



netWorked Youth Research for Empowerment in the Digital society

Advisory Board Meeting 4

Minutes

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1. Introduction

The WYRED project (netWorked Youth Research for Empowerment in the Digital society) (García-Peña, 2016b, 2017, 2018; García-Peña & Kearney, 2016; Griffiths et al., 2017) 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 (García-Holgado & García-Peña, 2018; García-Peña, 2016a; García-Peña & Durán-Escudero, 2017; García-Peña, García-Holgado, Vázquez-Ingelmo, & Seoane-Pardo, 2018) 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.

1.1.2 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 (BOUNDARIES)	UK

9	TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY (TAU)	Israel
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1.1.3 The work plan

The project work plan 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, the second in April, and the third in June 2018 in Bath, UK.

The original schedule proposed for Advisory Board meetings was re-organized so that in 2018 there are two online meetings and two face to face meeting, which took place in Bath, UK on June 18th 2018 and the other in Istanbul, Turkey on 19th November, 2018. In this way, the meetings are back on schedule, with one online and one face to face in 2019, the former in the last month of the project, and the latter In Belfast, UK on the 11th March 2019.

This document constitutes the minutes of the fourth meeting of the Advisory Board which took place on 19th November 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.
- Phillip 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 fourth Advisory Board meeting

3.1 Objectives and structure of the meeting

The fourth WYRED Advisory Board meeting was held at the DOGA Schools Beykoz Campus in Istanbul, Turkey on 19th November, from 9 am till 5 pm. The meeting coincided with a meeting of the project consortium which continued on the two following days. The overall objective of the meeting was to present the work done since the last meeting, and the strategies for the final year.

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 2018. 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, the meeting aimed to focus on each of these groups. A particular focus of the meeting was the responses of the consortium to previous recommendations by the Advisory Board and the EC evaluators, these 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), Tamara Gojkovic (YEU), Areta Sobieraj (OXFAM ITALIA), Mary O'Reilly (EY), Mairead McMullen (EY), Danny Arati (DOGA), Zuhal Yilmaz (DOGA), Paul Butler (PYE) Alicia Garcia Holgado, Fran Garcia Penalvo (USAL). Representatives of TAU and MOVES were unable to be present.

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 last year of the project second half of the project. Besides activities related to dissemination and networking, technical issues and work on the preparation of the WYRED Association, much of the focus of the work of each partner had been on completing the second research cycle. At this point the Advisory Board members to comment in later sections of the meeting.

3.2.3 WG4 - WYRED as Research

After the partner presentations the meeting moved to focus on each of the four working groups in turn, the first of which was WG4. First there was a brief presentation of the current status of the research cycle, and its evolution was described. From what had been initially a fairly complex set of activities in the first cycle, the approach has now been streamlined quite effectively and is more accessible. This was done to improve the potential transferability and adoption of the approach. Partners are now very familiar with the WYRED cycle and have all demonstrated its value with local groups in their different contexts. The challenge now is to achieve the same at international level. After this, the conversation focused on each of the phases of the WYRED research cycle, with discussion of issues as they emerged.

3.2.3.1 Social dialogues

The social dialogues (Cycle 2) functioned well, a wide diversity of participants engaged in the processes, and a valuable set of perspectives were shared. A substantial number of young people in Cycle 2 (439) across 7 European countries, and a wide range of ages and socio-economic backgrounds, had been given an opportunity to share their views and explore their diverse understandings of issues that concern them.

More than 50 potential research questions were identified under the 15 Delphi themes and areas of interest had included globalisation and extension of migration, how we use social media, targeting of information, self-representation online, homologation -marketing, multinationals economic versus political in an online context, risk, responsibility, and safety when using ICT and online world, behaviour on the internet, being a good digital citizen, social networks as a catalyst for hate, robots and their impact on work and cyberbullying. In response to the EC review, this range of themes has been narrowed down to a set of digitally focussed themes.

With a view to the future international online interactions training is planned on online facilitation for the partners that require it, and there are plans to organise a schedule of online events and specific collaborative work between WYRED groups from different countries, which is expected to contribute to the wider impact of the project and to the value gatekeepers and children and young people ascribe to the project

A central issue that arose from the discussion was that the themes of the research projects are too dispersed, and the work therefore lacks thematic focus. This reflected the considerations of the EC reviewers in their report. The Advisory Board suggested that despite the new focus on digital themes there was still a risk of a lack of focus and that it would be valuable to choose one broad theme and focus on that.

In addition to this it was observed that though it is clear from the work done that the methodology has been shown to work for young people it is important to recognise that attention from policy makers will depend on the numbers online that are achieved, as well as the activity itself, and achieving the political attention requires a focused set of themes. The need for focus in terms of the themes was also related in the discussion to the need for greater connection between themes and projects in order to achieve fruitful aggregation later in the cycle that can identify themes across projects.

Further comments focused on the online dialogues that are being planned for the final year. There was emphasis on the importance of ensuring that online activity is sufficiently engaging for children and young people to take part in, and the need to allow dialogue to emerge. Linguistic issues were also discussed, it is necessary to make sure that there are translation resources and if possible, interpreters when working with diverse groups of children and young people from different countries within one group. Commitment to use of the platform was also mentioned, as well as the need to improve registration for children under 14, and a need for these to have a safe space within the platform.

It was also commented that as a result of discussions in the previous advisory board meeting around the fact that the dialogues themselves are of great value to 3rd parties, including policymakers there had been reflection on the way we understand outputs in the project. The dialogues are now considered as not just generators of research projects, but as sources of useful insight in themselves. 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, and these are currently being collected for presentation in a WYRED Insights document that captures the value of WYRED to share all the different insights with policy makers and others. This can 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 was felt to be a positive step

3.2.3.2 Delphi survey

The Delphi work was presented (in the absence of TAU) through a Powerpoint presentation. The debate around it also centered on the focus necessary for the project. It was commented that the issues asked about vary in terms of their granularity, some are quite broad, while others are very specific. Furthermore, some are subsets of others. The question of education as a general issue that is at the root of many others was raised. It was recommended to adopt a more focused set of questions for the next Delphi.

Another issue was the nature of the questions, focused on future scenarios. It was commented that research shows that the majority of the young see their own personal future in a positive light and that of society in a negative light. The questions will therefore tell more about the way

they project, than about their current views. It was suggested it would be useful to supplement the Delphi with focus groups and qualitative studies. It was also observed that a good percentage of the participants in the project represent just one part of the young people of Europe, and that to make the work more relevant it would be important to focus on the less privileged. Related to this it was commented that subjects such as environment and LGBTQ are “luxury” subjects, the preserve of the well-off.

3.2.3.3 Research activity

While the 75 dialogues have produced over 100 research projects presented on the WYRED platform, it was observed that not all of these projects were relevant, some appear to be school science projects, and it would be valuable to ensure all the projects that interested visitors see do relate to the chosen themes, and involve the kind of social research that WYRED aims at. In the final year it will be important to ensure all the projects work together as a constellation of work around the selected thematic areas.

At this point it was also observed that there is a need to go beyond just doing the projects to do more thinking and reflecting, in order to identify what insights can be derived from each project and shared. In this sense there is also a need to fine tune reporting processes and show more clearly the linkage from dialogue, to research question to project to outputs and insights.

3.2.3.4 Evaluation & Interpretation

This aspect of the work is currently in the reporting stage. In recent months there has been a shift to a focus on the interpretation aspect of the project and the need to identify what is of value in the research that has been done and therefore what is shareable. The forthcoming deliverable which reports on the first cycle outputs includes a first section on evaluation of the experience by the children and young people, while the second section focuses on which aspects of the outputs of each project or group of projects are of especial value to the policymakers and the wider society. This second section will also be made into an Insights document which will be used as a basis for dissemination and networking activity in the final year, and as a key annual output of the WYRED Association. These developments were viewed as positive.

In relation to this it was commented that to facilitate this aspect of the work it would be important to further finetune the evaluation questionnaires to ensure that there is a focus on interpretation

of the value of what has been done in order to extract actual recommendations. The need to work more on streamlining reporting and interpretation processes across the arc of the research cycle was also mentioned. There is a need for clear articulation all the way through the arc and better connections between the different phases. Though the working group approach has shifted the project away from the silo thinking involved in a work package structure, there is a clear imperative to ensure that in each of the different phases of the cycle there is a similar focus on relevance and value.

3.2.4 WG2 – The WYRED Space

In relation to this aspect of the project, a range of issues were covered. Many of these dealt with technical issues that have been addressed, and others that remain complex, such as the need to deal better with children in the platform. Some content is inappropriate and there is a need to address not just the content itself (for example in discussions relating to gender and sexuality) but also in other cases questions of cognitive understanding of material and the degree to which the space is attractive for the younger age groups involved.

The other major issue discussed was the attractiveness of the platform and the degree to which of itself, with the resources available, it can promote engagement. The notion of a safe online space is an aspect that attracts children and young people but the platform itself cannot compete with the large existing social media spaces. It was reiterated that managing expectations is a key issue, but also that it is vital to ensure the activities proposed are actually attractive. Previously the advisory board commented that the platform is too serious a place and that is unclear that anyone is having any fun in it. It is also quite cerebral and seems to lack an emotional dimension. It continues to be important to bear this in mind. The challenge of keeping the platform activity energised and dynamic remains. While this is being addressed in the planning for the final year, the previous recommendations should be born in mind.

3.2.5 3. 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 ranged over issues such as the integration of

the work through the working groups, talked of dissemination and valorisation and then the WYRED Association.

3.2.5.1 Dissemination and networking

A key observation is that dissemination and networking now overlap in the project. There is now a common narrative, which should be emphasised and used. Furthermore, now that the manifesto has been updated it can be used to support this work. It was observed that the manifesto could be shorter still.

With regard to participation in events, it was emphasised that the question is not so much to interact with specific projects or events, as to form part of the conversations taking place in the different thematic areas we may focus on, and to position ourselves as experts in that area.

Related to this is the idea of building a network, it is important to think of this in terms not just of attracting people to WYRED as a pole of attraction but also making WYRED a key interlocutor or reference point. This increases the value of interacting with the project for other and makes the benefit of forming associations with WYRED more clear for other organisations.

3.2.5.2 The WYRED Association

This relates to the challenge in building the Association, the key challenge is to clearly identify the potential benefits for others of participation in the WYRED Association. While this was pending discussion at the meeting following the Advisory Board meeting, it was commented on as an aspect that needs to be very clear, and obvious to potential members of the Association. There was some discussion of different types of membership, and reflection on why individuals, as opposed to organisations, might join. If they are a stakeholder, do they create or consume, is their focus on participating in the process, or consuming the product. There may be different levels of membership and intermittency in terms of direct participation maybe (for example someone may be active when the subject of an activity is education, but a passive observer when the focus is more social)

The Advisory Board offered two possible strategies. The first of these is size, the aim is to be too big to ignore, this requires achieving a substantial mass of participants so that sheer weight of

numbers makes the project relevant. The current scale of the project, and the fact that it has proven to be a little more resource-intensive than anticipated, make this strategy inviable for the short to medium term.

The second strategy is novelty. Policy-makers frequently focus their attention on projects that are perceived as innovative in some way. In order to achieve this there is a need to be focused. The current list of around 15 digital topics is too broad, in order to make the project relevant for policy makers there is a need to narrow the focus and centre on one subject. This will allow the project to achieve a sufficient degree of interaction around the particular selected theme, and it will help participants derive a sense of purpose and direction in what they are doing in WYRED as it will be easier to perceive any particular project as part of a whole. The outputs will also be much more attractive and "sellable" due to this focus.

As regards the nature of the subject, it needs to be something convincing across the particular domain of digital society, and the work needs to be seen as delving deeper than others into that subject. The key notion is that of a lighthouse project, that illuminates a particular area and is itself a point of reference and guidance. It will be possible later, once this perception is consolidated, to widen the focus, but now there need is for narrowcast. On another note, given the central concept of empowerment for the digital society, it would be important to give more emphasis to the online aspect of the methodology.

The conversation also focused on the importance of the number of interactions. The focus of the project is on how children and young people interact and understand each other (and the digital world) in their different spaces. These are not the spaces that the public sector and policy makers inhabit. Children and young people do not inhabit the same communication channels. WYRED should be strategically connecting up the spaces in some way. There is a need to bring more people in such as members of youth organisations, and leverage the linkage between what WYRED focuses on and topics on the public agenda, especially that of the EU. Topics such as inclusion, promoting common values, tolerance, bullying, digital footprint, privacy and so on all have the potential to resonate in the policy sphere.

3.2.6 WG1 – The scope of WYRED

During this period of the project, since the previous meeting, not much of note had taken place so the presentations were short. The diversity work was explained and there were no comments on this aspect. As the time available was drawing to a close, the focus turned to an overview of the meeting.

The Board commented that more clarity is appearing now present, it is clear what works and what needs attention. While at the previous meeting there were still issues appearing, it is now easier to see the way forward. There is a need for a broad topic, with sub topics, and a focus on ways to make the work more appealing to children and young people, especially in the online activities. It will also be very important to use the momentum to build the network, and the excellent opportunity of the European elections in May 2019, to get more policy makers involved in WYRED activity. The notion of the digital society and its different aspects is high on the EU agenda and there is a good opportunity to use these platforms to get more support, and perhaps during this final year, in addition to the approach to work with children and young people, position ourselves as experts in virtual exchanges.

3.2.7 The next meeting

It was agreed that the next face to face meeting would coincide with the next WYRED meeting in early March in Belfast.

4 The fourth Advisory Board meeting

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