

Jimba Evaluation

Job description – Research Assistant: Measurement study

**Are you a mixed-methods researcher passionate about making research matter?
Are you looking for an opportunity to use your research skills to help shape how we understand and prevent violence against children?**

Join an exciting international research collaboration between the University of Latvia, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and Centre Dardedze, supporting the evaluation of the Jimba Safety Programme; an innovative programme helping young children build the confidence, knowledge and skills to recognise and respond to harmful behaviour.

As Research Assistant, you will play a pivotal role in the **in-field development and testing of a new measurement tool** that will underpin a future effectiveness trial. You'll lead cognitive interviews, observations and pilot testing with children, parents, teachers and programme implementers, helping to ensure that the research tools genuinely work for the people they are designed for.

This is a rare opportunity to be at the heart of an applied, international research project, combining rigorous research methods with meaningful real-world impact, while working across teams at the University of Latvia and LSHTM. If you're a self-starting researcher who enjoys working directly in the field, tackling complex questions and turning research into something that can make a difference, **we'd love to hear from you.**

About the Jimba Evaluation

Centre Dardedze, enabled by funding from the Oak Foundation, are running a research study exploring the impact of their leading Child Sexual Abuse prevention programme, the Jimba programme.

Center Dardedze is a Latvian non-profit organization based in Riga aiming to prevent all forms of violence against children, with a priority focus on prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation.

The Jimba safety programme is a prevention programme developed by Center Dardedze. The programme aims to enable young children (ages 4-10) to recognise and appropriately deal with harmful behaviour, demonstrate self-respect and respect for others, increase their self-esteem and self-worth and model safe and respectful relationships. The Jimba Safety programme achieves this by creating an environment where children are safe from abuse, and adults are empowered to support them. The programme aims to give education professionals and parents the confidence, skills

and knowledge to teach children about and role model safe relationships. This helps to protect children from abuse and teaches them to act respectfully to others.

The Jimba evaluation is a collaborative research project delivered by three partners, each bringing a distinct role and expertise:

- **Centre Dardedze (Jimba programme)** The implementing partner, which has developed and refined a promising intervention to prevent and respond to violence against children.
- **London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)** External academics from the Department of Population Health, with expertise in the international literature, epidemiological methods, and strong connections to international research and policy networks.
- **University of Latvia, Department of Anthropology** External academics from the Department of Economics & Social Sciences and the local academic partner, with expertise in social anthropology and violence research and qualitative methods, and a strong understanding of the national and local policy context in which the intervention is delivered.

The evaluation aims to:

- To learn from the implementation of the Jimba's Safety Programme as to iterate, adapt and improve programme design and delivery for local and international contexts.
- To evaluate the effectiveness (and sustainability as appropriate) of the Jimba's Safety programme; exploring the outcomes being achieved, and for whom for the main 11 step programme model.
- To identify emergent trends, opportunities, risks and other contextual factors that could support or hinder the effectiveness of Jimba's Safety Programme.

The measurement study phase of work aims to understand how the Jimba programme works, to build a research-informed understanding of the intervention model, and to develop and test a measurement approach in preparation for a future effectiveness trial. The focus of this role is supporting the in-field development and testing of the measurement tools and research approaches that a future trial would rely on.

The measurement study

A review of existing measures for the intervention's intermediate and ultimate outcomes is identifying where existing tools can be used and where new tools need to be developed and tested. New development work will create measures that are valid and reliable for kindergarten teachers, parents and children of kindergarten age and combine a range of techniques. This stage tests new data collection techniques with caregivers (who consent on behalf of children), with children themselves, and with adults involved in the intervention. It also allows the team to establish and test procedures in preparation for a main trial.

Goal:

To arrive at a clear idea of exactly what would be measured in a large trial, and to work out how it will be measured.

Specific objectives:

- Ascertain which phenomena of interest within the existing theory of change can be assessed using pre-existing, valid measures within the relevant populations.
- Draft the wording for potential measures, including questions and possible answers, and prepare related cognitive interview guides for their assessment and refinement.
- Translate and back-translate tools from English to Latvian and validate their meaning in each language.
- Cognitively test new measures within their intended population and refine them until participants consistently interpret the items as intended and no items are systematically biased across subgroups.
- Translate, assess, refine, and back-translate existing and validated measures into Latvian for inclusion in final data collection procedures.
- Bring existing and new measures together as data collection forms for the trial, and pilot them to ensure appropriate ordering, suitable length, and feasibility for use in a later phase-III trial.

The role

Purpose

This role supports the refining and testing of a new measurement tool developed for an effectiveness trial of Centre Dardedze's Jimba programme. The tool is a survey designed to measure children's ability to say no to boundary-crossing behaviour, identified as the critical measure of effectiveness for the Jimba programme.

The role is critical to the project: leading the in-field work to test the tool, exploring and understanding how well it works, and supporting refinements. It acts as the field lead for tool testing and a critical bridge to the LSHTM team leading the design and development of the tool as part of the wider effectiveness study design.

What the work involves

You will be employed by the University of Latvia and matrix-managed by researchers at LSHTM, who lead the design of the effectiveness study. The work runs across two stages:

- **Cognitive interviews.** Conducted iteratively with a small group of participants; parents, and pre-school staff, gathering detailed feedback on how participants understand key constructs in the survey and whether that understanding aligns with the intended meaning. This is repeated until the tool is acceptable and understandable. Testing of playground observations of children in kindergartens alongside team of student researchers.
- **Pilot testing.** The refined tool is then tested with a larger sample. Surveys are conducted with children of kindergarten age, their parents, kindergarten teachers, and programme implementers.

Throughout the project, you will be responsible also for:

- Conducting the cognitive interviews and observations, and testing the final tool in the pilot phase
- Recruiting and overseeing additional researchers to support planned activities for the two phases of work.
- Managing logistical arrangements for all planned fieldwork activities.
- Maintaining regular contact, collaboration and communication with both the LSHTM and the UoL teams; to maximise effective partnership working and ensure a strong bridge between LSHTM led design work, and UoL executed testing and development activities.

Timing

The work is proposed to run from October 2026 to April 2027: a light induction and training period in October 2026, cognitive interviews from October 2026 to January 2027, and pilot testing from February to April 2027.

Person specification

Essential

- Previous experience working with children (ideally of kindergarten age) or on sensitive topics.
- Mixed-methods researcher with a strong history of conducting qualitative and cognitive interviews.
- A self-starter with experience organising and leading or independently undertaking research activities to specific project plans and goals.
- Language skills: Latvian and English.
- Interest in violence prevention and research in this field.
- Strong communication skills, with the ability to work across different research teams and proactively communicate progress and findings.
- Able to approach research with flexibility as the project and field require.
- Have, or be willing to obtain, a Criminal Record Certificate.
- Experience of recruiting student research assistants, with access to academic students.

Desirable

- Degree(s) in public health, social work, psychology or a related field.
- Previous experience developing and testing closed-ended survey items on children's experience of sensitive topics.
- Previous experience in academic research, ideally with a record of publications.
- Language skills: Russian.

Contract details

Employer	University of Latvia (matrix-managed by LSHTM)
Funder	Oak Foundation
Start date	October 2026
Contract period	October 2026 – April 2027
Hours per week / month	Part time, hours and days to be agreed – roughly a maximum of 2 – 3 days per week Oct – Jan: 65% of the work Feb – March: 35% of the work
Salary	€1770 per month (full time, pro-rata)
Location	Riga, Latvia

How to apply:

If you are interested in this role, please get in touch with Zane Linde – Ozola from the University of Latvia for more information about how to apply.

E-mail: Zane.linde-ozola@lu.lv