



netWorked Youth Research for Empowerment in the Digital society

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Advisory Board Meeting 3

Minutes

WP10_D10.4



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1. Introduction

The WYRED project (netWorked Youth Research for Empowerment in the Digital society) is a 3-year project funded by the European Commission Horizon 2020 INEQUAL programme. It runs from November 2016 to October 2019, with 9 partners from 7 European countries (listed below). This document is the third of a set of six that minute the meetings of the project Advisory Board.

1.1 Overview of WYRED

1.1.1 Project summary

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 (García-Peñalvo, 2016b, 2017; García-Peñalvo & Kearney, 2016).

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 (Griffiths et al., 2017).

1.1.2 Partners

1	UNIVERSIDAD DE SALAMANCA (USAL)	Spain
2	OXFAM ITALIA ONLUS (OXFAM)	Italy
3	PYE GLOBAL (PYE)	UK
4	ASIST OGRETIM KURUMLARI A.S. (DOGA SCHOOLS)	Turkey
5	EARLY YEARS - THE ORGANISATION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN LBG (EARLY YEARS)	UK
6	YOUTH FOR EXCHANGE AND UNDERSTANDING INTERNATIONAL AISBL (YEU)	Belgium
7	MOVES (MOVES)	Austria
8	THE BOUNDARIES OBSERVATORY C.I.C	UK



	(BOUNDARIES)	
9	TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY (TAU)	Israel

1.1.3 The workplan

The project workplan involves 10 work packages. The first of these involves the definition of the different processes involved in the research cycle, and the second is dedicated to the preparation and implementation throughout the project of the inclusion strategy, 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, After these first three preparatory WPs. The next 5 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 will explore the themes 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 different 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 artefact 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 an association.

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).

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

2 The WYRED Advisory Board

2.1 Introduction - Quality and Evaluation in WYRED

The activity that will take place within WYRED, specifically the WYRED research cycle, involves its own specific evaluation and interpretation process in which the outputs of the cycle will be subject to scrutiny and assessment. It is there, in WP7, that we work with the young people participating

to decide what outcomes should be shared and what stakeholders and social groups they might be shared with. This also helps the consortium ascertain whether the research cycle developed is producing useful and valuable results for society.

The focus of the work in WP10, though related to that work, is distinctive in that 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. WP10 has one dimension which involves an internal evaluation by the partners of the progress of the project, which could principally be characterised as a process of group reflection.

The other dimension is the external evaluation of the project. Apart from the informal processes where WYRED is seen by external stakeholders who then “evaluate” it by expressing interest in its outputs etc which is the true measure of impact, WYRED has three external lenses trained on the work:

1. the official European review process, in which the reviewers are employed by the Commission to examine the progress and outputs of the project,
2. the External Independent Ethics Advisor, in which the review is subcontracted by the consortium to examine the ethical dimension of the project.
3. the WYRED Advisory Board, which is the focus of this document.

2.2 The Advisory Board

The WYRED Advisory Board is defined in the proposal in the following way:

“The last body involved in the management and quality processes in the WYRED project is the WYRED Advisory Board. This will have 3 members, invited by the partners. The role of this Board is to monitor the work of the project and its progress and act as a friendly critical eye, helping the consortium to keep the work on track and achieve its objectives. The aim is that membership of this Board will be heterogeneous with actors from different contexts, and it will meet online every six months, and attend a project meeting once a year in order to engage directly with the consortium.”

2.2.1 The Advisory Board schedule

The creation of the Advisory Board was subject to some delay (described in the document D10.2 which minutes the first Advisory Board meeting) but the first meeting took place in January 2018 and the second in April.

The original schedule proposed for Advisory Board meetings was re-organized so that in the first semester of 2018 there are two online meetings and one face to face meeting, which took place in Bath, UK on June 18th 2018. At this point the meetings are back on schedule, with one face to face in Istanbul at the end of 2018, and one online and one face to face in 2019.

This document constitutes the minutes of the third meeting of the Advisory Board which took place on 18th June 2018.

2.2.2 The make-up of the Advisory Board

As the proposal states, the Advisory Board is made up of 3 members. These are:

- Jordi Jubany, independent teacher, anthropologist and trainer from Barcelona, Spain with a focus on education and digital culture.
- Phillipp Ikrath, researcher and board member at the Institute for Youth Culture Research, Vienna, Austria.
- Brikena Xhomaqi, director of the EU Lifelong Learning Platform, based in Brussels, Belgium

3 The third Advisory Board meeting

3.1 Objectives and structure of the meeting

The second WYRED Advisory Board meeting was held at the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution, Queen Square, Bath UK on 18th June, from 9 am till 5 pm. The meeting coincided with a meeting of the project consortium which continued on the two following days.

3.1.1 Structure of the meeting

The meeting was structured around the working groups into which the project has been organised since the EC review in January. These are WG1 – The scope of WYRED, WG2 - The WYRED space, WG3 – WYRED and society and WG4 – WYRED as research. After initial presentations by each partner, focusing on the work they have done and their future plans, as this was the first time they met face to face with the Board, the meeting aimed to focus on each of these groups, though it transpired that aspects relating to WG1 came up in all the discussions which were rich and considered very helpful by the partners.

3.1.2 Participants

Advisory Board – Brikena Xhomaqi, Phillip Ikrath, Jordi Jubany

Partners – Nick Kearney (BOUNDARIES), Panagiotis Chatzimichail (YEU), Areta Sobieraj (OXFAM ITALIA), Aaron Hauptmann (TAU), Mary O'Reilly (EY), Mairead McMullen (EY), Sabine Zauchner (MOVES), Danny Arati (DOGA), Zuhail Yilmax (DOGA), Anna Renau (PYE) Coordinator (USAL) unable to be present due to illness.

3.2 Outcomes of the meeting

3.2.1 Introduction

The comments made by the Board members during the meeting are presented in this section.

3.2.2 Partners introductions

The meeting began with introductions of each of the partners who outlined the work that they have done in each country, and the work that they aim to do in the second half of the project. Through these presentations and the ensuing discussion, a series of issues were identified that need consideration in the coming months.

- First among these is the issue of the digital society aspect of the project, and to what extent the topics chosen by young people in the dialogues and their research projects are

appropriate to the nature of the project with its declared focus on the digital society. It was observed that this is not just a question of the topics, but it also has to do with the approach that has been implemented, particularly in cycle one which is very much an “analogue” approach, and non-spontaneous. In contrast to this it was also commented that there is a social inclusion dimension to this, in the sense that the digital cannot simply be introduced into every aspect of life, and degrees of digital sophistication vary substantially among different young users - however much the vast majority may have access to digital technology, their practices are heterogeneous, and in particular there is tension between passive digital consumption and digital activism. It was suggested that those who are largely consumers of content through digital media may be less well-prepared to participate in WYRED than those who actively question the nature of their use and of the content they use. It was suggested that there is a need to address these different levels of digital skills as a diversity issue and look at how to manage that. It was also questioned whether the partners themselves require training in digital activism in order to participate more effectively in the online activities proposed. It was suggested that a greater and more explicit focus on what the use of technology actually means for young people would be valuable. In short there is a need to define more clearly what “digital” means in WYRED (in WG1)

- Secondly, contrasting with this digital focus it was also pointed out that although society is increasingly digital in all walks of life this cannot be simply assumed. Some things require human contact and decision-making made by people for people. We should not lose sight of that, or the risk of excluding people.
- The conversation also identified a series of challenges related to finding new groups of young participants and perhaps new target groups, and identifying new stakeholders.
- It was also suggested that there is a need to simplify our activities in the second cycle and focus on articulating the core arc of dialogue – research – interpretation in a more holistic way.
- Another challenge is the tension between the freedom which allows the participants to choose their own topics, and the focus on digital society in the project. How can the presence of the digital aspect be ensured? It was also discussed whether it would be useful to attempt to guide decisions towards the issues that particularly concern policy-makers, and look for potential connections between their considerations and youth concerns, though it was also commented that this might lead to the imposition of existing policy agendas.
- Some reflection also took place at this point regarding the platform. In particular, its role and relevance in the project. It was questioned why communication in the project has to take place through this platform, especially since it is a space that does not facilitate communication very well. It was also questioned why it is a closed space, which may actually militate against young voices being heard or even articulated (Why should I speak

if no one will hear me?) While the ethical considerations that guided the decisions taken in relation to the platform design are clear, there was debate about the extent to which these may be impeding greater interaction within the project. These issues were discussed in more detail later in the day.

3.2.3 WG4 - WYRED as Research

After the partner introductions the meeting moved to focus on each of the four working groups in turn, the first was WG4. After a brief presentation of the working group and the rationale of the move towards working groups to articulate the work, the conversation focused on each of the phases of the WYRED research cycle, raising a variety of issues under each heading.

3.2.3.1 Social dialogues

- A key issue related to the value of the dialogues for young people, it was pointed out that there are in fact few opportunities for this kind of open face-to-face dialogue for young people in society today and that this is something that should be borne in mind as an attractor. There is a need perhaps to strengthen this aspect of the project particularly in the online dimension.
- Similarly, the dialogues themselves are of great value to 3rd parties, including policymakers and the issues and debates that ensue from them can be framed as outputs of the project and furthermore contribute to the positioning of WYRED as a reference point for those who are interested in the relationship of young people with issues related to the digital society.
- This also provides reflection on the way we understand outputs in the project. We have often construed outputs as the recommendations that occur at the end of the cycle, but in fact there are interesting results coming out of all the different stages of the cycle: the dialogues, the research questions, the research activities proposed, the artefacts generated and the stories of the research processes and course the recommendations themselves. It would be valuable to make more use of these emergent outputs than we do currently.
- This in turn raises the issue of our harvesting techniques and how we gather and present the information and insights that emerge from the dialogues. The issue of reporting is something that was returned to later in the consortium meeting.
- Lastly given this recognition of the intrinsic value of the dialogues as opposed to the value simply as a part of an ongoing process, we need to think further about how to sustain groups and participation and manage shifting permutations of young people, particularly

in international dialogues. There is clearly potential for variations, now that the baseline characteristics are clear after Cycle 1.

3.2.3.2 [Delphi survey](#)

- A in the case of the dialogues the Delphi is increasingly a project activity that has moved beyond being a motor for the conversation, that is simply a step in the chain of events, to being of interest in its own right, though it continues to generate outputs that can be used in the dialogues when necessary.
- It is generating useful outputs that are of value to 3rd parties such as policymakers, given that it identifies the main topics/areas of interest for young people. The potential for creating a regular output that is comparable from year to year could be of value in positioning WYRED as a reference, analogous to NMC Horizon reports in the field of education technology for example.

3.2.3.3 [Research activity](#)

- A key issue that was brought up in relation to the research activity is how to decide what constitutes a project. In other words, at what point can activity that young people are undertaking within WYRED be considered a “research project”. It was however observed that this is only an issue from the perspective of funding. For the purposes of justifying the project activity it is necessary to count projects, and it is worth remembering that although this aspect needs to be taken into account, these requirements can limit the project. It was recommended that we allow more heterogeneity of activity and try to avoid “quantitative fetishism”. Running counter to this was the comment that it is necessary, if value is not ascribed numerically, to work out other ways to accredit value and locate the usefulness of the work; a set of qualitative criteria.
- The outcome of this discussion was that it is necessary to define a quality assurance framework, particularly in terms of understanding what research is in the context of WYRED. Though this is a concern particularly of the evaluation and interpretation phase these criteria would form a framework for the whole arc of activity within the WYRED cycle, from dialogue through to interpretation.
- It was also commented that the most effective use of the platform has been in relation to the research projects and their presentation, and that while this is useful the platform should not be limited to being a database of projects. In relation to this the toolkit might include more extensive considerations in relation to the facilitation of the projects and products in the online space.

3.2.3.4 Evaluation & Interpretation

- Considerations in relation to this part of the process focused on the fact that the emphasis so far has been on evaluation. The focus has been the process, and whether young people find it fulfilling, rather than on the products. This has led to a situation where there are only a limited number of actual recommendations coming out of the research projects at present. This needs to be addressed.
- The key issue that arose is that it is clear that the interpretation aspect of the project requires further thought. It needs to be focused on criteria of value and the identification of what is valuable in the research that has been done and therefore what is shareable. The discussion focused on how this might be done.
- One suggestion was that the evaluation questionnaires be further fine-tuned to ensure that there is a focus on interpretation of the value of what has been done in order to extract actual recommendations.
- It was however also recommended that the consortium consider streamlining reporting and interpretation processes across the arc the challenge is to identify exactly what information should be gathered and how it should be extracted. The relationship between this process and the intrinsic value of participation in WYRED, related to WG1, was also pointed out. If interpretation becomes a more continuous process it is perhaps easier for a young person to identify the meaning and value for them of participation in the cycle earlier. This may also help to promote and sustain engagement.
- The questions that arose in this part of the meeting pointed to the need for clear articulation all the way through the arc and better connections between the different phases. The project has already moved away from the silo thinking involved in a work package structure, to create a working group that covers the whole cycle, and the discussion indicated that there is a recognition now that the different phases of the cycle (officially covered by work packages 5, 6 and 7) need to ask similar questions, which further justifies the need for amalgamation of reporting across the arc.

3.2.4 WG3 - WYRED and society

The next stage of the meeting focused on working group 3 which focuses on the project's relationship to society. This covers both how people are attracted to the project and how it is disseminated and later sustained.

- The discussion covered issues such as the need for better dissemination to give voice to the project and how to reach more stakeholders and youth groups. Thought was given to who we can involve in the digital world to promote WYRED, and the need to be more

active with respect to national blogs/news/events. Related to this is a need to identify the right channels to promote the outcomes of the research projects to the right stakeholders and policymakers. The question of how to give more voice to young people through the project, for example possibly through the use of social media, was also raised.

- The key critique in this area was that we are too dispersed and that it is unclear who our target group is. It was strongly recommended that we focus on defining the target groups since the nature of our communication (vocabulary, resources, images, etc) will depend on the target group we are trying to reach. Simply leaving the target group as “young people” is inappropriate since this is too diverse and heterogeneous a group.
- In addition to this it is actually necessary to work out exactly who we are working for. Is it the young people or the policymakers? If it is both, what is the relationship and the relative emphasis to be given to each. This needs to be clarified, presumably in the work of WG 1.
- It was commented that the baseline concerns and the design of the project, with its focus on participation and social justice, are very much middle and upper-class preoccupations. It is quite likely that there are social groups, particularly disadvantaged young people’s groups that are not particularly excited or engaged by the concerns of WYRED, or convinced of the value of the outcomes for them. This has implications for how they are reached.
- It is also important to recognise that since these concerns around participation and justice are common among “elitist” youth groups, similar initiatives exist and it would be important to do an assessment of other possibly competing initiatives as part of any feasibility study related to sustainability plans.
- It is necessary to identify the added value of WYRED, does it offer something radically new, or should we be attempting to complement other projects and organisations who are doing similar things. It is likely that for young people’s groups, our closeness to power may be an attractor.
- Another important issue in relation to sustainability is the question of what we want to make sustainable. Is it the platform, the method, the research projects themselves, the recommendations that come out of it? The challenges involved in ensuring continuity of the project were discussed. Centring the value on the platform may involve financial challenges issues around ownership and maintenance and possibly a need for sponsorship. The method may be something that can be formalised and packaged for different stakeholders but there are many competing methods for engagement of young people. It is possible that the emergent WYRED community can grow, and some kind of alliance around the topic could be formed, but issues already mentioned in relation to sustained participation of young people would need to be addressed.
- Sustainability also requires further work on how we fit into the wider conversation around young people and digital society and who we relate to. It is necessary to look at other

existing projects to find possible alliances and partners. We also need close relationships with influential decision-makers, possibly however only one or two who become references for us. It is also vital to work out to whom we would be offering the project at the end of the funding period, once outside the aegis of the EC.

- After some discussion, three different strategies were proposed:
 - Strategy 1 to broaden and include the less privileged. This requires that the project to be more marketable. Those young people live in a market and to get their attention WYRED needs to be much funnier, much more dynamic, much more immediate etc. This might be a challenge for this consortium
 - Strategy 2 would get rid of the adults in the project as far as possible, as they have their own agendas the focus would be on collaboration with organisations run by young people and on promoting WYRED as a tool for them. These organisations tend to be elite organisations which require a different approach to work with the less privileged, and perhaps more feasible for this particular consortium.
 - Strategy 3 comprises different layers of intensity of participation. At the most committed level people already in the activist dynamic, then other layers for people from other backgrounds.
- This discussion raised the issue of inclusiveness and whether we are really reaching those who are not in schools. There is a need to adapt the project and perhaps try to play with the WYRED approach to fit these groups, through the possibility of spin-off projects funded by Erasmus plus (Youth or Social Inclusion) or others such as ESF or structural funds.

3.2.5 WG2 - The WYRED Space

- The central issue discussed in relation to the WYRED platform (García-Peñalvo, 2016a; García-Peñalvo & Durán-Escudero, 2017; García-Peñalvo, García-Holgado, Vázquez-Ingelmo, & Seoane-Pardo, 2018) was the question of engagement. How do we bring young people in and give them easy access to conversations and ownership of them. Youth participation is very unstable and this makes it a challenge to keep the platform activity alive and running.
- The discussion revolved especially around the question of what young people get out of the platform and what reasons they might have for engaging with it.
- The general feeling in the comments was that the platform is not currently achieving this engagement. It was felt particularly that the platform is too serious a place and that is unclear that anyone is having any fun in it. It is quite cerebral and seems to lack an emotional dimension.

- While the origins and rationale for the nature of the platform are clear, it was mentioned that the nature of a safe space or environment (it was pointed out that this is not necessarily a term that young people relate to) includes not only technical security and safety aspects but also as a space where people feel comfortable and willing to share their thoughts.
- It was felt that there is a need for improvements. Some are technical, but there is also a need to think about how the platform is used.
- Several suggestions for improvement revolved around the need to make participation meaningful. One was to provide examples of what the outcome of participation in a conversation might look like, and what follows on from that participation. There is a need for accountability and clarity around transfer. Young people need to see that we are actually communicating results, recommendations to someone/somewhere. Put simply they need to see that we are doing what we said, making their voices heard.
- In relation to this it was pointed out again at this point that a closed space, however safe, may not be perceived as the best place to be heard, and that this may be affecting engagement.
- As well as showing how we share the conversation outputs beyond the platform, another option is to bring external guests in to give their thoughts/opinion on projects, and the project as a whole, particularly people that have a story to tell, who can inspire.
- It was also suggested that it would be valuable to make young people part of the process to improve the project/platform, perhaps framed as ambassadors.
- Another aspect that was commented on is the degree to which discussions need to be time limited to ensure focus. More of a sense of “event” around each conversation might be valuable.
- It was also strongly recommended that the consortium undergo online facilitation training, for example in the Focused Conversation approach, perhaps with the help of the IFA: international Facilitators Association

3.2.6 WG1 - The scope of WYRED

Unfortunately, there was not time to focus on WG1, though it was commented that there were many pertinent issues arising from the rest of the groups that could feed the work of WG1.

3.2.7 The next meeting

it was agreed that the next face to face meeting would coincide with the next WYRED meeting in mid-November in Istanbul. The date for this is still to be confirmed at the time of writing. Towards

mid- October, an asynchronous discussion will take place to decide exactly what the agenda for that meeting will be in order to ensure that maximum benefit can be derived.

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