

#### Research:

- Data analysis based on 20 years of Summer Kindergartens' evidence
- New data collection on a nation wide level

#### Elaboration of:

- Multidimensional framework for defining disadvantage
- Flexible and replicable ECEC intervention tailored to highly vulnerable communities
- Evidence based guidance for practitioners and policy makers

#### Analysis:

- Short and long term economic, social and educational returns of ECEC participation
- Barriers to access and participation in quality ECEC

#### Contribution to strategy:

- Translation of research findings into policy recommendation at national and EU level

#### Other:

- Collaboration with local and national authorities
- Involvement of expert by experience (children, parents, grandparents)
- Dissemination and advocacy at national and EU level

## Specific expertise relevant to the call topic

*Please specify all points that you bring as a significant contribution / value to the topic. For example, team, expertise (publications, previous projects etc), infrastructure, networks, knowledge, data, technologies, etc.*

*Please add links to webpages of organisation, department, unit, etc.*

### **Project proposal**

Save the Children Romania proposes the implementation of **a nationwide study assessing the costs of child poverty and the returns generated by early education interventions**, using the Summer Kindergartens programme as a structured research and data-collection platform. Building on over 20 years of evidence, the study will combine historical datasets with newly collected quantitative and qualitative data to produce EU-relevant, up-to-date insights into the economic, social, educational and wellbeing impacts of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) participation for children coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The research will apply participatory methodology involving children and parents as experts by experience. It will estimate both short- and long-term returns of early education interventions, including effects on school readiness, retention, prevention of early school leaving and parental engagement.

In parallel, Save the Children proposes to design and pilot **a flexible, community-adapted early education model** tailored to the needs of the most vulnerable and systemically marginalised communities. This model will test innovative and scalable approaches to increasing participation in quality ECEC, addressing structural and behavioural barriers such as poverty-related constraints, limited parental engagement and insufficient local infrastructure.

The combined research and pilot components will generate actionable and operational policy recommendations for EU and national decision-makers.

### **Available resources**

Save the Children Romania brings over 20 years of continuous implementation and evidence in early education interventions for children coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Through its nationally implemented Summer Kindergartens programme, the organisation has supported thousands of children aged 4–7 from vulnerable communities, many of whom would otherwise have had no access to structured early education. The organisation has systematically monitored school enrollment, academic progression and social integration outcomes, creating a strong empirical foundation for cost and return modelling.

With nationwide coverage and deep community engagement, Save the Children works with children affected by multidimensional poverty, including Roma children, children in rural isolation, children left behind by migrating parents and those exposed to violence or neglect. Save the Children Romania's diverse and complimentary programmes, spanning education, health, social services and child protection, allows for comprehensive data collection and a holistic understanding of child poverty dynamics.

The organisation has dedicated research capacity and long-standing collaborations with academic institutions and public authorities at local and national level. Its multidisciplinary teams include experts in education, psychology, public health, social assistance and child protection, ensuring rigorous data gathering, interpretation and policy translation.

This combination of research and operational expertise, multidisciplinary capacity and policy engagement positions Save the Children Romania as a strong partner capable of contributing robust EU-relevant insights and scalable solutions to reduce the cost of child poverty and close the ECEC participation gap.

### **Please contact:**

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