



netWorked Youth Research for Empowerment in the Digital society

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## Year 1 Quality and Evaluation Annual Report

WP10\_D10.8

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Year 1 Quality and Evaluation Annual Report

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## 1. Introduction

This document collects the findings of the evaluation process carried out between June and late November 2017 for the WYRED project (García-Peñalvo, 2016b, 2017; García-Peñalvo & Kearney, 2016). The process involved examination of project documentation and deliverables and extensive group and individual interviews with partners. The document constitutes the second evaluation-related deliverable of the project, the first of these was the quality and evaluation plan, and the insights from the process will contribute to later versions of that document. More important, however, is the formative aspect of the evaluation, which involves the identification of achievements so far, and potential improvements to the project. Indeed, the key function of the evaluation process during the project is to provoke reflection (Griffiths et al., 2017). Potential improvements are suggested in a list of recommendations at the end of the document.

### 1.1 The WYRED Project

The emergence of the young as a distinct social group, and their slowly increasing empowerment through the availability of digital technology, has brought with it an understanding that they have a key role to play in the digital society, as drivers of new behaviours and understandings. However, their active participation in society is not reflected sufficiently in policy and decision-making, especially in relation to digital issues. Because of this, they are not well represented and unheard, and this makes it hard for research and policy to identify and understand their needs. These issues are further complicated by the fact that the group is a swiftly moving target, it is as heterogeneous as the wider society, and young people can be unwilling to be subjects of research.

The WYRED project aims to provide a framework for research in which children and young people can express and explore their perspectives and interests in relation to digital society, but also a platform from which they can communicate their perspectives to other stakeholders effectively through innovative engagement processes. It will do this by implementing a generative research cycle involving networking, dialogue, participatory research and interpretation phases centred around and driven by children and young people, out of which a diverse range of outputs, critical perspectives and other insights will emerge to inform policy and decision-making in relation to children and young people's needs in relation to digital society.

The project is informed by the recognition that young people of all ages have the right to participation and engagement. It has a strong focus on inclusion, diversity and the empowerment of the marginalised. The aim is to replace the disempowering scrutiny of conventional research processes with the empowerment of self-scrutiny and self-organisation through the social dialogue and participatory research.

#### 1.1.1 Objectives of the project

The overall aim of WYRED is the empowerment of children and young people. The WYRED project has several central objectives:

1. to provide a framework for research in which children and young people can express and explore their perspectives and interests in relation to digital society
2. to provide a platform from which children and young people can communicate their perspectives to other stakeholders effectively through innovative engagement processes.
3. to engage children and young people in a generative research cycle involving networking, dialogue, participatory research and interpretation
4. to generate a diverse range of outputs, critical perspectives and other insights that can inform policy and decision-making in relation to children and young people's needs in relation to digital society.
5. to make this process continuous and sustainable

These objectives involve a series of challenges that are a natural corollary of the work we propose, these are as follows.

1. **ENGAGEMENT** - children and young people are to a large extent immersed in a set of activities that take up most of their time, and their free time is precious. The engagement in WYRED of children and young people can involve competition for attention with existing activities.
2. **RESEARCH** - research is frequently understood in society as a dry activity divorced from everyday reality. This misconception can affect the way that WYRED is perceived both by the young participants and by third parties. Horizon 2020 is a research programme, but exploration may be a more fruitful word to use in this context.
3. **LEGITIMACY** - one of the ultimate aims of WYRED is to help young people communicate their issues and concerns to those who take decisions about them. There is a sense in which WYRED functions as a bridge. The challenge will be to ensure that the work done by children and young people in WYRED and its outputs are perceived as legitimate by decision-makers.
4. **TECHNICAL ISSUES** - configuring a safe space for the activity in WYRED, that is both sufficiently attractive to children and young people and compliant with the necessary ethical requirements, is a challenge. In particular competing with the digital expectations of the young on a very tight budget will be bracing.
5. **DIVERSITY** – WYRED is committed to diversity and inclusion, however it is frequently the case that the easiest children and young people to access are to be found in middle-class schools with receptive families, the challenge is to move beyond this context.
6. **SUSTAINABILITY** - the activity in WYRED is initially resource hungry, hence the need for EC funding, making the activity sustainable involves promoting self-management among young people and

facilitating the transition from funded project to self-funded youth-led activity. This is a considerable challenge activity.

7. ETHICS OF EMPOWERMENT - the central conundrum in a project like WYRED that focuses on facilitating the empowerment of young people and their agency is the question “when is the right moment to let go” (of the balloon). This is an ethical question.

Many of these challenges are identified in the proposal, others acquire significance as the process progresses. These are particularly areas of importance in a project that aims to innovate in this way.

### 1.1.2 Structure of the project

The project work plan involves 10 work packages. The first of these focuses on the definition of the different processes involved in the research cycle, the second is dedicated to the preparation and implementation throughout the project of the inclusion strategy, and the third focuses on the development of the WYRED platform, which will be used throughout the project as the space in which the activities and interaction take place. These first three preparatory WPs are followed by 5 WPs which cover the full cycle of research activity in WYRED. This starts with network building in WP4, in which the children and young people who will participate in the research cycle are attracted and engaged, and the principal themes that represent their concerns are identified. The next work package (5) focuses on social dialogue around these themes, which are further explored to identify key research questions relating to the digital society that concern children and young people. In the subsequent work package (6) these children and young people, supported by the partners, will focus on designing and implementing research activities to explore these questions and issues in a range of ways. WP7 focuses on the interpretation and evaluation of the process and its results in the production types by the young research participants and the partners, of different formats and artefacts that will be used to present the results, principally insights and recommendations to different target groups at policy level and in the wider society. The final phase of the cycle in WP8 focuses on the dissemination and exploitation of these results, though this work package runs throughout the project engaging in the valorisation of the WYRED activity through workshops, event participation, online activity and the creation of an association to manage WYRED activity after the funding period.

These 5 work packages form a cycle that is aimed to generate insights relating to the perspectives and concerns of children and young people in relation to digital society. The cycle repeats twice during the funding period of the project and will continue after the funding period indefinitely under the aegis of the WYRED Association. The WYRED cycle is supported by 2 other work packages focusing on management (WP9) and quality (WP10).

WP no.	WP Title	WP Owner

WP1	WYRED PROCESSES DEFINITION	BOUNDARIES
WP2	INCLUSION	MOVES
WP3	WYRED PLATFORM DEVELOPMENT	USAL
WP4	BUILDING THE WYRED NETWORK	YEU
WP5	SOCIAL DIALOGUE PHASE	EARLY YEARS
WP6	PARTICIPANT RESEARCH PHASE	DOGA SCHOOLS
WP7	EVALUATION AND INTERPRETATION PHASE	PYE GLOBAL
WP8	VALORISATION	OXFAM
WP9	PROJECT MANAGEMENT	USAL
WP10	QUALITY MANAGEMENT	BOUNDARIES

It is worth noting that there are challenges involved in implementing a project that begins with a traditional work package structure, but in which the aim is to move towards a continuous cycle of activity in which the divisions between work packages 4 to 8 will increasingly be elided.

### 1.1.3 Project consortium

The consortium is made up of nine partners, and is very diverse, with partners from academic organisations that focus on research and others whose principal focus is youth work.

1	UNIVERSIDAD DE SALAMANCA (USAL)
2	OXFAM ITALIA ONLUS (OXFAM)
3	PYE GLOBAL (PYE)
4	ASİST ÖĞRETİM KURUMLARI A.S. (DOĞA SCHOOLS)
5	EARLY YEARS – THE ORGANISATION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN LBG (EARLY YEARS)
6	YOUTH FOR EXCHANGE AND UNDERSTANDING INTERNATIONAL AISBL (YEU)



7	ZAUCHNER-STUDNICKA SABINE (MOVES)
8	THE BOUNDARIES OBSERVATORY C.I.C. (BOUNDARIES)
9	TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY (TAU)

The diversity involved is of great value but also constitutes a challenge since the organisational cultures and ways of working among the different partners are diverse, as are the cultures in which they work.

## 1.2 Quality and Evaluation in WYRED

The activity within WYRED, specifically the WYRED research cycle, involves its own specific evaluation and interpretation process in which the outputs of the cycle are subject to scrutiny and assessment. It is there, in WP7, that the participants and consortium evaluate whether the research cycle developed is producing useful and valuable results for society.

The focus in this report, though related in very general terms, has a different focus insofar as it centres on evaluating the project as an EU financed project which has a set of outputs (deliverables) and processes that have been previously defined in the funding proposal. Though both sets of work share the ultimate objective of evaluating the quality of WYRED the perspectives are different, the work covered in this report focuses on quality management and the evaluation of the overall progress of the project.

### 1.2.1 Quality

The purpose of the internal quality processes in WYRED is to ensure that the project deliverables are completed with an acceptable level of quality. This involves attention both to the quality of the deliverables themselves and the quality of the processes used to manage and create them. While project outputs, the deliverables, are subject to an internal quality control process using predefined criteria, the processes of the project, including internal aspects such as management, communication and collaboration, participation and reporting as well as the research cycle activities are evaluated independently. The results are incorporated into this Quality and Evaluation report, and the other evaluation reports planned during the project. The ethical perspective will be subject to a separate reporting process.

The focus of quality control is on the deliverables of the project. Quality control monitors project deliverables to establish that the deliverables are of acceptable quality and are complete and correct. The deliverables are assessed for completeness and fitness through a peer quality content inspection during the development of deliverables and to mark the completion and approval of the deliverables. As mentioned previously, quality

assurance, which focuses on the processes adopted in the project, is carried out through the processes of project evaluation, described in the next section.

At the start of the deliverable production process, the proposed structure of the deliverable is approved according to the following indicators:

- the contents are in accordance with the objective stated in the project description
- the allocation of the tasks is realistic and consistent with the roles of the partners as defined in the proposal, unless modifications have been made
- the timetable proposed is realistic and matches the deadline set out in the project proposal, unless modifications have been made

During the production of the deliverable, all partners are responsible for playing their part in checking the quality of the deliverable as it progresses and making appropriate comments and suggestions for modification.

The key quality criteria used for the final review of each deliverable are as follows:

- compliance with the objectives as stated in the project description in the Grant Agreement
- the completeness of the documentation describing the work done in the corresponding work package
- compliance with templates and editing guidelines as described in the project handbook
- clarity and legibility
- the degree to which the deliverable constitutes a complete response to the task
- usefulness to the target reader and audience
- complete history of document versions

For the purposes of this report, the quality management process has been monitored and the degree of fulfilment of these criteria has been examined. Though there has been some slippage in the upload to SYGMA (EU deliverables portal), the deliverables produced so far in the project comply. Where this is not the case, comment is made in the main body of the report.

### 1.2.2 Evaluation

The project evaluation framework in the WYRED project is intended to support the project activities, and provide opportunities for continuous improvement both of project processes and the products created, especially the network itself. This will be done by observing and interpreting the different actions carried out by the consortium and providing feedback at appropriate moments within the project cycle, and is done principally through the independent internal review process, which is the responsibility of P8 (Boundaries). The overall objective is to support the consortium both in the achievement of the specific project objectives and in its compliance with the

funding requirements. This involves attention both to the management perspective - the extent to which the administration, communication, collaboration and other aspects (such as, for example, compliance with deadlines) are appropriate – and to the development perspective – the extent to which the different activities are successful in achieving the objectives, with respect as much to the design and development of the products and services as to their valorisation.

The project evaluation process will contemplate both formative and summative dimensions, and will also focus on identifying lessons that can be learned from the project, both in terms of operational and management aspects, and in development terms. The principal evaluation criteria that will be used to define the scope of the monitoring and interaction during the project evaluation process, and to guide feedback and reporting, are similar to what could be termed the ‘standard’ evaluation criteria used in a wide range of EU project management and evaluation processes. They include:

- correspondence with the proposal - the match of the activities, products and services developed, and the overall results, to the aims and objectives of the project
- appropriate activity - the efficient management of the activities, appropriate communication and collaboration, the completion of work by agreed deadlines and to a sufficient degree of quality, and the fulfilment by all partners of the tasks assigned to them, as well as appropriate use of the outputs
- impact in the short, medium and long term, and the sustainability potential of the project outcomes. In this last respect, particular attention will be paid to the appropriateness and success of the dissemination and exploitation activities.

Against this background, the process also has a series of specific project evaluation objectives:

- To carry out ongoing monitoring of the project design and development activities, providing feedback and recommendations for corrective action whenever needed.
- To carry out ongoing monitoring of the project management activities, with special attention to communication and collaboration.
- To facilitate reflection and critical thinking among the partners on different aspects of the project, in order to ensure an integrated approach to the project, in which all are participants.

The methodological approach has used a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, though the focus, given the need for flexibility in the project evaluation process, has been on a qualitative approach. The quantitative methods have focused on analysis of project data to derive an overall impression of the degree of activity generated, and the interest in the project, but the emphasis has been on interviews. After an initial set of informal contacts during the project meeting in Vienna (May 17) and a group session, a round of online exploratory interviews took place in June and July, to explore the issues different participants had in relation to

the project activity. These allowed the interviewees to set the agenda and to discuss the issues that they considered to be important. This ensures that all the perspectives of the different participants are represented and taken into account in the evaluation process. These were combined with a semi-structured interview process, which while it ensured a similarity of approach across the interviews, also let the interviewer delve deeper into the reasons and issues involved in their responses in order to reveal underlying issues and permit confidential discussion of sensitive issues. The results of these were then shared with the consortium and a round of group reflection took place. Some important decisions were taken as a result of this process and implemented in October. Finally, in the partner meeting in Florence (November '17), a series of group reflection activities to surface participants' perceptions, attitudes and concerns took place. These activities make the key issues visible so that they can then be identified and reflected upon. These focused on SWOT analysis, sharing of achievements and challenges and reflection on the current status of the project. The eventual timing of the project meeting led to a small delay in the evaluation process, which was due to complete in M12. After that, a series of informal interviews also took place to check impressions.

Throughout the project, the evaluation has also involved observation of the work, and periodic discussion of the progress of the activities has taken place, including interaction with young participants in order to ensure their perspective is included. This observation forms part of the continuous monitoring of the project. This report is the outcome of all these processes.

## 2 Current situation of WYRED at M12

It is important to recognise that WYRED is a highly innovative project, involving a new way of approaching youth empowerment and engagement, with an explicit focus on diversity and inclusion, which necessarily implies a very heterogeneous consortium and target groups. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that there were differences in understanding, working styles and expectations at the start of the project, and it is valuable that over the first year of the project these have been addressed and recognised. The nature of the project requires an extensive degree of collaboration and involvement of diverse partners in a wide variety of aspects, many of which are new to some. There is also a fluidity of tasks and transitions, and although this is valuable, and arguably necessary to provide the flexibility the WYRED approach implies, it requires an agility and a capacity for adaptation that the instruments commonly used in projects of this kind do not necessarily support. This has posed important challenges to the consortium in this first year, as each partner adapted to a new context in which its habitual working processes required adjustment.

Against this background, the consortium has achieved a range of useful intermediate outcomes during this first year, that provide a solid basis for further work as the project proceeds, and the consolidation of the WYRED approach to youth empowerment. These are listed here:

1. A new methodological approach for working with young people, centred on giving them agency and a voice has been developed, and is currently being trialled (WYRED Consortium, 2017a, 2017b).
2. A substantial number of young people, across seven European countries, and a wide range of ages and socio-economic backgrounds, have been given an opportunity to share their views and explore their diverse understandings of issues that concern them.
3. The consortium has carried out a valuable Delphi process as part of a wider process of youth dialogue that has identified a set of concerns that are of particular importance to European young people at present.
4. The consortium has developed its understanding of appropriate and ethical ways to network with and engage young people in social dialogue both online and off, which is evolving into a collection of good practices.
5. The consortium has supported a good range of youth-led exploratory and research projects in which young people had the chance to go beyond opinion to more in-depth understanding of the issues that concern them.
6. The project has developed a platform that functions as a safe space for young people to carry out their explorations and exchanges, which also serves to connect young people from different countries and environments (Durán-Escudero, García-Peñalvo, & Therón-Sánchez, 2017; García-Peñalvo, 2016a; García-Peñalvo & Durán-Escudero, 2017).

7. A wide range of different organisations across Europe have been made aware of the WYRED project and its approach.

It is important at the outset to point out that WYRED is not strictly an “academic research” project, it is better characterised as a process of social innovation, as perhaps befits a Societal Challenges project. The work involves a profound shift in the way that we work with young people, and most importantly a relinquishment of agency and control on the part of the consortium, in order to give this agency to the young people involved. This approach, though valuable and welcomed by a very high percentage of those who hear about the project, poses challenges from the perspective of evaluation. Put simply, perhaps the key success factors in WYRED are the engagement of young people through the process, their emerging agency, and their sense of ownership of that process. Engagement, agency and sense of ownership are not however simple to measure. At this stage in the development of WYRED a full cycle has not yet been completed, so it is not yet possible to provide a full vision of the value of the project to the young beneficiaries involved, though the initial indications are very positive.

As the achievements listed above show, it is possible to speak of a successful first year. Wherever the partners speak of the project the reception tends to be enthusiastic, and most show great interest in the initiative, though the kind of commitment required for full engagement is not possible for many. In this first year the consortium has been able to define the WYRED cycle in detail and try out different options in order to develop a flexible *modus operandi* that can be adapted to a wide range of different contexts. The consortium is well-positioned to take the WYRED approach forward and consolidate it over the next year.

However, few projects are without teething problems, and WYRED is no exception. During this first year several issues have arisen that have caused delays and bottlenecks in the development of the approach. The most important of these reflect challenges that were already identified in the introduction to this report, and in some respect can be considered inherent to the approach in the sense that they derive from the shift in the nature of work with young people that WYRED proposes. They can be summarised as scheduling, engagement and privacy. In the following sections, we explore these issues in more detail.

### 2.1.1 Scheduling

A key focus of WYRED is diversity. The project arises out of a response to a call focused on inclusion and this aspect is an important source of added value in the project. However, for this reason, an issue that runs right through the project is the challenge involved in catering to the very diverse and heterogeneous contexts and timelines of the different stakeholders we are working with. While some synchronisation of the project activity across the partners is valuable, especially in order to coordinate international projects, there is a risk that the need for synchronisation derives into a “lockstep” that hinders the partners from working effectively with young people. This happened in the first cycle in early 2017. There was an initial understanding that the work should run in tandem in all countries, particularly in the networking and dialogue phases. This created considerable

problems with scheduling. For example, for some partners there was a need to begin the initial meetings before some of the content that was intended to be used in these meetings, such as the manifesto, could be prepared. In other cases, the timing of some aspects coincided with periods in which the target groups were not available. For example, in the UK participants became unavailable after the start in March of the yearly exam period, when few schools collaborate in any other activity. Issues such as these caused considerable difficulties during the first semester of 2017 and complicated participation. As a result, some of the work has been conditioned by the need to meet deadlines, in order to coincide with others, and this has affected the depth of engagement with tasks.

Subsequent reflection on this issue, during the evaluation process, identified the need to understand the WYRED cycle as a framework, rather than a blueprint, or a series of fixed dates. It was decided to update the project timeline so that it reflects more appropriately the rhythms of young people's lives, and this includes a need for built-in flexibility. To this end, and as a result of recommendations made during the evaluation process, the partners created a temporal map of the availability of different stakeholders in the different countries, in order to plan more appropriately the framing of the WYRED cycle. It should be noted that this will be an aspect that requires continuous revision.

An important outcome of this process of reflection is that the initial dates and deadlines planned, partly due to the time of the grant, were not fully realistic. In response to this, the consortium had decided upon a reorganisation of the timing of the cycles. Instead of beginning after the start of the calendar year, the next cycle has been brought forward to autumn 2017 so that the key periods of the cycle do not coincide with times when the majority of young people are unavailable due to exams and other commitments in late spring and summer. Although this change in timetable means that there will be some overlap between the first "experimental" cycle and the second, it has the benefit that, as well as addressing the schedule issue, it allows the project to implement two full cycles before the end of the finance period, which was not originally the case.

### 2.1.2 Engagement

During this first period, most partners have gone through a process of deepening understanding of the nature of the project. Some initially understood that the emphasis of the project should be on digital activity, whereas the consensus is slightly different, since the focus is actually on young people and their attitudes and opinions relating to the society they live in, which happens to be "digital". This distinction is subtle but important, and the shifting understanding, brought about partly due to interaction with young people, and partly through discussion among the partners, is valuable. A key lesson learned during this period is that the full engagement of the young and their meaningful participation, which is central to the work of WYRED is not as easy to achieve as might be thought. Participation in an ongoing process, which is furthermore open-ended, is much harder to commit to than participation in a single event, such as a youth panel.

In the first cycle, each partner focused on engagement locally, with varying degrees of success. This was sometimes due to scheduling issues, and at other times due to issues relating to the nature of the target groups selected and their capacity to engage. The availability of young people to participate in a process like this varies widely across the consortium. A key issue is that increasingly in Western society the lives of children and young people have very little free space so that a project like WYRED may have to compete with, and displace other activities, unless it can integrate with them. For example, for a project which focuses on children and young people, schools at first sight would appear to be valuable interlocutors. The school context however tends to follow a clearly defined set of activities which young people are expected to participate in. In some countries, access to schools has not proved especially difficult, and it has been possible, sometimes after some hard work, to integrate the work effectively into existing activities. However, in others, the existing school context in which resources and time are extremely limited, coupled with safeguarding issues in some cases, has made it difficult to gain access, and harder to achieve the availability of children to participate due to competing academic demands on their time. Where it has been possible, WYRED has been framed as an after-school activity in these cases.

The outcome of these challenges in relation to engagement has meant that partners have naturally tended to focus on the contexts they know best, which are their local contexts. In these terms, most partners have been able to achieve engagement with a set of groups of young people and experiment successfully with the WYRED approach. Efforts are being made to develop a coordinated (though flexible) engagement strategy across the partnership that shares the best of what each partner has found to be successful so far. However, the local focus has been to some extent at the expense of the international dimension in WYRED. Though the more limited part played by international activity has been partly due to delays in relation to the platform which are discussed in the next section, there is a need for greater focus on this aspect.

In relation to this, an important general reflection with regard to WYRED is for the consortium in the next cycle to reach out beyond each partners' familiar networks. There is a need to find ways to engage with young people who are not the "usual suspects", in order to ensure that the commitment to diversity and inclusion is respected.

### 2.1.3 Privacy

In the evaluation of the WYRED proposal, the principal issue raised in relation to what was considered a strong proposal otherwise, was that of ethics. It was felt that the ethical dimension of the project required more work, and this was requested prior to the signing of the grant agreement. A particularly important issue was that of data protection and privacy, and a related deliverable, the Participant Protection Policy was introduced into the workplan. Attention to the aspects has been present throughout the work of the first year and, in most areas, it has not proved to be an issue since partners were already familiar with aspects such as safeguarding and informed consent. However, in the context of the development of the project platform, some issues did arise.



The WYRED platform has been conceived as a safe space for children and young people to engage with each other within the project. The option of using existing social media, such as Facebook or Instagram, despite their familiarity for young people, was ruled out because none of them comply with the security and privacy requirements of the project as defined in the Ethics section. Although the sensible decision was taken not to develop from scratch, the complexity of the emerging WYRED approach and the requirements involved, especially the issue of privacy and participant protection, caused considerable complications in the process of development. In particular, these involved issues relating to the necessary disassociation of the real data of users and that of their avatars within the system, the avatars being a key element in the protection of identity and privacy within the platform. The configuration of this aspect, coupled with cultural and privacy challenges relating to the collection of diversity data (a crucial element of the project that depends on the platform) caused delays that put back the release of the platform till autumn of 2017.

It is important to point out that these delays derive from an intrinsic characteristic of the project, which is its valuable focus on giving freedom to young people to interact and explore. The corollary of this freedom is the ethical requirement to ensure the safety and privacy of these young people while they undertake this exploration. In WYRED this is done by creating this safe space. While this has proved more complicated than initially anticipated, and has had knock-on effects on the international work of the project, the privacy issues are now solved, and the platform has launched. This will be further discussed in the relevant section.

Most of the challenges faced by the project in this first year have related to one of these three issues. Each is intrinsic to the WYRED approach, and without them the innovation involved would not be possible. They can therefore be characterised as “teething” problems that, to a large extent, have been solved during this first year. In the following sections, the work done in each of the work packages is examined.

## 3 WYRED Year 1 - Framing and infrastructure

These work packages provide the WYRED framework in which the cycle can take place, they include processes, ethics, diversity, and the online platform.

### 3.1 WP1 Processes

This work package was the entry point in the project for the partners, and the initial task, the creation of the handbook, functioned acceptably as a useful task to promote initial engagement, and in general the feeling is that the work in this package has served as a useful space for defining, exploring and explaining the project's philosophy, approach and mechanisms. However, in some cases it was felt to be over-theoretical, especially at the start of the project before all had achieved full comprehension of the nature of the work. The ethical aspects covered in this work package are considered to be exemplary.

The process handbook caused some bemusement at the start of the project since little had been learned as yet that would have involved changes to the processes defined in the proposal itself. However, the role of these handbooks is to document and track the evolution of the approach so that it functions as a continuously updated source of guidance. Its existence, and the commitment to updates, provides guarantees that the approach can be flexible without losing sight of its objectives. As the project moves forward the processes set out in the handbook are to be refined and improved, and indeed changes have already been identified for the next version.

### 3.2 WP2 Diversity

The work done on diversity has proceeded satisfactorily, with strong commitment and good quality work from the leadership. The documentation produced has been of very good quality, especially the inclusion report that takes into account the key indicators of diversity and appropriately includes all country specifications. The challenge of adapting to the different contexts of each partner has been very successfully addressed.

Diversity is at the heart of WYRED, and a driver of the philosophy of inclusion that underlies the work of the project. At present in the initial cycle, the indications are that the project is achieving an acceptable degree of diversity across the consortium, though as the work moves forward it may prove necessary to take explicit action to ensure this. Some initial resistances to this focus on diversity were expressed at the start of the project, framed particularly in terms of questioning of the level of detail required in data collection relating to diversity; it is important to recognise that the application of the diversity criteria adds a level of complexity to the project that can at times be challenging. These initial reservations have however mostly disappeared. There is consensus around the diversity criteria and their expression in the instruments, and the diversity criteria are being appropriately implemented by all partners.

### 3.3 WYRED platform

As mentioned previously, the platform development has suffered some delay, due to technical complications relating to the need to ensure the privacy and protection of the participants within the safe space that the platform provides. It is important to mention that though these delays have had some repercussions in relation to the international dimension of the project, it has been considered throughout by the partners that it is necessary to get the platform right, given that it is a key element that is intended to articulate all of the activity in WYRED.

The platform design has involved very careful consideration of data security and ethics issues, and a progressive simplification of the processes involved, in order to improve the personal experiences with online interaction in the platform. It is now considered to be appropriate for the work of WYRED, and is running with a very large target group with considerable diversity in terms of ages, languages and communication styles. Although it is early to be sure, and the challenge of “competing” with existing media that young people are used to using remains, there are good indications that the platform can provide a useful safe space for WYRED activity.

It is worth noting that the extent to which the platform can be used beyond the specific purposes of WYRED is likely to be limited. It is not feasible to expect the young people participating in the project to move away from the spaces they usually use, except for very specific purposes. This means that the functionality of the platform and its attractiveness needs to be sufficient rather than brilliant. However, the experience of using it needs to be sufficiently attractive for young people to commit to using it for the purposes of the WYRED activity, and the degree to which it facilitates this will almost certainly be key to its success. The presence in the platform of an engaging activity, and a commitment to facilitating and guiding this activity will be a vital factor to bear in mind.

It is important also to emphasise that the team currently working on the platform is extremely capable and agile in attending to partners’ needs and requests. Once the challenging technical development phase passed to the testing phase, the team proved very receptive to comments on functionalities and usability, and the collaborative process involved has been fruitful. Going forward, it is important to emphasise the role of the partners in committing to the use of the platform as a key element of participation in WYRED and in helping the users to engage with it.

## 4 The WYRED Cycle

These work packages make up the WYRED cycle. As previously mentioned, the decision was taken to start the second WYRED cycle earlier than originally planned in autumn 2017, in order to adjust the cycle to the rhythms of the target groups involved. This means that at the time of writing, and until March 2018, the first and second cycles are running in parallel. This is not considered to be an issue, particularly when it is taken into consideration that as the project moves forward the WYRED cycle is increasingly expected to become a continuous cycle in which different groups may be in different stages of the cycle at the same time. Cycle 1 is currently in the research phase, while Cycle 2 is in the initial networking phase.

### 4.1 WP4 Networking

The work in this phase of the project was successful in attracting a diverse collection of participants to the project in the different countries, most of whom carried forward to subsequent phases. Appropriate engagement strategies were used, and a high degree of motivations was apparent among a large majority of the young people involved. Achieving this success however involved a series of challenges. The overarching scheduling and engagement issues already commented on were of particular importance in this work package. The networking phase involved a series of different actions designed to function as attractors to facilitate the networking process. These included the manifesto, slogan competition, the Delphi and the initial questionnaire, and while each of these constituted an interesting tool for engagement, they were organised into a very tight timeframe in which delays created bottlenecks that affected the whole networking process. Though these delays were successfully addressed, and the work was completed successfully, there were effects for some partners on participation. Overall however this work package was successful in generating networks of children and young people nationally and internationally among the partners, and these numbers are expanding. The different activities involved help to generate interest in the project and the partner countries and positive reactions. The questionnaires and Delphi work also appropriately serve the purpose of identifying key areas of discussion that served as a good introduction to begin the dialogue in the following phase of the project, and a good idea of the topics that concern children and young people and adults that work with them.

As part of the evaluation process, the different elements involved in the networking process, and the overall workflow, were discussed to explore the degree to which they contribute to engaging people in WYRED. The principal objective of the workflow is to promote engagement of participants while simultaneously identifying their concerns. Some elements were felt to be principally elements that helped to kickstart the process at the very start of the project, but that once the process was underway they were no longer as necessary. This is the case of the initial stakeholder questionnaire and the slogan competition, which were initially intended to spark interest in the absence of other elements, but which now are superseded by the evidence generated by the

work of the project itself. It is unclear that the use of questionnaires is necessarily the most appropriate engagement strategy, and in many cases face-to-face meetings appear to have been more effective. It is perhaps important to note that the organisational culture in the youth sector seems to be more comfortable with face-to-face interaction than online.

The role of the manifesto is still under discussion. It proved to be a challenge at the start of the project since it was not clear who it should represent, or how. The delays in its production, due to these doubts, meant that for many it was not possible to use it effectively at that stage, but it is felt that it has good potential for future use in engaging stakeholders and young people, and it should be revisited in early 2018.

The Delphi process was felt to have worked very well and it was very well organised and managed. However, it did function as a bottleneck in the first cycle since it was responsible for generating ideas for the dialogues. This role is no longer as necessary since the consortium has material for seeding the dialogues from the previous cycle, however the Delphi is seen to fulfil an important observatory role in the project that can feed discussions, dissemination and engagement, as well as articulating initial conversations on a policy level. The decision was therefore taken to continue to implement the Delphi but in parallel with the rest of the networking activity. These different decisions have led to a streamlining of the networking process which is considered to make the networking activity easier to implement, as the lack of “lockstep” allows partners to respond to opportunities with potential participants in a more agile and appropriate manner.

Achieving meaningful participation in the project initially proved to be a challenge, as partners worked hard to involve stakeholders. Though in many cases initial interest is often high, further engagement can be a challenge. However, as understanding of the project increased within the partners, their discourse became more grounded and it was easier to achieve the commitment and cooperation of stakeholders. Once stakeholders and young people understand the benefits it is possible to get them in and do real networking. However, it is important to note that this work takes more time than foreseen in the proposal, and that up to this point each partner has been working largely in isolation, since the international networking part depended on the presence of the platform.

One challenge in the networking process had to do with issues of terminology. The language used in the proposal is not necessarily the language used by those who work with young people. Though partners are making adjustments continuously, there is a need to give thought to the language used in the different contexts of the project.

Another important aspect is the question of ownership of the process, the key issue is to ensure that the young people coming into the project feel they belong. Reflection is needed on these aspects; the streamlining decisions appear to have helped but it seems possible that further adjustments may be needed. An aspect that

has been commented on extensively is the attraction of international interaction, and now that the platform is in place, the aim is to involve member organisations from third countries that are not part of the project consortium. An important task that needs to be addressed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle is the development of a more extensive and coherent engagement strategy that reflects and respects the different ways of working in different youth sectors. All partners need to be involved in this due to the importance of learning from each other with regard to the different engagement strategies that work. Increasingly it will be necessary to understand networking in WYRED as a continuous process.

## 4.2 WP5 Social Dialogues

The social dialogues functioned well, a wide diversity of participants engaged in the processes, and a valuable set of perspectives were shared. However, the process took place under some degree of stress due to limitations relating to the availability of the groups at the end of the school year. In all the dialogues, there was clear interest in the topics and interesting insights have arisen, especially in relation to the differences in priorities between young people and the stakeholders that work with them. They constituted a valuable opportunity to engage students in analysing, reflecting and critically thinking about their own generation in terms of what they identify as their principal concerns and problems. In many cases there was also a reflection around their degree of engagement and society and decision-making.

The result of the process was frequently that the young people involved left with a sense of empowerment through sharing their knowledge and perspectives, and furthermore that the issues that concerned them were also relevant for their peers and for society. For many the discussions also involved exploration of core values and views of the future. Most importantly from the perspective of the WYRED cycle, the discussions provided the momentum and the ideas to move forward into the research phase.

Though it is perhaps understandable given that these were the first social dialogues in WYRED and the focus was therefore on the process itself rather than any other issues, it is necessary to note that reporting of the social dialogues was variable. Though the template created is very clear and easy to use, work needs to be done to provide a greater degree of detail in some reports since this is vital for the analysis of the dialogues. It would also be valuable to ensure improved recording of the dialogues on future occasions. An aspect that remains pending is the implementation of online dialogues which are now being organised as the platform comes online.

## 4.3 WP6 Research projects

Given that the first WYRED cycle is currently in the middle of the research phase, it is not yet possible to comment fully on the outputs of this stage. However, there are initial indications that the flexibility and openness of the project to numerous different forms of exploration research and the capacity to adapt to the needs of the

participants is proving to be extremely valuable. There is evidence emerging that when sufficient autonomy to take decisions about the nature of the exploratory process they will undertake is given to the young people (which is a fundamental principle of WYRED), the response is very positive. They take ownership of the process, and the work involved is proficient and of good quality.

The main tangible output so far of this work package is the Research Toolkit which is a very valuable package with a good range of activities and suggestions for participants to orient them when this is necessary. Though it is possible that going forward it may be a good idea to reduce the size of the toolkit to make it more manageable, this is a decision that should be taken when more feedback from the participants is available.

#### 4.4 WP7 Evaluation and interpretation

As is the case for the research phase, the first WYRED research cycle has not yet reached the point where the work done in this work package can be fully evaluated. The work that has been done so far involves the generation of a set of tools to evaluate the dialogue and research process. Different tools have been developed for different ages of participants, and the focus has been on developing a slim and accessible methodology that would not overload participants at a sensitive stage in their engagement with the WYRED process. The methodology focuses on a self-evaluation process that involves creative responses to ensure engagement. However, during reflection on this deliverable during the evaluation process, it has been suggested that some additional instruments could be introduced to reflect other external understandings of what constitutes appropriate evaluation in this context, especially since one aim at this stage in the WYRED cycle is to look at ways in which the outputs of the research done by the participants may be of interest to society or policy makers. The deliverable is therefore undergoing a process of revision, although only the existing instruments are to be used in the first cycle.

## 5 Valorisation

### 5.1 WP8 Dissemination and sustainability

The valorisation work in WYRED has been progressing appropriately with respect to the definition of procedures and strategies. The graphic design of the project and the website are appropriate and of good quality, as is the initial promotional video. The project also has an appropriate technological infrastructure to support the dissemination work. The website permits publication in each of the partner languages and has an infrastructure that supports blogging by each partner and a global blog in English. There is also an appropriate social media infrastructure with accounts in Twitter and Instagram, and an automated system for the generation of newsletters. The project also has a community in the institutional repository of GRIAL group at the University of Salamanca which will ensure that project publications comply with H2020 open access requirements, and a public community in Zenodo<sup>1</sup>, to ensure visibility and interoperability with the EU OpenAire initiative.

The valorisation plan created at the start of the project is of a very good quality, with good ideas for activities and events proposed on a good potential network of contacts. Partners have engaged across the consortium in dissemination, especially since the networking itself constitutes a form of dissemination; however, the full range of actions proposed in the valorisation plan has not been implemented fully. Though the need to concentrate on developing the first WYRED cycle, and perhaps the natural lack of emphasis on dissemination in the first year of a project may explain this, more work needs to be done. In particular, though partners have been blogging about their activity in WYRED, there is a need to generate content that can be used to publicise the activity of the project across a wide range of media, and it is important that partners engage more fully in this activity. The valorisation strategy is of good quality but to come alive it requires a greater degree of commitment by the partners. It is very important to recognise that this cannot be simply delegated to one partner since any one partner's knowledge of the details of the work of other partners will always be limited. It is possible that further systematisation of dissemination activity, above and beyond what has actually been defined so far, would be useful. The original proposal for the rotation of social media responsibilities could perhaps be revisited.

There is also a need to recognise more fully that the work of networking and the work of valorisation involve very similar processes, especially as in many cases the objective of valorisation is to encourage people to join the network. There is a need to improve these processes both at local levels and across the partnership, and to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://zenodo.org/communities/wyred> currently 39 public documents





recognise the potential value of valorisation activities on social media in attracting new participants to the project.

## 6 Management

### 6.1 WP9 Project management

The management has in general responded well, providing help where necessary and when questions are asked. The project handbook is of good quality with a useful collection of templates and materials for the project to standardise documents and processes. The tools that the project uses are generally acceptable, and the organisation of meetings has been efficient. Though it was felt that at the first two project meetings more time could have been devoted to general discussion of the objectives and strategies involved in the project, rather than focusing on information transmission that could be undertaken by other means, the third meeting was felt by the majority of partners to have been exceptionally valuable and fruitful, promoting very useful discussion of the key issues involved in the project.

An aspect that caused some comment in the evaluation process is the planning of work. Throughout the first year there have been difficulties in meeting deadlines, partly due to the scheduling complications already mentioned. At present, the project works to single deadlines on work packages. This requires an agility of response that is not always feasible. Planning is currently organised through the tool in the Redmine platform. Most partners feel this tool is too complex. Up to now the onus of ensuring deadline compliance has been on the coordinator, but it is recommended that each WP leader plans more granular stages in the process of development of any particular workflow to allow partners to plan ahead. This will require clear discussion of what is expected in relation to each deliverable, and more effective monitoring with appropriate and timely reminders.

In addition to this, there is a need for a clearer process in the provision of feedback and comments to documents. The documentation of the project needs to set out decision-making processes and governance more clearly to inform communication and timeframes, and particularly the degree of autonomy that partners have in relation to their tasks. These issues gave rise at the start of the project to some tensions between partner staff and the management, particularly around communication. These derive in part from differences in organisational cultures that have to a large extent now been solved, though it is felt by some that the style of management could be more flexible and tolerant of differences, in line with the spirit of the project, though it is important to balance this against the need to ensure the fulfilment of the project milestones.

### 6.2 WP9 Collaboration and communication

Communication and collaboration is working well within the project. All partners seem committed and enthusiastic, and in many cases proud to be part of the project. There has been a process of acculturation as

partners become used to different experiences in working styles. As partners have got to know each other it has become easier to work together. While some partners have had some difficult situations, and there has been some tension particularly in relation to the meeting of deadlines, it is felt that actions have been taken to remedy this, and that things will function better going forward.

### 6.3 WP10 Quality and Evaluation

Quality and Evaluation in WYRED have proceeded according to plan, though with a slight delay in the production of this Quality and Evaluation report to take into account the results of the third project meeting and developments in WP3. Another area that suffered delay is the creation of the Advisory Board. This delay was due to the fact that the key member invited requested to postpone until after the summer, but then due to changes in her circumstances, had to pull out. Since then however, the Advisory Board has been constituted, and it will have its first meeting in January 2018.

The view of the partners is that progress in this WP has been useful for the discussion of the work done and to reflect on the challenges involved and the improvements that can be made, individually and collectively, to further the progress of WYRED.

## 7 Conclusions and recommendations

The WYRED project is progressing adequately. Though it has faced several important challenges related to the nature of the work it proposes in its first year, and these have caused delays in the work, these challenges have been successfully addressed and the consortium is in a good position to consolidate the WYRED approach and generate valuable results as the project moves forward. The final section of this report provides a list of key recommendations, though some are simply reminders.

### 7.1 Summary of recommendations

AREA	RECOMMENDATION
OVERALL	The project timeline has been updated so that it reflects more appropriately the rhythms of young people’s lives. It would be valuable to make this official, and the description should take into account the need for built-in flexibility.
OVERALL	There is a need to improve these processes both at local levels and across the partnership, and to recognise the potential value of valorisation activities on social media in attracting new participants to the project.
WP1	Attention needs to be given to the ethical requirements set out in WP1 as the second cycle progresses, and as the platform becomes part of everyday activity in WYRED.
WP1	The updating of the process handbook is an area that will need to be considered soon while the lessons learnt from the first cycle are still fresh.
WP2	Though appropriate attention is being paid to diversity and inclusion in WYRED, it will be important to continue to ensure that the diversity criteria are appropriately implemented by all partners.
WP3	Going forward, it is important to emphasise the role of the partners in committing to the use of the platform as a key element of participation in WYRED and helping the users to engage with it.

WP3	It will be important to ensure the presence in the platform of engaging activities, and partner commitment to facilitating and guiding the activities will be a vital factor to bear in mind.
WP4	An important task that needs to be addressed in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle is the need to develop a more extensive and coherent engagement strategy that reflects and respects the different ways of working in different youth sectors. All partners need to be involved in this.
WP4	The manifesto has good potential for promoting engagement and as a dissemination tool, it should be revisited.
WP4	Increasingly it will be necessary to understand networking in WYRED as a continuous process.
WP4	Thought needs to be given to the language used in the different contexts of the project.
WP5	Work needs to be done to provide a greater degree of detail in some reports since this is vital for the analysis of the dialogues.
WP5	International networking for the first cycle which has been delayed, and should be completed as soon as possible.
WP8	There is a need for partners to engage more fully in the production of content relating to their activities, in order to publicise the project.
WP9	It is recommended that each WP leader plans more granular stages in the process of development of any particular workflow to allow partners to plan ahead. This will require clear discussion of what is expected in relation to each deliverable and more effective monitoring with appropriate and timely reminders.
WP9	There is a need for a clearer process in the provision of feedback and comments to documents.
WP9	The documentation of the project needs to set out decision-making processes and governance more clearly to inform communication and timeframes, and particularly the degree of autonomy partners have in relation to their tasks.



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