

GLOBAL KIDS ONLINE

Knowledge exchange and impact

Meeting report from 20–21 June 2017

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Context and aims

The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) Department of Media and Communications and UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti recently hosted a knowledge exchange and impact meeting of the Global Kids Online network that offered an opportunity for researchers from Africa, Asia, Europe and South America to discuss research dissemination challenges and to share local experiences of working effectively with stakeholders to maximise research impact. The meeting, funded by the LSE Knowledge Exchange and Impact Fund and UNICEF, brought together over 30 academics, researchers and UNICEF staff from 12 different countries – Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Ghana, Montenegro, the Philippines, Serbia, South Africa, the UK and Uruguay. The gathering offered an opportunity to hear from the members of the Global Kids Online network about their strategies for effective engagement with stakeholders and the challenges they face in their research dissemination and impact efforts. This report offers a synopsis of the event.

The aim of the meeting was to review the new evidence gathered by the Global Kids Online network, the best ways of addressing the existing research gaps, and responding to the policy and practice priorities of national and international stakeholders. The meeting also aimed to allow members of the Global Kids Online network to share their strategies for effectively engaging with stakeholders and the challenges they face in their research dissemination and impact efforts.

Building on the expertise of country partners and experts, the goal was to work towards the creation of an effective knowledge exchange and impact strategy and toolkit for the online platform of Global Kids Online (www.globalkidsonline.net). Participants worked together to outline the logical sequence of the initiatives from inputs to outcomes, examining the similarities and differences among countries, reflecting on the gaps between desired and achieved outcomes, and exploring regional strategic collaboration. They also discussed key actors and types of engagement, brainstorming the best strategies to achieve engagement and impact.

Meeting agenda

Day 1: Tuesday 20 June 2017

- Welcome and introductions (Sonia Livingstone and Jasmina Byrne)
- Project developments and first comparative findings (Sonia Livingstone and Jasmina Byrne)
- New research and findings (presentations by country partners)
- How can Theory of Change thinking support Global Kids Online? (Isabel Vogel)
- Hands-on taster session: Theory of Change fundamentals (workshop, feedback and discussion)
- Knowledge exchange and impact (Rachel Middlemass and Kerry Albright)
- Closing remarks from day 1 (Sonia Livingstone)

Day 2: Wednesday 21 June 2017

- Engaging with stakeholders – experiences of the country partners (presentations by country partners)
- Best strategies for impact – workshop and discussion
- Global Kids Online indicators discussion
- Feedback and review of the Global Kids Online research toolkit
- Future directions (Sonia Livingstone and Jasmina Byrne)

Project developments and first comparative findings

Sonia Livingstone (LSE)

Global Kids Online is an international, collaborative research effort. Starting in 2015, its aim was to construct a research framework and toolkit for comparative (qualitative and quantitative) work, and to provide a network for researchers working in the field. Each country project is individually funded and carried out by national researcher teams, often in collaboration with UNICEF country offices, using the common Global Kids Online research framework and toolkit. Each country study therefore benefits from comparability of findings and cross-national collaboration, while remaining contextually relevant and speaking to the specific country contexts in relation to children, parents and policy-makers' agendas.

The Global Kids Online network has already made considerable progress in terms of researching how children go online and which risks and opportunities this entails. Now, as both the framework and toolkit have been built, it is time for a review and to focus on the following questions:

- How are the framework and toolkit working, and do they need revisions?
- How can we further develop our international network of researchers and experts? How is Global Kids Online growing?
- Are there particular countries or regions with interesting developments that are worth reaching out to?
- Where is expertise needed? What knowledge is needed?

While attempting to construct an evidence base with a child rights focus, the challenge is that people are trying to think about a number of various levels of analysis: the individual level (of the child), the social level and the country level. It is important to think about to what extent findings are saying things about a specific level.

Another set of questions arises when trying to learn from children and when looking at child wellbeing and children's rights:

- What opportunities are children gaining? What risks

are they encountering? What skills do children develop? What is the importance of internet access as a factor?

- What kinds of next steps can we take in the analysis of our data? For example, how do children's experiences have consequences for their wellbeing or rights?
- Would it be helpful to share the data? How would people collaborate on the analysis or publication of our projects?

The Global Kids Online project encompasses a number of surveys that differ in terms of sample size and age of participants. As the findings are building up, we find that the more we know, the more questions we begin to ask. However, we can now make some **general observations** after having compiled the results:

1. Smartphones are way ahead in terms of being the most used device by children.
2. Opportunities: Children learn new things by searching online.
3. Cultural differences: When mapping out cultural differences, some interesting points emerge. Taking skills for verifying information as an example, we can observe that some younger children do not find it easy to verify information, and that specifically in poorer countries, children's confidence in their verification skills is lower.

Jasmina Byrne (UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti)

Regarding online risks, it is important to differentiate between risk and harm (as not all risks lead to harm) by being realistic and putting children's behaviours into context. An example for this is the risk of seeing potentially hurtful content or imagery – while some children might be upset about certain kinds of content (e.g. explicit imagery), others might not have the same reaction. It should be noted that, although parents' digital skills are in some countries lower than children's who are older than 14, parents still play a vital role in guiding and supporting their children both in offline and online environments.

Further questions that the research is raising are around civic and participation practices:

- Do all children have opportunities/skills to engage

politically online?

- How representative are children who engage civically of the general population?
- Do children trust the internet as a platform for civic engagement?
- Is their right to privacy protected?
- How is data/feedback from children used, for example, for policy?

So far, the key recommendations of all reports point to **the need for policies that:**

- Have a better focus on information and communications technology (ICT) education, teachers' digital skills and knowledge, and their potential to support students
- Look at the interplay between offline and online contexts
- Take into account children's privacy
- Recognize children's agency, values, beliefs and opinions – and their potential to be users who actively develop the internet.

“The Global Kids Online vision is about supporting the realisation of children's rights online and making sure that children are safe online. Still we need to recognise that changes in the “offline” world can influence that goal.” (Jasmina Byrne, UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti)

Insights from new Global Kids Online research

Brazil

Survey sample size: 33,000 households
Valid responses (from children and parents): 3,000
National partner: Regional Centre of Studies for the Development of the Information Society, Cetic.br
Age group: 9–17
Data collection: November 2015–July 2016
Data collected by: Cetic.br
Areas: Rural and urban
Administration: Home, face-to-face

Language: Portuguese

Further details: www.globalkidsonline.net/brazil

Alexandre Barbosa (Regional Centre of Studies for the Development of the Information Society, Cetic.br) presented the experiences of the Brazilian team. Global Kids Online has often been praised as an important project, with, for example, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) discussing its findings. In the case of Global Kids Online Brazil, politicians felt ownership of the process, which was one of the reasons the project was championed. One policy-maker, for example, was very interested in evidence on children from the point of view of consumer protection, and less so from a perspective focusing on human rights that would relate more to risks and opportunities.

In Brazil, 2015 saw a major **change in research design and sample selection**, because two surveys – the Global Kids Online as well as the Household survey – were merged so that the research design also included children who were not online.

Working both with the Global Kids Online and the Household survey made the differences between both very clear: the Global Kids Online survey is the largest survey and very complex. A consequence of that is the training of interviewers: over 200 need to gather data simultaneously. In practice, whether a participant is asked questions from the Kids Online or the Household survey is randomly selected by the software application. Due to the difference in the surveys, remuneration had to be adapted for the two surveys.

In terms of **findings** from Global Kids Online Brazil, one key point that emerged was access to the internet. The study found a context of digital exclusion, as only 58% of the general population are connected to the internet and 79% of children aged 9–17 are internet users. There are 23.4 million young internet users in country, while 6.3 million children have never accessed the internet. The higher the social class and the higher the age, the more likely children are to be internet users. Mobile phones are readily available across all social classes, and the use of a mobile phone for accessing the internet increased greatly from 2012 to 2015; 7.1 million children in Brazil, usually from lower-income households and rural areas, only access the internet via mobile phones, which has an impact on their digital skills.

Another set of points emerging from the findings was **intolerance and hate speech online**. These proved to

be quite difficult concepts to work with due to the complexity of collecting sensitive data. Findings from our questions on discrimination showed that children from upper-income households and older children had witnessed more discrimination. Amongst different forms of discrimination, discrimination on the basis of colour or race was the most prominent. In total, 9.3 million young internet users saw someone discriminated against online and 6 million had been discriminated against.

The **next steps** for Global Kids Online Brazil will be to take a closer look at the following three topics:

- Digital skills
- Community
- Civic engagement

The Global Kids Online Brazil team is currently discussing and testing questions with the challenge being that the Global Kids Online survey is already quite sizeable. One option currently being considered is to include questions from the [DiSTO: From digital skills to tangible outcomes survey](#).

“The vision that children as agents in the digital environment is not meant to be only online. But the internet will be transformed in 20 years, maybe it will not be the internet as we know it today. In our offline lives technology will be embedded.” (Alexandre Barbosa, Cetic.br)

Bulgaria

Survey sample size: 1,000 children and 1,000 parents

National partner: Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre (SafeNet)

Age group: 9–17

Data collection: September 2016

Data collected by: Market LINKS Research & Consulting

Areas: Rural and urban

Administration: Home, face-to-face

Language: Bulgarian

Publications: Three reports on Risks and harm, Parental support, Digital and media literacy

Further details: www.globalkidsonline.net/bulgaria

Petar Kanchev (Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre) reported that the Bulgarian team partly adopted the Global Kids Online framework, and thus it is, in parts, comparable with other Global Kids Online studies, although some sections (e.g. questions about school, collaboration online and skills) are different.

The **key findings** of the 2016 Bulgarian Global Kids Online survey are:

- Children are using the internet earlier and more frequently than ever, rapidly becoming mobile users.
- Even though they are ‘digital natives’, they are not as online-savvy as is often assumed.
- Increased internet use leads to increased risks for children in Bulgaria.

“We don’t have to call it ‘Bulgarian kids online’ – we can just call it ‘Bulgarian kids’ because they are all online.” (Petar Kanchev, Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre)

- Social networking was very popular amongst children, with Facebook being the most popular. In Bulgaria, a high rate of 9- to 11-year-olds have personal accounts on Facebook, with almost no differences regarding gender.
- At the same time, the study found a substantial increase in both online and offline bullying.

Bulgarian Global Kids Online uses a cross-referenced model between the European Union’s (EU) DigComp (Digital Competence) and EAVI’s Media Literacy criteria framework, and identifies four pillars of **digital and media literacy**. The more children score in each pillar the better, as long as online safety skills are developed in parallel.

In terms of information literacy, the study found that:

- Bulgarian children actively search for entertainment online, but not for school-related information. Moreover, there were issues around verification skills, as half of Bulgarian children cannot evaluate the truthfulness of online information.
- Children also seem to be more passive users of the internet – rather than posting text, pictures or video, they mainly spend time online with more passive activities.
- Parents, schools or friends are crucial for children’s

digital media literacy. The study found that students have better technical skills when using the internet now than six years ago.

- With regards to parental supervision or guidance, the study found that there is less parental mediation and collaboration, especially for 12- to 14-year-olds.
- When looking at online skills development in schools, the study found that less than a third of students receive weekly school tasks requiring the refinement of online information skills and less than a fifth of students receive collaborative online assignments from school; 15% of Bulgarian children have access to 'Digital Star Teachers'.
- Children were willing to help others use the internet—66% expressed that they were willing to help their parents and 82% were willing to help their friends.

In the Bulgarian case, several incidents that happened in a row (including the blue whale) led to heightened public concerns about children's use of the internet, which was echoed in media coverage. Unfortunately, evidence-based data proved unable to counter the **narrative promoted by the media**, because it turned out to be immensely difficult to explain data clearly through the media to the public.

Chile

Survey sample size: 1,000 children and 1,000 parents

National partner: Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso

Age group: 9–17

Data collection: August–October 2016

Data collected by: Ipsos Chile

Areas: Rural and urban

Administration: CAPI at home, face-to-face

Language: Spanish

Further details: www.globalkidsonline.net/chile

Magdalena Claro (Universidad Católica de Chile) discussed that the Global Kids Online project in Chile is a collaboration between different universities, funded by the Ministry of Education in Chile, and coordinated by UNESCO.

The **key findings** from the 2016 survey highlight that when at home, children and teenagers are more

connected to the internet than the general population. Intensity of use is high: 92% of the children use smartphones and a majority use the internet every day, with 53.2% using the internet several times a day. However, 33.6% of children never use the internet at school (which is also consistent with data from schools).

In terms of **opportunities**, formal and informal learning benefits were observed in 84% of all the children. Furthermore, the internet offered opportunities with regards to citizenship, with 8% of the children discussing social and political problems online and 36% reading and watching news online. On the flipside, 36% of the children reported at least one experience on the internet that had made them feel bad, with only 50% seeking support after a negative experience.

Results on **digital skills** were consistent with the performance-based digital skills test in Chile: students who are good at one type of activity are usually also good at other online-related activities. The study found significant differences in digital skills amongst different socioeconomic groups and different households' education levels. In addition to this, different socioeconomic groups also demonstrated significant differences in access and intensity of use.

A total of 62% of the children received help from their parents with advice on how to use the internet. A third, however, never or almost never received **parental mediation** when something bothered them on the internet. There were no differences in active mediation between socioeconomic groups, but there were differences across ages, and girls reported higher mediation. Moreover, parents who have more experience as internet users report more mediations. With regards to restrictive mediation, there was again no significant difference between socioeconomic groups. Age again proved to be a significant factor, as older children received less restrictive mediation. On the other hand, 53% of the parents/caregivers reported that their children frequently helped them to do something they found difficult online.

The high information learning percentage in Chile is related to a good national digital education programme with its educational policies ensuring that teachers develop online skills. However, even though there is good digital education, it is not enough to guarantee that all children develop the same skills. In terms of **teachers' mediation**, a third of the children reported that their teachers frequently mediated their use of the

internet. A little over half reported that the teachers have never or almost never mediated when something upset them online (significant differences by age can be observed in the findings for these questions). Therefore, mediation by teachers can be seen as focusing more on information navigation instead of helping children with personal problems related to their internet use.

“We want everything to be good for children, but let’s focus on the internet side of it and make sure that in the digital environment they are well.” (Magdalena Claro, Universidad Católica de Chile)

Montenegro

Survey sample size: 1,002 children and 1,002 parents

National partner: UNICEF Montenegro

Age group: 9–17

Data collection: June 2016

Data collected by: Ipsos Montenegro

Areas: Rural and urban

Administration: Home, face-to-face

Language: Montenegrin

Complemented by: Qualitative study

Further details:

www.globalkidsonline.net/montenegro

Speaking on the work in Montenegro, Jelena Perovic (UNICEF Montenegro) explained that a specific complement to the survey was **qualitative work with marginalized and disadvantaged groups**, for example, through interviews and focus groups. Vulnerable groups included in the qualitative research were, for example, children with disabilities, children from households with a lower socioeconomic status, children in institutions and Roma minority children. Also, participatory research was conducted by young people through focus groups and participatory video action research in cooperation with the University of Sheffield, UK, University of Montenegro and Ipsos research agency.

Key findings: In Montenegro, 91% of the children are online, with non-users being more often from economically deprived families. There is a trend of children starting to use the internet earlier: more than

one half of children aged 9-11 (55%) started using internet when they were 6-8 years old, while at this same age this was done by only 1 in 13 children (8%) who are now aged 15-17. Smartphones are the most-used device to access the internet. Time spent on the internet substantially increases as children grow older. On average, children aged 15 to 17 estimated to spend online almost four hours each day

“How much time I spend on the internet? I am 24 hours online!” (Respondent, Montenegro survey)

The survey found that more than two thirds (72%) of children have **social network profiles**. What is concerning from the findings is that 53% reveal the name of their school, 35% reveal their home address, and 13% met face to face someone who they have first had contact with on the internet.

In terms of **risks**, 38% of the children reported that they had experienced something upsetting online, but only 4% report the problem, with most asking their peers for help. Children report being bothered by viewing violence and fights online – a fifth stated that they had seen recorded videos of their peers fighting. A total of 29% of the children say they have seen sexual images online, while 4% of parents think their children might have.

In terms of **mediation by school and parents**, younger children more often initiate discussions about online experiences. Parental support and protection are limited and mostly involve talking to the children. Moreover, parents’ digital skills lag as the children grow up. Only every second child (47%) uses the internet at school. The children feel that they know more about the internet than their parents, and older children feel they more know about the internet than their teachers as well. Over 50% of the parents named the school as their preferred source of getting information and advice on how to help and support their child on the internet and on how to keep their child safe.

“There is often a ping-pong dynamic around who is responsible and able to teach children digital skills. Teachers frequently think parents should do so, while parents often say teachers should do it.” (Jelena Perovic, UNICEF Montenegro)

An additional challenge is that the digital skills of both parents and teachers might be lower than the children's. **Building media literacy** intergenerationally is difficult, and it is easier to reach parents who are already interested in this topic. Going through schools might be the most promising avenue to reach every child, including the ones whose parents are without an affinity to this topic. Overall, the study recommends country stakeholders facilitate the building of digital literacy skills.

Ghana

Survey sample size: 2,000 children and 1,000 parents

National partner: UNICEF Ghana

Data collection: June–July 2017

Data collected by: Ipsos Ghana

Areas: All 10 regions, 68 districts out of 216 sampled

Administration: CAPI at home, face-to-face

Language: English

Complemented by: 20 focus groups (5 with parents, 15 with children); key informant interviews (with the government, internet service providers and civil society organisations)

Further details: www.globalkidsonline.net/ghana

Joyce Odame (UNICEF Ghana) explained that the training of research assistants was completed in April 2017, and that the quantitative and qualitative data collection for Global Kids Online Ghana project would be completed in July 2017.

The **foundations** for the Global Kids Online Ghana project were established in September 2015 when UNICEF was supporting the Ministry of Interior with the organization of a stakeholder meeting to address the question of how to protect children from online abuse and exploitation. The meeting resulted in the realisation that evidence was needed on children's use of the internet, its risks and opportunities in the form of a national study. The 2016 Global Kids Online network meeting provided a great overview of the Global Kids Online research framework and, as a result, led to the decision to adopt the Global Kids Online research methodology for producing the evidence needed.

There was a high level of **engagement with different stakeholder groups**. As protection of children online falls into the remit of three ministries (Ministry of

Communication, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, and Ministry of the Interior), all of them are interested and engaged in galvanizing government support for the research. While Ipsos Ghana was conducting the research, UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti contributed by providing technical support. A Research Steering Committee was founded that included representatives from the three ministries, as well as non-government organisations (NGOs) and other civil society organisations (CSOs). This Committee was established to add guidance and advice to the research process, for example, by reviewing the questionnaire and rewording questions to better fit the context in Ghana.

Challenges the Ghana team had encountered so far were:

- Ethical approval from the Ethics Board took longer than estimated within the project timelines.
- Difficulty in prioritizing modules and questions in the quantitative tool, because all were deemed relevant, yet the survey would be too long if all of them were included.
- Technical problems with the mobile application for data collection.
- Difficulty finding children aged 9–11 for interviews (which suggests that internet usage in this age group might be low).
- Some parents consenting to their children being interviewed, but insisting on being present at all times throughout the child's interview.

From these challenges, the Ghana team derived the following **lessons**:

- Start the application for ethical clearance well ahead of time to avoid delays.
- Involving the relevant stakeholders from the initial stages of the research project helps to get their buy-in and support from the outset.
- The selection of research sites needs to be informed by the mapping of internet penetration and usage across the country.
- Schedule interviews with children in the afternoon, when most schools are closed.

Going forward, there are plans to integrate child online safety into existing programmes to support children and parents on how to use the internet safely.

The Philippines

Survey sample size: 2,250 children respondents

National partner: UNICEF Philippines

Data collection: 2017

Data collected by: De La Salle University

Sampling design: Multistage cluster sampling design

Completed by: Qualitative workshop with children for results validation

Further details: www.globalkidsonline.net/philippines

Maria Margarita Ardivilla (UNICEF Philippines) reported that a range of **stakeholders** is involved in the project, including government agencies and NGOs. The Global Kids Online Philippines team is taking a **phased approach**: after working on the research protocol (including getting approval of it) and conducting a pilot study in the first phase, the second phase now entails conducting the national study. As a previous similar project encountered a five-year ethics review, preparation was important.

The actual survey is currently being conducted. It was reported that the response rate was quite high, which was a contrast from a 60% response rate for the field test or the pilot in 2016.

The study aimed at covering as many **regions** as possible. However, there was one region in which surveying proved problematic. For the region of Mindanao, martial law created a delay in surveying, but taking into account the safety plan, the fieldwork could start. Also, located in the Mindanao region is the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), a fragile region with pockets of armed conflict. Unfortunately, it had to be excluded from the sample, which ran counter to the original goal. Inclusion of the ARMM region is currently being sought before the Ethical Review Board of DLSU.

Children living in gated communities proved hard to get access to. There were instances where parents gave consent to be surveyed, but their children did not consent. In relation to ensuring the **wellbeing of child respondents** during the survey process in the field, the following points emerged. Children, especially younger children, want their parents to be within their sight.

¹ UNICEF Philippines is also conducting a national study on Child Online Sexual Exploitation which would have a more

Learning from the pilot, the aim was for the children in the national study to finish the questionnaire within the 45-minute mark, so some questions (in this case, sexual exploitation-related questions) had to be trimmed down.¹ In order to get young children engaged, emphasis was placed on hiring young enumerators with whom the children would find it easier to establish a rapport. Due to the sensitivity of the questions on violence, the enumerators received four days of training.

In total, there were 144 enumerators, who sometimes had to make a great effort to reach secluded areas. To ensure the **safety of the enumerators** as well as to have a gender balance, a buddy system was in place in which one male and one female enumerator were in one team and travelled together. In terms of equipment, each enumerator received a waterproof bag for the tablet and printed surveys as a back-up in case they needed them.

Members of the research board were encouraged to take part in **spot-checks**. Their aim is to provide a space in which enumerators and members of the Research Board can process and talk about concerns from the field, which proved to be an enriching experience for everyone involved. As some of the enumerators work under difficult circumstances to reach inaccessible places, seeing core members of the Research Board boosted their morale. Another advantage is that they serve as a debriefing with which issues can be addressed quickly.

“Advice for other countries: spot-checks [with enumerators] are important so that you can get an understanding of the perspective on the ground and help to address issues.” (Maria Margarita Ardivilla, UNICEF Philippines)

When the Research Advisory Board found that nothing in the available toolkit was **measuring children’s aspirations**, UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti team replied with a set of questions to consider. The bulk of the proposed questions will be integrated in the qualitative study that will validate the findings of the quantitative process.

A cyber-attack caused issues, but fortunately, computer science staff from the university were able to secure the

purposive approach towards sexual exploitation-related questions.

project data.

China

Wenying Su (UNICEF China) discussed UNICEF China's recent **partnership with Tencent**, whose founder and CEO is very invested in child online protection. Collaboratively UNICEF China is aiming to:

- Advocate for policy development to promote child online protection
- Engaging the ICT industry to take the initiative
- Public awareness raising and communication

One **research component** that is already planned will look at how children use the internet in China to inform policy advocacy, industry engagement, and public communication. However, a national representative survey is impossible anytime soon, as the sheer population numbers make this too difficult: 731 million people are online, among them 170 million under 19 years old. Moreover, China is facing a huge wealth disparity and digital divide. So, the research will be contextualized to reflect the reality in China.

Currently in China there still are many loose ends to tie for the government to build a robust legal framework to protect children online. A comprehensive legal system targeting this area is absent, although some provisions are scattered in different laws and regulations. A child-focused perspective and child-friendly approach is also largely missing among the cyberspace policy making community. But this subject is clearly high on the government agenda and a national policy is currently being drafted.

With regards to collaboration with a private company, UNICEF is wholly independent in implementing the project and advocating for child online protection. However, this partnership will provide an opportunity to leverage Tencent's reach and creativity in China and globally.

Theory of Change

“How will you imagine or implement processes of change within your regions?” (Sonia Livingstone, LSE)

Theory of Change (Isabel Vogel, independent consultant)

Theory of Change (ToC) is an approach or a way of thinking that involves constantly exploring change and what happens. The heart of ToC is about **real change for real people in real life**. However, instead of directly planning what you want to do and how you can push that change out to the world, ToC is a systematic, dynamic and iterative process that has the following **key questions** at its core:

- What is the change we want/need to create for whom?
- How can we achieve it?
- Why does it matter?

There are three aspects of ToC:

- Critical thinking about change (overall approach), for example, constantly trying to question one's assumptions and getting multiple perspectives
- Systematic process (group-based ToC critical analysis)
- Set of products (narratives, change pathway diagrams).

We only see part of the system, but complex system thinking tells us that the more people we engage with and the more we learn, the better we can navigate it and influence the changes that we want. In a context of **complex systems** with multilevel governance that is characterised by national, regional and international flows and diverse, interrelated actors of state and non-state bodies, it is important to keep in mind the following points:

- Wide participation and ownership: You need a broad process or participation and consultation with people that matter to achieve a sense of ownership.
- Comprehensive analysis: Build a big picture so that you don't miss groups.
- Active use: Use a learning framework that you should keep coming back to and using iteratively. This is very much linked to evaluation and evaluative thinking.

Further materials on Theory of Change

Vogel, I. (2012) [Review of the use of 'Theory of Change' in international development](#), DfID (Department for International Development) (UK)

Vogel, I. (no date) [What is theory of change about?](#)

Marjan van Es, Irene Guijt and Isabel Vogel (2015) [Theory of Change guide](#), Hivos

“Global Kids Online aims to influence systematic change through awareness-raising, rigorous knowledge and development of policy and practice at every level.” (Isabel Vogel, independent consultant)

With regards to research projects and institutions, ToC distinguishes among three different **spheres of influence** they can occupy:

- The sphere of control includes research design, implementation and primary outputs – everything that can be controlled by the institution. Usually, there is engagement in a non-linear way with stakeholders in a sphere of influence.
- The sphere of influence is where the uptake of primary (research) outputs leads to secondary outputs as well as influence on policy, practice, strategy and technology.
- The sphere of interest signifies further uptake and influence that lead to changes in economic, sociocultural and environmental domains.

ToC tends to start with a **vision of change** (which has not yet been fully defined by Global Kids Online); it is informed by worldviews and assumptions. The vision of change should be updated based on iterative findings, so it is worth regularly checking back and seeing whether you can refine the vision a bit – it should be stretching, but realistic.

Abstract-sounding issues such as implicit discrimination against children should be unpicked and grounded in a real setting when you are mapping the current situation. These are ‘unstructured problem situations’, so one needs to look at the key systems that reinforce values and norms. Ask yourself: What is happening in the current situation, what are the results of that, and what are the tangible examples for it? It is important to start where things are real and most

tangible, so that you can talk about very concrete terms as a basis for action. This way you don’t get stuck with abstracts and quite generic elements.

“There is a lot of diversity and independent approaches in different countries, so the question is how we can collectively argue for something bigger.” (Kerry Albright, UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti)

“Yes, especially because children’s rights apply to all countries.” (Sonia Livingstone, LSE)

When thinking about **global-level change**, it is useful to start building a more global perspective by first thinking of national contexts and going from there.

ToC in **eight steps**:

1. Clarify the purpose for using ToC
2. Describe the desired long-term change
3. Research and describe the current situation
4. Identify who/what/where needs to change to realise desired change
5. Prioritise, focus and map change pathways
6. Develop strategies and interventions
7. Define monitoring, evaluation and learning priorities and process
8. Use ToC for critical reflection to implement and adapt.

Theory of Change taster session: Feedback and discussion workshop

Participants were asked to focus on Step 2 from this list and to **describe the desired long-term change** that Global Kids Online should achieve by writing a tangible, specific, time-bound and people-oriented statement of change that describes the desired transformation, such as changed behaviours or changed relationships. This included thinking about ‘Who is the most important focus of the change? How would you like their lives to be in a positive future situation?’ Figure 1 below is a summary of the discussions the regional groups had.

Figure 1: Global Kids Online’s desired long-term change

	AFRICA AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA	LATIN AMERICA	THE BALKANS
Desired long-term change	Children and adults are working together to ensure that children are empowered, respected, protected, resilient and able to realize the opportunities and mitigate the risks that exist in life, both offline and online	Children are agents in the digital environment. They are skilled, empowered and can protect themselves. Children’s rights are upheld	Children should be secure, safe, responsible and confident online. Children should be the main beneficiaries of this strategy for change, primarily for now, but also in their capacity as future citizens
Assumptions	Adult buy-in is key to overcome an adult-centred world. Countries are committed to fulfilling child rights and their international obligations	Digital transformations lead to the internet being more concentrated, more embedded and ubiquitous. There is a lack of participation and a culture of paternalism	There are currently inequalities surrounding internet use. Human rights must be supported, both online and offline
Current situation	Children are often treated as second-class citizens by many stakeholders, stigmatized, pathologized and discriminated against. There is a focus on protection. There are major evidence gaps, minimal utilization of available evidence amongst policy-makers and practitioners and a lack of research (evidence divide, equity divide). Online versus offline dichotomy. Most vulnerable groups of children are being left out. Under-utilization of linking Global Kids Online to other practitioners and initiatives/interventions on the ground	Strong social inequalities, digital and educational inequalities, traditional values, parental mediation inequalities, quality and universal education	The discourse of control is more prevalent than the discourse of support. Children need support regarding internet use (from family and institutions), but there is also lack of awareness of this need. Not enough locally appropriate content (language issue). The internet is mostly perceived as just a source of fun for children
Tasks	For institutional actors: multi-stakeholder collaborations, better coordination (clever workarounds), better use of research and evidence, monitoring, measuring and evaluating own programmes and policies. Child-centred public finance management and programmes. Long(er)-term commitments. Shared regional agendas. Child-friendly governance. For societal actors: shared agenda, common approach. For family/individuals: more intergenerational dialogue, communication, mediation, engagement, increased skills, increased civic space (participation). Positive peer support and collective responsibility – working together	ICT industry, families and NGOs as important partners. As strategy: role of telenovelas in getting the message to families about the problems and challenges of the digital world. In education: change in the level of teachers (need teachers with the capacity to mediate the digital environment), curricula, authorities, Ministry of Education, digital literacy in the curriculum and promoted by schools. Rights-based internet governance. For politicians: evidence-based policy related to child wellbeing. Church: needs more information and to be aware that this is an important issue in society; by working with the church, politicians might be influenced too. Inter-relationships between these stakeholders are also important	Changing the narrative and public discourse from control to support. For schools, families and authorities: changing awareness of the need for support, strengthening children’s digital skills and critical thinking offline and online. Ministry of Education: see digital resources as a catalyser of the education system reform. For schools: improve the pedagogy and incorporation of digital tools

As some groups during the taster session did not focus specifically on the online world, a question arising is: why did some focus on online issues as a main thing, while others grounded their ToC in the offline world? There was a lot of discussion around the offline–online dichotomy – is the dichotomy at all helpful when thinking about ToC?

Knowledge exchange and impact

The LSE approach to measuring knowledge exchange and impact (Rachel Middlemass, LSE)

Research impact can be defined as:

- An effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia.
- The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy.

Demonstrable contribution: you need to establish:

- Reach and significance: Impacts were felt when, where, by whom and to which degree?
- The material and distinct contribution of your work. That impacts would not have happened – at least not in the same way and/or to the same degree – without your work.

Both claims need to be supported by independent evidence. The evidence must be relevant and robust, but may be quantitative or qualitative. It should be selected for its relevance and capacity to demonstrate impact claims. For illustrative examples of possible evidence, see Figure 2.

In conclusion, measuring impact is a dynamic (contentious) ongoing conversation. It is very nuanced, has many disciplinary differences and depends heavily on the type of impacts being claimed.

“Offline circumstances manifest and shape online circumstances and vice versa.”
(Amanda Third, Western Sydney University)

Figure 2: Examples of evidence indicators

Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators
Performance data from partners or research users	Reports from any external organisations using the research
Investment/value data showing cash or in-kind investment in research and related activities	References to research(er/s) on external users’ websites or press releases
Satisfaction, health or wellbeing measures produced through independent analysis or audit of outcomes	Acknowledgements of expert input
Engagement data, e.g. attendees at public events or participants in talks or workshops; amount of media coverage and size of audiences	Records (e.g. Hansard) or minutes showing provision of evidence
Interaction statistics, e.g. number of retweets, shares etc.	Citations or references in funding applications by external partners
Usage data, e.g. number of downloads or times reproduced elsewhere	Responses to media or online coverage of research
Citation data, e.g. number of times research is cited in guidelines	Sentiment analysis showing a change in the ways people describe things
Altmetrics showing online attention/references to research (ask anyone citing your work to do so using full bibliographic details and, if possible, a DOI, to allow altmetric tracking).	Factual statements and/or testimonials and personal letters from users and beneficiaries (they can be very powerful)
	Survey responses or feedback/evaluations from relevant respondents

Using the Global Kids Online Impact Monitoring Framework to capture your impact efforts (Kerry Albright, UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti)

It is important to **define research impact** as it means different things to different people. What do we mean by assessing research impact? Why should we even bother? For UNICEF, impact is defined as:

- **Academic:** Contributing to the long-term evidence base through publishing high-quality, relevant research, peer-reviewed books, journals and other fora with subsequent citation.
- **Conceptual:** Influencing discourse, debate and dialogue amongst key stakeholders (academics, policy-makers, NGOs, media) to affect their knowledge, understanding and attitudes, both on- and offline.
- **Capacity-building:** Building the capacity of researchers in the Global South to engage in research design, analysis and implementation in focus countries, to engage in new practice and policy development processes and to enhance their international profile.
- **Instrumental:** Being able to demonstrate a plausible contribution to changes in policies, programmes and practices in focal countries and within UNICEF as well as broader impact pathways more generally.

However, this definition does not yet contain anything explicit on systems, networks, partnerships and collaborations.

Although UNICEF does not need to regularly report on academic impact, doing so might be relevant for donor reporting, as a moral responsibility or simply out of personal curiosity.

However, assessing research outcomes and impact is very difficult, especially now that most projects have already started. For that reason, the focus now is on measuring the process of engagement as well as final outputs. The Global Kids Online network is currently drafting an **Impact Monitoring Framework** that sets out a common basic framework for this process, and is adaptable to countries' impact priorities and definitions. It provides a holistic view of research impact beyond academic and policy impacts. Its goals are:

- Providing a systematic way to assess uptake, use and impact research
- Assess the overall impact of the various country

efforts in the longer term alongside a global programme of ToC to support scaling up and lesson exchange, especially as more countries come on board (moving beyond data collection).

It is important to note that the framework does not operate on strict definitions that need to be followed; rather, it is designed to be as open as possible and should be used in a collaborative and adaptive way. The framework looks at three points: (1) uptake – including the project inputs, activities and outputs, project engagement and participation; (2) use – how people are engaging with research, reactions, awareness and what they are using it for; and (3) impact – often defined as purely long-term outcomes such as policy or behaviour change, but Innocenti takes a less definitive view.

As some countries might not have baseline data on impact or budgets for this task, the focus should be on basic, no-cost data collection for assessing impact. It is important to be pragmatic in low-resource situations.

Engaging with stakeholders: Experiences of the country partners

Ghana

Joyce Odame from UNICEF Ghana highlighted that a stakeholder meeting in Ghana in September 2015 provided a forum for many stakeholders to discuss what could be done to address child online sexual exploitation in Ghana. In August 2016, the government launched a National Steering Committee whose main task was to **develop a national framework** for children's online protection; a draft framework has already been created. In this context, the need for national research to gather evidence on this topic is high on the agenda.

Child online protection has emerged as a component of the political project, so the **overarching goal** is to engage in a unified effort for child online protection in Ghana. This is exemplified by diverse stakeholder engagement with various departments: the Ministry of Communication, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and the Ministry of the Interior.

Planned activities are, for example, audiences with ministers, presenting the draft framework to the new cabinet, launching the report after the end of August and disseminating it. The **dissemination plan** includes:

- Validating the report with members of the National Steering Committee
- Launching the report at national level
- Producing a child-friendly version of the report for dissemination via school-based clubs
- Organising dissemination sessions with various stakeholders such as the National Child Protection Committee, the media, industry and the private sector
- Organising a forum with the National Steering Committee on the uptake of the research recommendations.

Going forward, there are currently no legal provisions that address issues of online exploitation and abuse, which is one area that the Ghana team will be looking at in the future.

South Africa

Patrick Burton from the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention discussed that the South African team first tried to **conceptualise ‘engagement’** by figuring out what they wanted to achieve or get out of this research, particularly as there was no time for a long engagement process. The **planned outcomes** were:

- To inform the common narrative of risks, opportunities, rights online and children’s online activities, especially in times of heightened media attention to these topics. One problem is that the media often take findings out of context and focus on the negative, so the aim is to shift the conversation more towards opportunities offered by the internet.
- To inform the direction that government takes with regards to children’s rights online by providing briefs and informing policy development.
- Raising awareness amongst children and policy-makers.

As different departments were responsible for different facets of children’s online issues, the team **identified specific stakeholders** it wanted to influence by looking at departments and parliamentary committees. Furthermore, chapter nine institutions (a group of organisations established in terms of Chapter 9 of the South African Constitution to guard democracy), international NGOs, industry, service providers, the media, civil society, schools and parents were identified as relevant stakeholders.

The **launch of the pilot study** at which a Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) commissioner and child rights activist, together with representatives from government, delivered a speech and which brought together a diverse range of stakeholders turned out to facilitate a high level of buy-in and led to numerous invitations to present the pilot study at other occasions.

“Our confidence comes from the fact that there is very little evidence out there and we can provide the data that is needed.” (Patrick Burton, Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention)

Activities undertaken for stakeholder engagement were, for example:

- Facilitating the Advisory Group
- Engaging with government and parliament (e.g. by speaking at committees)
- Lobbying civil society
- Developing training material and crafting various publications tailored for different purposes
- Training educators
- Creating integrated family interventions.

Challenges of engagement: Institutional ownership is very limited, as the government has many other priorities which means that children’s rights online have not yet received enough attention. The South African team really wants to inform the development of legislation, which often takes 3–5 years, partly due to lack of clarity around which political body should take ownership of this topic.

Attempts to **engage the industry** constituted one of the biggest challenges throughout this process. With some exceptions, industry unfortunately lacked time or capacity to provide much needed support for the research or the research uptake.

“It is important to think how to create a win-win situation with industry stakeholders. What is the goal and responsibility of industry? Their primary goal is to generate revenue, but their responsibility is towards the users. So, it is important to think about what kind of engagement we want that works for all.” (Jasmina Byrne, UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti)

The Philippines

Maria Margarita Ardivilla from UNICEF Philippines reported that key national agencies are represented in the **membership of the Research Advisory Board** set up for the Global Kids Online Philippines study: Social Welfare, Justice, the new Department of Information and Communications Technology, the Interior and Local Government (oversees local governance, which is important for cascading and intervention), the Council for the Welfare of Children (monitors policy and implementation of all programmes involving children), the National Youth Commission, the Anti-Poverty Commission and NGOs and CSOs focused on children's advocacy. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia is the project's development partner and sits on the Board.

Buy-in from the administration was a high priority, and the Philippines team **ensured this strategically** by using the following institutions as entry points: the Inter-Agency Council against Child Pornography, the Philippine Plan of Action to End Violence Against Children, the Philippine Judicial Academy, the police and local government. The government is currently the strongest partner on the project. This kind of advocacy includes the government investing funding both at a national and local level, facilitating legal reforms to address bottlenecks in implementation and law enforcement, and providing agencies with the manpower, technologies and strategies needed.

The team is also involved in global or international networks such as the WeProtect Global Fund to End Violence Against Children and the South-South Cooperation, driven by the East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office (UNICEF EAPRO).

There is an **ongoing conversation with industry**, for example, with one telecommunications partner, about awareness-raising amongst employees. Some issues such as blocking or filtering content are legally required but not implemented. Therefore, the team is keen to address issues through industry engagement.

With regards to **NGOs and CSOs**, there are many initiatives to increase awareness and skills through online materials. The team also wants to partner with advocates and the media, and is currently working on a corresponding strategy.

Right now, there is a fragmented approach to parenting

in the Philippines, so parenting support interventions are an important aim of the project. The goal is to **harmonize activities** across the range of initiatives and approaches. Moreover, a behaviour change strategy based on community engagement in order to influence social norms is still in the works as research demonstrates that parents and relatives are drivers of the sexual exploitation of children online.

Challenges included:

- Dealing with the prioritisation of children's online protection over children's online opportunities (which is also a challenge within the organisation)
- The need to engage young people more and to figure out best practices for engagement with children
- Sustaining the conversation with stakeholders and the sharing of knowledge
- Funding gaps
- Identifying channels for disseminating the core message widely (also in rural regions).

In terms of shifting the paradigm away from a sole protection focus, working with UNESCO and bringing in the Department of Education have proved helpful. Possible solutions for **broad dissemination in different regions** are cooperating with the Department of Welfare and Social Development, and the Department of Health, for example, by distributing the message with the help of health workers or to use cash transfers as an entry point to connect with parents from rural areas.

Argentina

According to María José Ravalli from UNICEF Argentina, it was not common in UNICEF Argentina to do research on children and the internet, so the Argentinian team were the first to start working on this. The core team consisted of six people (consultants were hired for the different initiatives), and can now be considered one of the frontrunners in the field of stakeholder engagement by having **indicators, key performance indicators (KPIs) and budgets** allocated to this purpose.

“It is strong work we do and we aimed to find a way to show its value.” (María José Ravalli, UNICEF Argentina)

“Having a framework is important to be able to do this kind of stakeholder engagement.” (María José Ravalli, UNICEF Argentina)

The Global Kids Online study was an **opportunity to engage in a dialogue with different stakeholders** who are interested in the topic of children’s online experiences. While the study was conducted, stakeholder meetings, dialogues and one-off meetings were held, for example, roundtables with partners in the private sector and meetings with academic partners to incorporate their perspectives in the study. Reports were published in Spanish and English.

The team **cooperated with the media** to make sure that the issue was covered in a respectful way. The aim was to have a different way of presentation and to **introduce data with humour**. A number of activities were carried out with good overall results (see Figure 3).

For **public policy-related stakeholder engagement**, the team tried to use the formation of a new government as a window of opportunity to push for a new programme. The “Digital Coexistence programme” was an intersectoral programme in the province of Buenos Aires involving the Children’s Secretariat, the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Education, UNICEF and NGOs. Its aim was capacity-building for teachers, child protection and justice officers, children and families, and it employed face-to-face and digital training as well as an online campaign.

Figure 3: UNICEF Argentina’s activities and results related to Global Kids Online dissemination and impact

Activities	Results
<p>Report launch</p> <p>Data were presented by a stand-up comedian before the conventional presentation took place</p> <p>An exhibition that showed devices from different eras of technological development was organised aiming for more personal engagement.</p>	<p>Front-page coverage by three newspapers</p> <p>The launch helped establish the report, which is now a valued resource in the country</p>
<p>‘No Da Compartir’ campaign</p> <p>As cyberbullying was the most widespread negative issue for Argentinian children, the team partnered with a government agency in the multi-year communication campaign, ‘No Da Compartir’ (‘It’s not cool to share’), which generated opportunities for audiences to engage with data and topics:</p> <p>Focus on massive events (Lollapalooza festival)</p> <p>Focus on influencers</p> <p>Days like Internet Day or Friends Day were used to highlight the message</p>	<p>The combination of data and influencers led to a wide distribution of the message</p>
<p>#Replay for all campaign</p> <p>Various activities employed</p>	<p>The campaign achieved a good reach and became a trending topic</p>

For children, a participatory **theatre play** was designed for and with 10-year-old students – many roles in the play had their characters based on research findings from the study. Moreover, a ‘Let’s talk about everything’ **web platform and chat helpline** were established with the National Youth Secretariat.

With regards to **legislation**, the data from the study were used in different ways: since October 2016, a new policy allows the use of different devices in the classroom. Now the team is working to strengthen capacities in schools to positively use this. The Convergent Communications Law, which is currently being debated, lists the promotion of digital and media literacy policy as one of 17 main items.

“It is useful when UNICEF country offices plan and budget for efforts like this as part of their five-year strategy.” (Jasmina Byrne, UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti)

Brazil

“In Brazil, there is a gap between the research agenda and policy agenda and it is up to us to breach this gap – our responsibility is to produce reliable data that are useful for policy-makers.” (Alexandre Barbosa, Cetic.br)

In the context of Brazil, in order to combine both the **research and policy agenda**, it was important to produce data that are: reliable, policy-relevant, timely (to inform policy decisions), accessible (to all key stakeholders), cost-effective, interdisciplinary (to address cross-cutting issues such as access, protection, education, etc.) and comparable (for datasets).

Stakeholder engagement proved to be a vital ingredient for the success of the project, with 55 voluntary experts engaged in data production and dissemination. The Research Centre is linked to and funded by .br institutions. However, there is a procedure to engage with other stakeholders as .br institutions are multistakeholder-governed: all stakeholders needed to be convinced that the project was relevant. The government was involved with three ministries (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Human Rights and Ministry of Education) and nine CSOs were also participating. A

number of academics were invited to write for the project’s publications, and overall 16 universities were involved. Many academics were very engaged, but in terms of regional distribution, it was found that while universities in Sao Paulo were more willing to use data, it was difficult to engage academics from the rest of the country (North, North-East).

Institutional support from UNESCO and UNICEF has been provided since the beginning of the project. Of substantial importance was the **regional collaborative network** in Latin America, whose current members are Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay. Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Mexico are very interested – some are already trying to find funding to also conduct the project.

Dissemination strategies: The website provides publications that are available for download and microdata that are available to selected users (mainly government and academics). Further activities include press releases, public debates, conferences and capacity building.

Workshops for policy-makers on how to use statistical data for policy-making purposes are organised. In the future, comparative studies should yield cross-national reports.

Chile

Magdalena Claro from the Universidad Católica de Chile explained that the Chilean story is quite different from that of Brazil and Argentina, as the Chilean Global Kids Online project was established by academics rather than Cetic.br or UNICEF. Although there was a clear need for data and evidence as most data available was produced by the telecommunications industry and thus focused on the use of technology instead of social issues, **finding funding** for the Chilean Global Kids Online project turned out to be a major challenge. The Ministry of Education and ENLACES (Centre for Technologies in Education) were both interested and eventually funded the project, and UNESCO was asked to administer the budget and to take over responsibility for admin.

Additional stakeholders included the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (CEPAIL in Spanish), universities (academic experts), the National Television Council and NGOs involved in digital rights topics.

Data were made available to selected users at the beginning of 2017, and the database will soon be made public.

Actives undertaken were:

- An international meeting of experts in January 2015 for survey validation
- An expert national workshop in July 2016 for discussing the research and to forge alliances with researchers interested in analysing the data as well as to increase the network
- Launching the Global Kids Online Chile results at a conference in April 2017 – the project was presented at the conference ‘Virtual Educa’, a big educational conference organized around the topic ‘Students’ digital world’ – there was a lot of interest in the data
- Some engagement with the media, although the resulting articles did not publish the headlines the team would have liked.

Impact on policy and decision-making: Topics from the study were included in the digital education strategy of the Digital Education Council in which skills development was particularly emphasized as an important topic. Opportunities to be research consultants for the Ministry of Education were also created, which provided a way for the academics involved to influence policy. While there is already some impact in the education field, the team plans to reach out to child protection institutions to also emphasize protection-related issues.

Lessons learned: Research-focused project networks have strengths (good data) and limitations (reduced institutional support and less formal organized support). For that reason, the team is currently trying to find a way to get more involved in networks and to become part of policy discussions in order to benefit from advantages offered by more institutional settings.

Future research would include qualitative studies and Global Kids Online surveys, but this would depend on the team’s plans and capacities.

Uruguay

Matias Dodel from Universidad Católica del Uruguay conveyed that the Uruguay team had just started with their Global Kids Online Uruguay study, together with UNICEF Uruguay as the main funder for the project.

Uruguay can be described as a small, progressive nation that has an established welfare state tradition.

There is **no survey or comprehensive research** on how Uruguayan children use the internet, and policies on these topics are not always backed up by recent evidence.

The **state and government play a strong role** in terms of rights and development in Uruguay. The country has a **state-owned telecommunications monopoly** that is highly regulated and state-funded, which presents an opportunity to introduce evidence-based policies around safe internet use.

The past two governments and the current government undertook a **‘One laptop per child’ programme (Plan Ceibal)** on a national scale: all students and teachers in the public education system were entitled to a laptop or tablet device, to connectivity and to educational content. However, it is unclear how much teachers have used digital devices in their teaching and whether they have learned how to use this technology effectively in the classroom. The team is working with a **variety of stakeholders:** UNICEF Uruguay as well as the UNESCO Regional Communications Office; it is cooperating with the AGESIC Presidency (which is its link to government and policy-makers), with Plan Ceibal (the laptop provision programme with experiences in policy implementation as well as working with and surveying children) and with the Universidad Católica (which provides academic expertise on surveying and is currently also employing the [DiSTO: From digital skills to tangible outcomes programme](#)).

Next steps will include a submission to UNICEF’s *State of Uruguayan children* report in October/November and delving deeper into the research findings after the report is published.

“There is a conspicuous absence of private sectors in the presentations, but some of the biggest challenges to child rights online are coming from the private sector.” (Amanda Third, Western Sydney University)

Bulgaria

The **mission statement** of SafeNet Bulgaria, Petar Kanchev emphasized, is to improve the digital and

media literacy of Bulgarian children. The **communications strategy** employed was based on a marketing communications model that was originally developed for business and that was then adapted to fit the needs of the project. It is based on the following questions:

- Which audiences should be reached by the messages? Who are their key influencers?
- What are the behavioural objectives that should be achieved?
- What is the content that facilitates these objectives?
- Which channels can facilitate the delivery of content?
- How can we evaluate the impact of our communication activities?

Partly based on developmental psychology, the **behavioural objective** was to change negative behaviours and to encourage positive behaviours online.

In terms of **target audiences**, five target groups were identified: four groups of children of different ages (pre-schoolers, preteens, early teens and adolescents) and Bulgarian policy-makers as a fifth group. The digital natives narrative is very prevalent for parents of young children; however, parents are key influencers for **toddlers and pre-schoolers**, and children love it when parents interact with them when using online devices.

For **preteens**, the key influencers are primary school teachers as primary role models, but also parents. Fathers are less involved in mediation than mothers. **Early teens** are more rebellious and focus more on peers and older teens; 90% or more of them have online profiles on social networks for achieving a sense of belonging and group affiliation; they also love games and gamification. For **adolescents**, risks stemming from internet use are higher and they also like to engage in risky behaviour. Their key influencers are peers and celebrities as well as vloggers and musicians as they enjoy watching music and vlogs online.

With regards to **Bulgarian policy-makers**, political parties tend to struggle to adapt to rapid technological or social changes. Change of ruling parties can bring about abrupt changes in policy, which creates a lack of sustainable solutions in the field of education policy. Public opinion (voters) and established institutions (like UNICEF or national organisations) are crucial for influencing policy-makers.

Strategies were tailored to each target audience by employing the formula of doing X (= activities) to achieve Y (= the benefit). For example, for early teens, the benefit (Y) of having a supportive and positive IRL and online community was achieved by the CyberScout programme (X) in which children are trained to become online safety trainers to help their peers and are given advice as to who to contact for questions and guidance.

Other activities in this programme were:

- 'Finding Emo' campaign (on how easy it is to find online traces of a person by asking children to search the internet for information on Emo)
- The Bulgarian SIC (Safer Internet Centre) helpline (established as a response to suggestions from children participating in the CyberScout programme) that provides guidance from trusted consultants
- The Counter-speech campaign
- A youth media panel.

Measuring impact was possible in some cases (e.g. by documenting events organized by children and keeping track of the number of participants), but not possible in other cases (e.g. age of callers to the helpline could not be measured directly due to confidentiality rules).

Montenegro

After finishing the research project, as Jelena Perovic from UNICEF Montenegro discussed, the team engaged with a **variety of stakeholders**, ranging from the government to the civil and private sector. Also included were children and young people, schools, universities, the media and even celebrities. The research was connected to the **End Violence Online UNICEF global campaign** that initiated a public debate about children's online safety.

The **findings were launched together with the Prime Minister of Montenegro** and the complete **campaign was based on the research evidence, which was also used to fuel a public debate**. Jelena Perovic quoted the Prime Minister who said at the campaign launch: "It is our goal to provide every child with the digital literacy which is necessary for living a safe life in the contemporary world."

Children are outstanding campaign spokespeople as they phrase in simple terms campaign key messages and transmit them effectively to different audiences. A high school student participating in the research was

quoted, saying at the campaign launch: “We need to talk about our online experiences and, in this way, encourage young people, parents and schools to decrease the online risks, as – anyway – we have to use the internet every day.”

Social media are **useful channels to get the messages across** in an accessible format, for example, by creating pictures with quotes from qualitative research or short messages about research findings.

Another campaign component was the **NET Friends app**, a multiple-choice game made from true stories from children online, which was created since children aged 9-11 mainly use the internet to play games. UNICEF National Goodwill Ambassador Antonije Pusic, alias Rambo Amadeus, a celebrity in the Balkans, lent his voice for audio material used for reactions to correct/incorrect answers. As an additional function, the game also has a mechanism for reporting violence online. The app was pre-tested with children aged 9-11 with the help of the Parents’ Association/NGO.

After finishing Global Kids Online research, the team engaged in **further participatory research**:

- Together with Ipsos and the University of Montenegro, high school workshops were organised where students learned more about Global Kids Online and how to organize focus groups themselves.
- With Professor Dorothea Kleine from the University of Sheffield, participatory video action research was done in the form of a workshop with students from the capital where they made videos on related topics.
- Both focus group results as well as videos were used for the **Youth Forum on Cyberbullying organized on the occasion of UNICEF’s 70th anniversary**.

Several attendees note that the affiliation with UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti, Global Kids Online (because of its global scope) and LSE had created credibility and a reputation for their projects.

Serbia

Talking about the experiences from Serbia, Dragan Popadic from the University of Belgrade explained that UNICEF Serbia partnered with LSE, UNICEF Office of

Research - Innocenti and EU Kids Online and the Institute of Psychology in 2015 for a pilot study. However, progress towards a national study halted as Serbia did not meet the main eligibility criteria for applying for continued funds.

Dragan Popadic explained that media and society in Serbia display a **preoccupation with the dangers of the internet** (as exemplified by the extremely widespread fake news piece about ‘Blue Whale’). Facts around youth online activities are sometimes incorrectly represented in the media, and a **discourse prevails that prioritises online consumerism and entertainment at the cost of recognizing the opportunities for learning and positive development** offered by the internet.

“Media plays a key role for changing the discourse or narrative – but in practice, the narratives are driven by emotions, especially fear. Maybe we need to rethink how we present our data. What else do we need in addition to our data? We need that extra something to create the change of discourse – an example is the combination of influencers and researchers.” (Jasmina Byrne, UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti)

Workshop on best strategies for impact

One aim of the workshop was to exchange ideas for **best strategies for maximizing research uptake, use and impact at the regional level, and applying these to plan global strategies**.

A broad range of **factors affects impact**:

- The long process of change in big institutions (such as the OECD, ITU, UNESCO and UNICEF).
- The difficulty of defining and measuring what impact you truly see from a given research programme, and how to develop best-practice approaches for reaching the impact goals.
- The role played and autonomy wielded by a specific institution and the chances to influence a specific institution can vary significantly from country to country, so avenues to impact in each country are

different.

- For each Global Kids Online team, the project is at a different stage.
- Each Global Kids Online team has different resources (funding, social capital, etc.) at their disposal, ranging from well-funded to very limited.
- Global Kids Online projects are being run by different institutions with different skills, perspectives and goals.

During the workshop, participants raised issues and goals pertaining to a **global level** as well as points pertaining to more **specific contexts**. The main challenge emerging from the tension between the general and the specific therefore is: *How can we develop an overarching global strategy that also accounts for local, national and regional context and differences?*

Participants agreed overall that **Global Kids Online needs a unified, global, powerful message**. This message could, for example, emphasize commonalities amongst children globally. As governments are likely to engage with UNICEF and other intergovernmental organisations, UNICEF has the potential to successfully disseminate this message. Moreover, if the message is clear and simple, and policy makers hear it from multiple sources, the likelihood that they will take it seriously increases. In order to bridge the potential gap between the global objective of the message and regional/national contexts, it is suggested to first share the overarching message within the Global Kids Online network, and then to allow each team to adapt and translate the message to country contexts.

Every strategy for research impact presented during the workshop covered one of the following **key points**:

- Who are the stakeholders you would like to engage with? Did you consider stakeholders on different levels?
For example: The workshop participants mentioned (local/national) governments, regional organisations, industry, NGOS, educators, the media, childcare divisions, key influencers, parents and children as stakeholders they would like to engage with.
- Are you aware how children's and digital issues are linked in your country context and/or do you have a specialist focusing on these topics?
- Make sure to take a twofold approach by looking at

(a) organisations and individuals working on children's issues and (b) organisations and individuals working on digital issues. This way, you can ensure reaching many stakeholders.

For example: There is a special rapporteur whose remit includes digital issues and another rapporteur for whom children's issues are part of the remit.

- How do you prioritize the different stakeholders? What connections are there between the stakeholders?
For example: One might focus mainly on engaging with the government and involve much less the private sector in the project or funding (due to concerns related to bias impacting the project); inviting private stakeholders to events and discussions might be a more suitable approach.
- How powerful/ influential/autonomous is the stakeholder? What is the reach of this stakeholder and what is its mandate?
For example: The European Commission has a regional mandate and is a powerful institution. Therefore, it might be a good starting point for putting issues on the agenda, because governments have signed up for delivering commitments on this agenda.
- What are the stakeholder's interests/objectives/dislikes?
For example: A private sector stakeholder might be mainly interested in corporate social responsibility (CSR), its business, reputation and brand.
- What are the strengths of this stakeholder (e.g. skills, expertise, resources)? Does it have a specific focus on things such as implementation/strategy/dissemination/coaching etc.)?
For example: Engaging the private sector is not only about funding, but can also be about their human capital or expertise.
- If there are difficulties establishing contact with certain stakeholders, are there any influencers that could facilitate contact with that stakeholder?
- Are you engaging on every level? If engaging with an institution doesn't work, can you go one level lower or higher?
For example: Move from a national to international context or move down from a regional to local context).

- How do you tailor the message towards the stakeholder?

For example: Fostering a more interactive approach/active partnership by expressing ‘We want to work with you and to identify what can be done together.’

For collaborations with governments and NGOs, one strategy is to emphasize the usefulness of your comparative data for policies and campaigns, while for industry it can be useful to highlight your good reputation and its value for the company’s image/brand and its social responsibility engagement.

Challenges and questions raised:

- How can we involve children more in research and dissemination?
- How can the Global Kids Online network ensure that each team can have similar types of impact, despite consisting of different institutions?
- Would it be possible to identify common goals that are a minimum requirement in terms of Global Kids Online impact?
- Would it be possible to identify institutions or organizations that each country can target on a national level to achieve impact?
- When working with national government, is it better to present different issues to different ministries or to focus on one overall cross-cutting concern?
- Teachers often have negative views of technology or dislike change – how can we work with teachers and schools to improve this situation?
- Stakeholders sometimes suffer from a lack of data, a lack of support, dialogue and exchange of good practices – how do we best contribute to inform stakeholders?
- How can we craft a strong message that reaches message-deaf stakeholders where usually the only point we can get across is, ‘Hello, there are children in the world!’

One issue that received a lot of attention was **engagement with industry stakeholders**. While industry was seen as a key stakeholder with the potential to provide funding as well as to actively tackle online safety issues affecting children, participants also mentioned a range of risks and ethical issues related to partnerships with the private sector. A balanced approach was suggested where we maintain friendly

relationships but also discuss and challenge the industry to do more. The good brand names of UNICEF and LSE, and now also Global Kids Online, was seen by many as having the potential to incentivise companies to go beyond providing funding by also tackling issues around children online in their companies.

Another stakeholder group that was discussed in detail was **the media**, particularly national and alternative media, which offer the opportunity to broaden public discourse and raise the awareness of governments as well as focus national and governmental attention on the work of Global Kids Online. Similarly, to the points raised for industry stakeholders, the importance of not seeing the media as a wall or entity was highlighted, but instead, to identify media professionals who might be good collaborators.

The **role of champions** was also discussed more in-depth: while champions were seen as powerful stakeholders, participants also emphasized that focusing on one champion that drove the whole process was a risky endeavour if the champion was to give up their role. To avoid this kind of risk, it was suggested focusing more on engaging with a system/institution as a whole, and establishing institutionalized cooperation with that system.

Global Kids Online indicators

The session focused on reviewing the list of essential indicators for inclusion in other surveys. A final list will be produced as an outcome of the meeting, and these core items will be available for inclusion in other surveys as key indicators on children’s internet use.

Feedback and review of the Global Kids Online research toolkit

This session discussed possible amendments and additions to the qualitative and quantitative tools based on feedback from all country partners. The aim of Global Kids Online is to review its research toolkit based on new research, technology innovations and shifting policy agendas.



Future directions

The network discussed future plans for sharing information and exchanging research findings, dissemination and publication, as well as strategies for seeking further research funding and working more on creating a joint ToC, for example, via a deliberative online process.

Concluding comments from Sonia Livingstone and Jasmina Byrne outlined the success of the meeting in relation to sharing and learning from each other's strategies for effectively engaging with stakeholders and from the challenges the network partners face in their research dissemination and impact efforts. This has been very useful for moving forward with the task of creating an effective knowledge exchange and impact strategy for Global Kids Online, which will be developed further into a Global Kids Online impact toolkit and shared on the online platform (www.globalkidsonline.net). Further efforts will focus on continuing the process of learning from each other's experience and working together as a network to improve strategies for comparative research, dissemination, impact and policy-making.

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