



netWorked Youth Research for Empowerment in the Digital society

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Second and Third Cycles Recommendations

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1. Introduction

The key objective of this report is to outline insights and recommendations as presented by the children and young people, who participated in the WYRED project (García-Peñalvo, 2016, 2017; García-Peñalvo & García-Holgado, 2019; García-Peñalvo & Kearney, 2016; Griffiths et al., 2017) during the final two cycles of the programme. Recommendations in this report are also based on feedback from facilitators and in some instances external stakeholders such as school principals and youth work managers who also participated in the evaluation phases of the WYRED projects.

An earlier report (Deliverable 7.5 on First Cycle Recommendations (WYRED Consortium, 2018a)) highlighted the emerging themes and project ideas that emerged during the first year of WYRED's operations. This report follows the format of the earlier report with updates and further reflection:

- Section 2 looks at the WYRED processes and how each phase allowed for the articulation of thematic responses as a starting point for the analysis.
- Section 3 looks at the thematic development of WYRED as driven and determined by the specific projects that were selected by children and young people over the three cycles,
- Section 4 examines each of these main themes through the lens of the research process, from the perspective of the children and young people, as well as the facilitators and their colleagues in the range of WYRED settings, with a focus on commentary and feedback from the research projects.
- Section 5 points to some key conclusions and insights in relation to the methodological process and its potential applications.

Through Cycles 1 to 3, facilitators noted recurring difficulties in terms of building the engagement of young participants in the evaluation activities associated with their project work. A set of evaluation tools and guides were developed and amended over each cycle, with a degree of flexibility offered to each partner and facilitator in relation to the optimal application of these tools in each setting. For instance, in working with primary school children in a formal classroom environment, the facilitators were constrained by the capacity of the children to consider certain levels of evaluation indicators associated with e.g. the wider use of the methodology elsewhere. Also, while students in a third level institute or young people in a youth centre were academically able to fully engage with the tool kit, they were often constrained by time limits. They were more focused on completing their research activities in

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their groups or individually than coming together to carry out detailed reviews of process and output. A key learning point, as discussed by all facilitators during their training, online discussion forums and webinars, related to the importance of allowing for a flexible approach to evaluation and review within the WYRED process. By implication, the data collected through this process is reflective of the how different groups and participants have achieved different levels of accomplishment with their research evaluation activities.

As per the earlier Recommendations Report, the aim to highlight the range of topics of research activities as developed by the young participants around the themes they have been exploring and learning about. In the following sections, these research questions are presented independently of the status and completion of their research process, whether they came out with a specific artefact or idea: the intention is to list all topics and projects that have been created. A specific focus is included on Cycle 3, where a more integrated approach to data collection was taken.

In order to have an overview of the numbers of engagements with the children and young people that have taken place through an outreach and social dialogue phase. To date, this has involved:

Activities	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Totals
Social Dialogue Sessions	32	76	50	156
Children and Young People Involved	550	538	657	1745
Research Projects	101	43	118	262
Children and Young People Involved	438	414	721	1603

Once the children and young people had been engaged through the social dialogue phases, facilitators have worked with the children and young people, using the WYRED Activity Toolkit to assist them in elaborating research questions and projects. Each of the 262 projects in turn generated a series of research artefacts over the course of the project cycles.

2. WYRED Processes and Phases

2.1 Social Dialogue Phase

During the social dialogue workshops and sessions during the second and third cycles, the most common WYRED themes addressed were associated with “Living on social media, living with stress” and “Access to reliable information, and fake news, media literacy”.

The feedback from these sessions often differed depending regarding on the extent to which the facilitators had spent more or less time working with the same groups. Of the 50 social dialogues held in Cycle 3, almost 70% were held with the same groups of children and young people. The remaining 30% tended to be organised as one off events, usually as a full day workshop. The more typical approach was to work with a group of children and young people over a number of sessions, whereby the WYRED themes could be presented and discussed in some detail, before moving onto the research phases. On average some 13 children and young people participated in each social dialogue. The highest proportion of these participants were aged between 14 and 19 years (45%), with the older cohort of participants aged over 20 making up 38% and the youngest group aged 9 to 13 years at 17%.

The children and young people indicated that they had perceived the process of dialogue and conversation as very important in developing a deeper understanding of digital society issues. The dialogues acted as a critical springboard for the participants to be able to move into the research phase with a clearer insight into the types of issues that are most relevant for their lives.

A key finding at this stage of the analysis that facilitators point to relates to the common conclusions and feedback that was presented across each of the settings where WYRED was implemented. For each cohort, the thematic focal points were consistently greeted with agreement in relation to how important they were as factors that shape the means and nature by which the children and young people relate to their online worlds.

2.2 Research Activity Phase

Over 1,100 children and young people participated in the research phase during Cycles 2 and 3, developing 161 research projects and associated artefacts. Participants from the social dialogue phase tended to continue their involvement within the WYRED process during each cycle, by taking up the opportunity to carry out research work. During phase 3, facilitators noted a multiplier effect when extra children and young people became involved in the research work.

Some of these participants had not been involved during the social dialogue phase. This is explained through the youth centre settings. Key stakeholders involved in youth groups and youth centres had experience of social dialogue workshops and sessions. Having been briefed and supported on how the research phases were to operate, they brought WYRED back to their local centres and spaces. These young people effectively acted as catalysts and trainers for their peers within their youth centres.

While not all research questions were successfully turned into projects, with almost 10% of questions not being developed into the more applied research phase during Cycles 2 and 3. On the other hand, for some groups of participants, research questions were developed into a series of further projects.

Facilitators maintained the WYRED approach from the social dialogue phase, whereby the children and young people were provided the forum to explore the WYRED themes and focus in on the particular areas that interested them. In order to define research questions, further sessions and workshops took place. Participants were supported to become more forensic at this stage. The themes required refinement and they were facilitated to ensure that their specific interests became a focus for further research. Participants worked either individually or in groups. In some instances, the class group worked together to develop a series of interlinked projects.

In other instances, a wide range of subjects were explored and research topics and themes outlined. Research processes were then examined. Participants were introduced to quantitative and qualitative techniques. Interviewing skills were introduced. Surveys were designed and datasets produced.

This wide range of methodological approaches contributed to the potential for triangulation of results across the partnership. The fact that such large numbers of children and young people were carrying out research using these varied tools and in such a wide range of settings, from the formal to the informal, only contributes to the validity of their findings and moves away from the potential anecdotic results in Cycle 1.

2.3 Interpretation Phase

This validation of the research results happened through the presentation, evaluation and interpretation phase. Participants used a range of means to present and validate their findings. Continuing the WYRED approach, they were given control over the research process. They were

also supported to interpret their findings and find the most appropriate means of presenting their results.

As a result of this empowering approach, participants in turn presented their projects to peers, parents, teachers, youth and community workers, local and national politicians, as well as other stakeholders from policy arenas. The sphere of influence of projects in each country was vast, with school and youth centre policies being altered as a result of the research work, new groups established to take on research findings within universities, new modules being added to teacher training courses, WYRED being added to school curricula and college induction courses. MEPs were lobbied and engaged within research cycles and other WYRED activities. Datasets and research instruments were shared across countries and settings.

As well as the ongoing presentation of research results, evaluation exercises were conducted with the children and young people and their teachers and youth workers. These exercises happened within all the varied WYRED settings and again this feedback becomes more significant given the fact that the format and focus of the evaluation was driven by the participants themselves. The facilitators employed a range of self-evaluative and flexible approaches and methods as appropriate. For some facilitators, a series of interviews were conducted. One facilitator described how they carried out this work: “The Principals and teachers within the schools were very positive about the WYRED project and the methodology introduced to the children was a very effective tool to capture their views and opinions. We interviewed stakeholders after the Showcase event and filmed interviews with 5 stakeholders.”

Other innovative and flexible approaches included age appropriate tools such as in working with the younger age groups, the children and young people were asked to indicate “One positive thing from being involved in the WYRED Project” and “What could we do better?” Verbal feedback was also collected through a range of methods, including tools such as target evaluations, “circle time” and collection of Post it notes on flipchart. Feedback from facilitators highlighted:

“The Dialogues engendered lively and energetic debate among young people – the themes presented by the facilitators were based on the Delphi questionnaire topics mainly – however other areas of interest outside the digital society were also discussed and raised as issues of priority. Some partners identified possible research questions/areas of foci under the prioritized themes.”

In order to collect more formal evaluative feedback, facilitators addressed the following 7 questions with their stakeholders, including principals, teachers, youth workers and others acting as gatekeepers in the formal and informal sectors, where WYRED has been applied.

1. Did participants perceive the WYRED project as inclusive?
2. Were the themes relevant?
3. Was understanding clarified through social dialogue process?
4. Did the social dialogue process allow voice to be heard?
5. Were participants satisfied with participation in process?
6. Were they satisfied with research activities as process?
7. Were they satisfied with research activities as outputs?

The results of this evaluation work were overwhelmingly positive. Over 80% of respondents answered 5 of the 7 questions in the affirmative. The key challenges tended to be associated with the time commitment involved in order to be able to deliver the WYRED process in full. The school or youth centre was often unable to manage the extra support requested or sometimes required by a child or young person, who was aiming to carry out extra work on their project.

In some instances, the projects completed were of such a high standard that they were entered into national competitions and student fairs, where some projects received awards from a scientific jury. In other cases, projects were presented by the students as part of youth delegations to national and European parliaments.

Feedback from stakeholders in Turkey indicated:

“We believe that two main lessons can be learned from our experience with the WYRED project. The first lesson is that if we aim to give freedom to children and young people, space and support to work on ideas, we need to accept that sometimes they may want to take the projects in a different direction than we expected. This allows them to fully apply their creativity and ingenuity, supported by their passion. If we were to enforce a specific direction, even within WYRED, we would fall short of the very principles of WYRED, i.e. that children and young people can achieve great things for society if given the freedom and support to develop their potential. We believe that the number and the quality of the projects produced support the above statement.”

3. Research topics and themes

3.1 Participatory Research

Through all three cycles of the WYRED project, the consortium has facilitated a wide range of exploratory research activities, during which almost 2000 children and young people have investigated and examined issues that concern them in the digital arena. They have been supported to do this through creative projects (e.g. prototyping solutions following an ideation session to tackle pre-defined challenges) or more conventional research projects. Through this iterative process, using a wide array of research instruments and approaches, the research topics coalesced around similar themes.

The interaction both on the dedicated platform (García-Holgado & García-Peñalvo, 2018; García-Peñalvo & Durán-Escudero, 2017; García-Peñalvo & García-Holgado, 2019; García-Peñalvo, García-Holgado, Vázquez-Ingelmo, & Seoane-Pardo, 2018; García-Peñalvo, Vázquez-Ingelmo, & García-Holgado, 2019; García-Peñalvo, Vázquez-Ingelmo, García-Holgado, & Seoane-Pardo, 2019; WYRED Consortium, 2018b) as well as through other media further deepened this engagement so that as well as creating new research artefacts and results, the children and young people were also discussing and sharing their reflections on how the digital world was affecting them in each of their countries and settings. Each group that is working on a research activity administers its own space on the platform to record and review work progress. Participants have also made use of the platform to engage in transnational discussions and debates both asynchronously and synchronously.

Through the initial cycles of the WYRED project, the children and young people were the key drivers of the thematic focus. Their voice was facilitated to articulate the direction of their research interests. The focus of the research activities has been consistently trained on the lens of the digital society and how they are relating to its reach in their lives.

Before detailing the range and extent of the research stories and projects, this section will present the manner in which the themes emerged clearly through the three cycles.

3.2 Developing Themes

The main themes that were of interest to the children and young people were surfaced through Cycle 1 and the Delphi process. The participants in this process were asked to describe the priorities for their lives in relation to the online world. They then used these priorities to guide

their discussions and social dialogue sessions. From these sessions and workshops, the common themes emerged and have been grouped accordingly across each cycle.

Emerging from the first cycle of activities, the children and young people had identified the following 11 themes and discussion points as important interests.

Cycle 1 Themes	
Internet & Security	Bullying
Internet & Social Media	Politics
Digital society/ world	Employment
Environment pollution	Culture and identity
Education	Wellbeing & Health
Self-image	

The children and young people were supported and facilitated to train their lens in a more targeted manner, allowing for the more specific themes to emerge. As the WYRED methodology was implemented again through the second cycle, facilitators encouraged the young people to explore a broader range of themes that were more and more connected to their digital lives.

Therefore during Cycle 2, these themes and priorities were shaped in order to bring a closer focus to the online world of the children and young people.

Cycle 2 Themes	
Self-image and its presentation online	Media literacy
Gender discrimination, and gender differences online	Impact of hyper-connectivity and IoE on the individual
Stereotyping in online contexts	Digital activism
Internet safety	Future of employment in a digital world
Internet privacy	Changes in education in a digital world
Cyber security	Tolerance of different cultures, and integration of migrants
Living on social media	Living with stress online
Access to reliable information, and fake news	Digital divide
New technologies and their impacts on different field in the future	Cyberbullying and online abuse

Through this iterative process of again evaluating all research activities, these themes were again reviewed through the Cycle 3 research process. Through Cycle 3, all research activities were focused clearly on the following agreed digital society themes, as they had emerged through Cycles 1 and 2, as well as through the Delphi processes.

Each partner collected and collated detailed data on the projects being conducted and their focus through Cycle 3. Accordingly, the following six themes became the key thematic structure that would guide all dialogue and project work undertaken during the third cycle.

Cycle 3 Theme
Self-image and its presentation online
Gender discrimination, and gender differences online, stereotyping
Internet safety and privacy, cyberbullying, online abuse and cyber security
Living on social media, living with stress
Access to reliable information, and fake news, media literacy
Digital participation and activism, digital divide

3.3 Overview of Research Activity by Theme

The thematic area that attracted the most interest from WYRED participants, during the Second and Third Cycles, was the area of gender and stereotyping. This was especially the case with older participants within universities. Over one in five projects were developed with a focus on gender. One in ten projects were developed to explore the area of “fake news” and reliable information. This tended to attract a younger age profile, with the primary and second level school students more inclined to research this area.

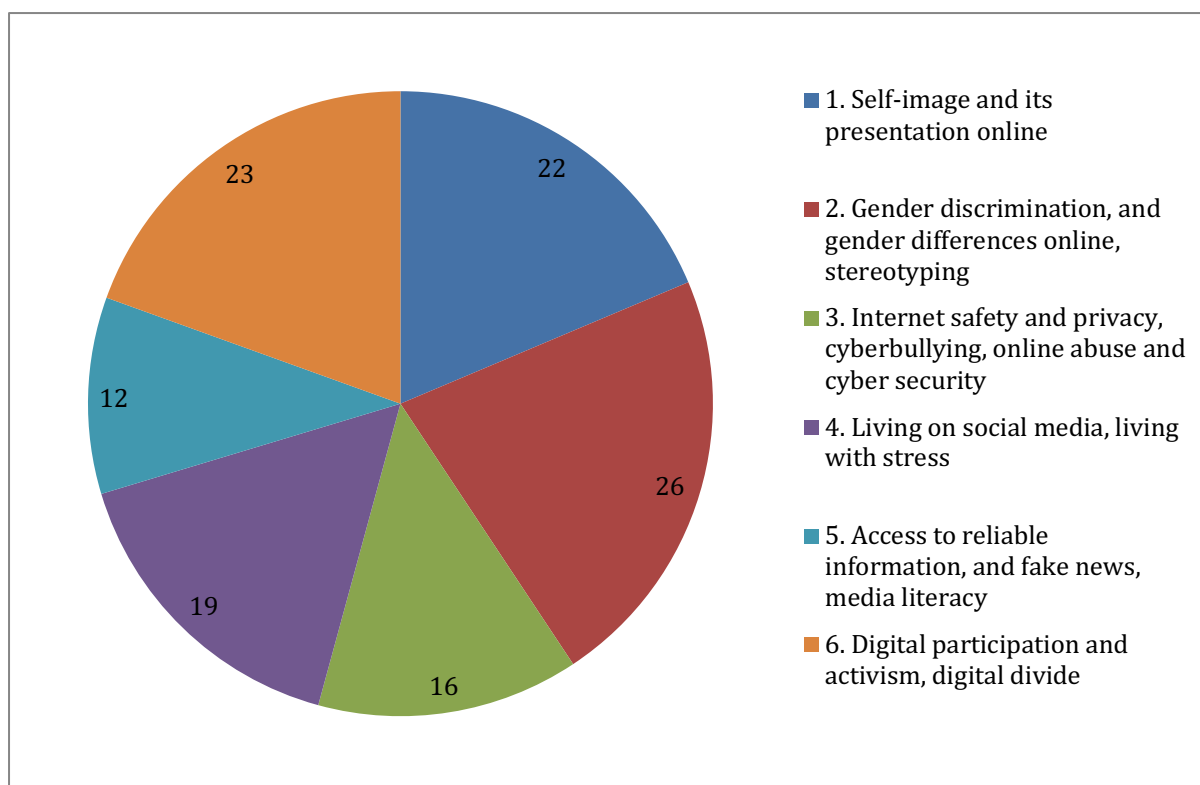
The following table and chart present the proportions of projects undertaken in relation to each of these six themes.

Cycle 3 Theme	Proportion of Projects
1. Self-image and its presentation online	19%
2. Gender discrimination, and gender differences online, stereotyping	22%
3. Internet safety and privacy, cyberbullying, online abuse and cyber security	14%
4. Living on social media, living with stress	16%
5. Access to reliable information, and fake news, media literacy	10%
6. Digital participation and activism, digital divide	19%
	100%

In looking at the numbers of participants who selected particular themes, the same trend is clear, with gender and digital activism as the two most popular themes.

Cycle 3 Theme	Proportion of Participants
1. Self-image and its presentation online	13%
2. Gender discrimination, and gender differences online, stereotyping	23%

3. Internet safety and privacy, cyberbullying, online abuse and cyber security	17%
4. Living on social media, living with stress	15%
5. Access to reliable information, and fake news, media literacy	14%
6. Digital participation and activism, digital divide	18%
	100%



4. Research conclusions and recommendations

The wide diversity of groups, ages, countries, cultures and research methodologies involved and applied across the three cycles of WYRED demonstrates the success of an inclusive and empowering research methodology. Furthermore, this extensive participation by children and young people has also led to a wide commonality of conclusions and recommendations emerging from their research activities, irrespective to their values, interests and objectives.

The tables in this section summarise a sample of the main topics or areas of interest that young people have worked around on these research activities and examine the nature and scope of projects conducted under each of these themes. Section 3 has highlighted the thematic



priorities. In this section, the specific focus of the projects and the comments and conclusions from the children and young people are highlighted demonstrating their deep reflection on these issues pertaining to their digital lives.

4.1 Research Projects in relation to the Media and Fake News

Through listing examples of thematic projects, this section outlines the nature of the research regarding their positions within a digital world. Some insights are presented as to the types of conclusions and recommendations that the children and young people are pointing to, based on their research activity.

Name of Project	Number of Participants
Fake News	8
How do we become more educated to get reliable information?	7
Distinguishing between real and false information on the Internet ("Fake News")	22
The integration of Gamification approach in education for a better learning experience	10
Fake News and online security programmes	5
The interventions of the European Union in media literacy.	10
Migratory phenomenon vs. fake news. How public audience is influenced by wrong messages.	10
Information and social media bombardment. How huge amounts of visual stimulation influence our brain.	5
Fake news on Facebook: analysis of the main players	10
The birth of fake news and why they get more views	5
People's perception on fake news spotters and their reliability.	5
The quality of information throughout the decades.	5

Some 12 projects were carried out by 102 children and young people under this theme associated with understanding the nature of news production and its reliability. In developing research projects in relation to this theme, many children and young people became fascinated about the propagation of fake news and structures that promote the development of such stories. They decided to carry out research with their peers in school communities and within their youth centres to examine the extent to which people are "fooled" by these stories.

Their conclusions focused on the challenges associated with distinguishing between real and false information on the Internet. Some participants noted that in many cases the problem is not necessarily false information but information that is only partially true, or biased. Some students think they have the ability to distinguish between true and false info, and some of them say they do not have such ability. The implication is that one should rely on the knowledge and personal experience of others. Some participants noted that the problem also exists in non-

digital media and it is not advisable to rely on journalists. They believe that most information in the media (any type of media) is either biased or only partially true.

For a younger cohort of researchers, they similarly concluded though their research project that:

“Not everything that is in the news is true and sometimes it is very hard to tell the difference between what real news is and what is fake news! Our research tells us that people think they can spot fake news most of the time, when in fact they cannot! People should be careful about what they believe- If it seems too good to be true, or silly, it’s probably not true! There should be stricter rules for people who make the news and for magazines, newspapers and the internet, so that people are not fooled by fake news reports. If you’re not sure if a news report is real or fake, check out other sources to see if you can find out more.

The recommendations again are suggesting that tighter regulation and focus on media channels is necessary to ensure that there can be a higher degree of trust when approaching online sources of news.

4.2 Research Projects in relation to Digital Participation Issues

A wide range of research activities were undertaken about the nature of how digital society is developing in relation to participation, activism and how minority groups are afforded equal access to digital rights. Some 131 children and young people took part in 23 WYRED projects on these themes and topics.

Name of Project	Number of Participants
What is digital activism? How can we get involved?	25
Exposing surveillance culture and social media	5
Media literacy Youth Corp to bridge the digital divide among older population	5
Digital tools to improve the inclusivity of democracy.	10
The participation of young digital citizens.	10
Digital Participation and its inclusiveness	10
Digital divide and its inequalities	10
The effectiveness of digital activism to shape our future.	5
The best place for digital participation.	10
Direct democracy, as digital media change democratic institutions.	10

Potentialities of gamification in shaping urban infrastructures	5
The Image of Women Redefined in Didem Mamak's Poems: A Mother, Child and a Sorcerer	2
What Is Bullying	5
Bullying and Participation	6
The impact of time spent gaming on mathematical achievement	1
Technology across time	1
The impact of the use of technology on social relationships	2
Fire Sensor for the visually and hearing impaired	1
The Impact of Migration on Society and The Opinions of Refugees: The Syrian Example	2
The Impact of Migration on Communities and Individuals	1
The Paris Principles in 14 images	1
Dictatorship	2
Age limits and Online Gaming	2

One desk research project involved a particularly interesting case study examining 'Better neighbourhood' projects as an example of how e-democracy platform can promote civic engagement. Such research interests also examined how education is to be used to promote a more inclusive "online society". The following conclusion was the result of a collective project by third level students in Belgium:

"Educating towards an active and democratic citizenship should not be reduced to just "civic education", especially if understood as a mere knowledge of the institutions, their relationships and the mechanisms of civil coexistence, rather it should be configured as a path that educates the values and attitudes of an individual and social ethic together. Communication and information technologies have improved the real possibility of participation of individual citizens. This translates into a concrete opportunity to exercise one's right of citizenship: through participation in consultations; through the evaluation and the influence exercised on the work of the directors; through immediate access to data, documents and information."

A key recommendation emerging from these young people requires that active citizenship measures take recognition of these spaces where young people are "active".

"The consolidation of the digital dimension as a "real space" for the exercise of active citizenship is linked to the familiarity that the individual matures with the use of tools, applications and services that allow the possibility of actively and effectively intervening

in local, national and European decision-making processes. This, of course, must be accompanied by a "digital transparency" project implemented by public authorities."

The promotion of active citizenship models for policymakers therefore requires an urgent "reboot" to take account of the reality of online lives of young people. Research projects also looked at the state of play of digital activism within their peer groups:

"Digital activism has proven to be quite successful in the last decade. Decision makers use the internet as much as we do and if something is shared enough it will captivate their attention and maybe even influence their decisions. We can see how through social media and advocating for climate change, decision makers around the world have taken note, heard young people's concerns and started to make some changes bit by bit, not the point we'd like them to but it's a start. Of course, the world will not be changed through a Facebook post and most of them will only raise awareness, but if enough people agree on the same idea and the heads of state see/hear that voice, it increases the chances of making a change. We should not only be active on social media though, changes are also made every day with small actions."

Taking this further, another project saw that there is potential for social media as a tool for activists and that some decision-makers are aware of comments and hashtags. However, as mentioned above, the importance of face to face engagement and the use of other strategies is equally important. In this regard, the project highlights the importance of WYRED as a complimentary approach for activists:

"You might not always be successful, but if you comment, share and debate enough on the platform, the person you're addressing yourself to will see your ideas and hopefully be inspired by them. WYRED gives you different opportunities and spaces. Allowing you to give detailed information and long developments contrary to what Twitter has to offer."

The importance of having a shared space for children and young people where they can share ideas and strategies for social change is noted by these research results. Social media channels are clearly not ideal in this regard and while WYRED is a new space for many of the young people, it does offer opportunities for developing more detailed and structured responses to often complicated issues in their lives.

4.3 Research Projects Associated with Gender and Stereotyping Concerns

Topics that are linked to the theme of gender and stereotyping made up the most significant proportion of research choices for children and young people across the partnership. Of the 26 projects that focused on gender related online issues and themes, all were carried out by young people aged 17 years or older.

Name of Project	Number of Participants
Homophobia	6
Stereotypes Online	6
Don't stay silent: Investigation of the impact of a patriarchal society on women's social lives	2
Gender Inequality	3
The Best Female Characters in Literature	3
Changing the names of female characters in Turkish novels and stories between 1830-1960	2
Gender Equality	8
A Different View of Folk Songs: Women in Bursa	2
Stereotypes on Social Networks	7
Gender stereotypes in education	13
Stereotypes and self-image	7
Stereotypes in sports	5
Gender gap in advertising	2
Cultural background and stereotypes	7
Stereotypes related to sexual orientation	5
Gender stereotypes during the childhood	8
Gender neutral environment in school	5
Increase gender equality to break down the barriers for women entrepreneurs	5
The eradication of stereotypes thanks to education.	10
The role gender and Disney princesses play.	10
Reasons for lack of female presence in STEM jobs	5
Gender stereotypes in sports. Anti-discrimination policies and the presence of women in various sport.	5
Differences among gender equity, gender equality and women's empowerment	10
The change in gender stereotype since Mid-20th Century	10
The online world is increasing gender discrimination.	10
Women are treated differently online than men.	10

For some, they chose to conduct an academic research project examining whether patriarchal structures can be found with social media structures and systems. These students produced posters that were presented to their peers and their tutors. These were instrumental in creating further debate and discourse within their campus. Others examined the relationship between sport, marketing and social media stereotypes. Again, these results were presented in order to stimulate and continue discussion amongst the student group. These projects were also shared within the WYRED platform and were circulated through the online discussion forums.

A project carried out by a group of asked the question whether the online world is increasing gender discrimination. Their conclusions and recommendations were again widely shared:

“We can clearly see that the online world is increasing gender discrimination, especially towards women. These new platforms give new spaces for attackers to cause harm, insult, bully, ... Gender inequality was always present and the online world reflects in a sense what is really happening or going through the minds of some people around the globe. It is a pure reflection of the real situation we’re living every day. More cyber security should be installed in order to protect women from being harassed, stalked, bullied or anything that can harm them, like we do in the offline world. A tool is a tool and a weapon is a weapon, online gender discrimination should be legitimised and erased to stop other young people (men) from being inspired. All of these can only be done with an increase in security and control on what is posted online and who has access to it.”

As well as pointing to the importance of challenging bullying behaviour, these young people also point to the importance of targeted legislation to prevent harming of women and promote protections.

4.4 Research Projects Associated with Online Safety and Privacy

The themes of Internet Safety and Privacy had been addressed for many of the children and young people through the formal settings of their school experiences. However, for many the idea of taking control over a research project in this area offered a new take or opportunity to investigate issues of their own interest. In this manner, 16 projects were carried out by 121 children and young people on these themes. Apart from one group of 10 year old children, the majority of participants who researched this theme tended to be students at second level formal education or higher.

Name of Project	Number of Participants
Raising Awareness of Violence Against Children	1
Consent/Permission	5
Cyberbullying	6
Hacking	9
Anti-(Cyber)Bullying Strategy for the Center of Inclusive Schools Vienna	18
Privacy on the web	22
Empowering the youth to reduce the risk of cyberbullying	5
Stopping the spread of harmful behaviour towards teenagers online.	5
The measures cybersecurity takes to protect the users and the system.	5
Actions to increase online safety	10
Internet of things and networks, opportunities and risks of a boundless world.	5
The problem of fight bullying on Instagram	10
Social Media and Cyberbullying: a comparative analysis	5
The people and bodies behind our internet safety and privacy.	5
Internet will never be 100% safe.	5
Legal and factual considerations on the right to be forgotten	5

A key WYRED project that took place in Austria took a focus on the development of an “Anti-(Cyber)Bullying Strategy for the Centre of Inclusive Schools”. A group of 18 young people aged between 13 and 14 years developed a research question “How can the Internet get safer for my daily use? What has to be considered, to be safe in the internet?” and “What can be done against bullying in the Internet and in School?” Of the group of young people from different classes, many of the students were dealing with cognitive or emotional difficulties.

As a result, the young people were fully engaged over this series of workshops and sessions, involving their teachers and other stakeholders from within the school. As well as building capacity of the students through the research activities, the buy in from the school was also achieved through the WYRED steps. The inclusive nature of the project ensured that all participants were involved and could feel that their voice was heard, especially through the thematic development work.

The focus for the project on the area of cyberbullying and how to address this concern was the final result of the WYRED social dialogues and research sessions. Through clarification and further iteration of the research work with the young people and involving the school personnel, the research output became more targeted at the school policies. The culmination of the project work was the production of a dedicated anti-cyber bullying policy for the school that was presented to the school principal at a dedicated event.

According to the facilitator, “before the presentation of the strategy all participants worked on it and proudly presented their strategy to the headmaster. They argue that the strategy is not only relevant for themselves but also for all their colleagues and the teachers in school.”

In this instance, we again see the power of both the educate and legislate joint approach. Through engaging the educators and developing a policy level response within the school environment, a sustainable outcome is achieved. The students are informed and aware about the causes and effects of cyber bullying and the school community have a consistent policy framework to deal with any cases of bullying as they may happen.

4.5 Research Projects Associated with Social Media and Stress

Much of the research under this theme focused on the examining whether social media can have a positive impact on mental health, particularly examining the role that online peer support communities can play in supporting people in need. In such instances, the research pointed to positive roles for social media. Some 107 children and young people took part in 19 research projects on these themes.

Name of Project	Number of Participants
Banter, memes and influencers	6
Follow-Up as A Social Media Influencer (Tülay Göçimen)	1
The Impact of Social Media on the Tendency towards Depression	2
The Relationship Between the Use of Social Media and Narcissism	2
Social Impact on People: How Do You Feel Without Your Keyboard?	1
Defining Future Jobs and Career Choices	2
Our lives and the lives of adults on Social Media	1
Digital Addiction	22
Social media support people facing mental illness	5
Over-usage of cell phone is connected to increase in anxiety	5
The changes of personality in the world of influencer marketing	5
The stress created by the use of social media	5
The world of influencers. Marketing models, trend of the phenomenon and possible evolutions.	10
Phenomenology of psychosocial influence of app dating.	10
Social Media: risk and consequences on the health	5
Influencer marketing: companies, followers and content message	5
Young people's and older generations' capability of not being online.	5
The big amount of time young people across Europe spend online per day.	5
Social Media are sources of dependence	10

Research projects also looked at the nature of “digital addiction” and research was conducted with peer groups within youth centres and youth groups. Some implications of digital addiction were considered to involve:

- Damage to social relations through a lack of personal contacts and face to face interaction.
- Physical damage through, for example, to damage to eyes and joints.

- Waste of time, taking people away from more meaningful social activities including activism.

All students said they are "living in their smartphones" a lot of time every day. Most of them would like to occupy themselves less with their screens. There was a discussion about "screen time": there was a disagreement about the typical time devoted to screens, but most agree that it is hours per day. Some students are busy with their screens four hours a day, maybe even more.

The young people decided to examine how to potentially restrict these types of behaviour. Regarding imposed restrictions, there were different opinions. Some of the students said that enforced restrictions and prohibitions are not effective. On the contrary, they achieve the opposite result, as young people will continue to do the prohibited things. It was mentioned that what matters is not necessarily the time spent on "living in the screen", but rather the manner in which the "addiction" is expressed, namely how the user copes when he or she needs to log out.

Young people felt that "the crux of the problem is the difficulty of disconnecting, even though you know it would have been better to do something else". Some of the participants noted that they are aware that their "screen time" is exaggerated and comes at the expense of something else they would like to do, but the problem is that it is very hard to disconnect. Students often cancel things in order to "be on screen" - for example, they sacrifice sleeping or watching TV.

The research group decided to examine a series of possible future scenarios and asked participants to express their opinion on the likely situation 10 years from now. The majority of respondents considered that the position would become worse. But their recommendation was for an immediate increase in education and public policy campaigns as a policy priority. With this in mind, they promoted a more overarching education policy that would address the potential impacts of digital addiction. They also recommend that the voice of young people is included when such a policy is being developed and reviewed.

These findings and recommendations were shared through the WYRED platform and became a focus for online conversations associated with the theme of online lives and how young people are constructing their own solutions.

4.6 Research Projects Associated with Self Image Online

Children and young people were very interested in exploring how they experience their online self-image. Positive and negative connotations are immediately conjured up, with the adult concerns regarding lack of respect and consideration for others not always in line with the experiences of the young people. Some 22 projects were carried out by 94 participants on these theme of self-image and how its presentation online affects children and young people.

Name of Project	Number of Participants
Exploring Self Image	6
Nomophobia Levels of Secondary School Students	2
What Would I Do?	2
The Impact of Technology on Values (An Interaction Project)	1
Self Image	9
How to be respectful online	2
Appearances Online	3
Internet Activities and Behaviour	4
Tech in the Class	5
Emojis to express ourselves	3
Online activities for 9 and 10 year olds	4
Awareness on of online dangers	1
Online appearances	2
Addressing our self images on social media	7
Body positivity on Instagram and young women body-acceptance	5
Online programmes to increase access to mental health care	5
The rise of narcissism in influencers	5
The correlation between self esteem and how we present ourselves online.	5
Linkedin and professional apps for Job search: online presentation.	3
Facebook affirmation and its role towards self-image and self-esteem	10
A young person's self-image is directly affected by online platforms and thus jeopardising his/hers personal development.	5
An online-developed self-image can be dangerous for a young person's self-esteem.	5

Artefacts produced during these projects included scientific posters, videos, newsletters and presentations. A project carried out by a group of 6 students aged 17 years focused on the questions "How do young people manage self-image in online contexts? Are young people's approaches to management of self-image online different from older generations?" The WYRED

process was facilitated face to face, using online tools to assist the research. The young people used mobile phones to produce video recordings of their reflections and interviews on this theme. As well as discussing this subject area with their peers, they also interview adults to gauge their opinions. For many, the research carried out on issues of gender stereotyping in their digital worlds was very often linked to negative mental health outcomes.

As research groups were used to working together and collaborating on artistic projects, they fully embraced the WYRED approach, allowing the research process to form a support for one another. Even if for some, they acknowledged that the research work “was new to all and many found it challenging”, they were empowered through the process to take decisions about how they would like to focus and progress their work. The group focused on the differences between their management of self- image as individuals, compared to how older generations use social media tools and platforms. According to the facilitator, the key insight “was the degree of investment, while all use social media and present them to some degree, the older generations are less concerned by the difficulties involved.

Key conclusions outlined by the groups focused on the need for the increased promotion of resilience and self-respect, which are communicated well in the reflection video they made.”

This becomes a common conclusion and finding from many of the projects in this area. Specifically that children and young people require a strong degree of resilience to be able to cope with and manage their online lives. Other projects asked questions about why young people change personalities when online or how do we protect ourselves. Research conclusions tended to point to the importance of being supported, self-aware and possessing resilience. Recommendations tended to request that schools and youth work settings would work to educate young people in relation to how to promote and build capacities and competences associated with digital resilience.

5. WYRED Insights and Recommendations

A key objective of Work Package 7 has been to illustrate the experiences of children and young people in terms of their engagement within WYRED activities and to present their feedback and reflections. Sections 3 and 4 have presented their insights allied with the diversity of groups, ages, countries, cultures and research approaches and methodologies adopted. The evidence highlights the scope and extent of how the children and young people have created a serious body of work through WYRED and with it significant challenges for policy-makers and decision-makers. In many instances, through their involvement in WYRED, the children and young people have taken the opportunity to voice these concerns in forums and debates with these same policy makers.

Their key conclusions and recommendations can be grouped in relation to the following key areas:

5.1 Research as Empowerment

The focus on empowerment and inclusion were key principles throughout the WYRED partnership and the application of the WYRED process. By bringing together almost 2000 children and young people in their schools, colleges, youth centres and facilities in over 20 countries across the three WYRED cycles of activity, facilitators, teachers and youth workers could use the methodology to take their interests and help to shape them into critical analysis.

A social dialogue phase encouraged the participants to develop research questions, ensuring that it was their own particular interests that would come to drive their further engagement. With the next steps, the children and young people were motivated and inspired to take active control over the process. Their facilitators became back seat passengers in this moving vehicle. Through this process of taking charge of their learning and shaping the questions that they wanted to research, the children and young people became their own agents of change.

The phases of research definition and implementation took a wide range of shapes and turns. Podcasts were developed, poetry magazines were produced, photography exhibits were put together, models were built, site visits were made to NGOs and others with expertise to offer, questionnaires were developed, interviews were carried out with academics, activists and artists. Through it all, the children and young people were in the driving seat. When they needed some support in addressing their research question or unpacking a difficult hypothesis, they would first ask each other and then if required, the WYRED facilitator would step in.

This process worked across a wide range of different age groups, within formal and informal spaces and educational settings and with larger and smaller groups. The documentation of the research activities through the WYRED platform and beyond present clarity on the successful application of the WYRED methods and approaches.

It is clear that from the experience of being active participants within this research process that the children and young people were allowed to develop their own voice, ask their own questions and formulate their own responses. They progressed an agenda that was set by them. Once they had set these agendas, they soon realised that they needed to make use of their power and their voice.

The children and young people are told from the outset that they are in control of the process, their ideas and thoughts are driving the projects. It is based on the principle 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 social dialogue and participatory research.

The empowering nature of the research led to an unexpected level volume of quality output being produced. As this degree of new projects were emerging and analysed, common conclusions were being reached again and again using different methods and employing different presentation and validation techniques. Qualitative interviews and podcasts were focusing on comparable recommendations on the same topics as results from in depth focus group work, quantitative surveys and desk research.

5.2 Space and Amplification for Voices

Through the WYRED project, children have been assured that their voice is of paramount value. As the project provided a framework for research in which their voice would be amplified in order that they could express and explore their perspectives, interests and solutions, a key aspect of the project was to support the use of this voice. As drivers of new behaviours and understandings, their voices needed to be facilitated and heard.

The amplification of this voice required the creation of a space where the children and young people can come together, in local settings supported by trusted facilitators as well as in online spaces. WYRED has allowed this process to happen using a methodology that uses research as the tool or the hook for engagement.

WYRED created a platform from which these children and young people can communicate their perspectives to each other and to other stakeholders. Over the course of the three research Cycles, almost 2000 children and young people have involved themselves in networking activities, international dialogues, participatory research and interpretation phases centred around and driven by themselves, out of which a diverse range of outputs, critical perspectives and other insights have emerged and been shared extensively.

Throughout their projects, they have had their recommendations debated, their research conclusions acting as catalysts for change and their research activities as triggers for new ideas and for greater levels of engagement in their schools and centres. Children and young people have indicated that they feel more informed and more confident as a result of their engagement with WYRED. They have expressed that they have a clearer understanding as to the key role they have to play in the digital society, as drivers of change. They consistently noted that decision-makers must take account of their voice in relation to the formation of digital policies.

5.3 Reaching a Wide Audience

The range of research interests was extremely impressive. As the volume of research artefacts and outputs increased over the course of the three cycles, it became clear that the research findings and conclusions were becoming more and more meaningful. From the big themes associated with online activism and democracy, cyberbullying, stereotyping and homophobia, they were motivated to direct their work and make arguments, conclusions and recommendations that were shared and disseminated across a wide range of forums. When their interest was linked more locally or specifically to themes regarding social media representations and impacts of influencers, they were equally able to articulate sophisticated research questions that led to important insights that could be shared widely.

The children and young people continued to find new ways to present their findings, using online and offline techniques and platforms. They involved their peers. Their school principals, teachers and youth workers were key targets. Where they could, they reached out to policy-makers and decision-makers. Family members were invited to dissemination activities. Competitions were entered, scientific juries made awards and commendations. Through Cycle 3, as a greater volume of research was being produced, the children and young people became keener to share their results and make use of the WYRED online spaces being provided. As more opportunities were created for the sharing and using of different online spaces (Online

Conversation Fortnights, Online Festival, etc.) children and young people became more active users

Schools and colleges made changes to policies and procedures as a result of WYRED projects. Young people travelled to events across Europe, in which they were invited to present recommendations or participate in high level committees. Some of these events were attended by European Commission representatives, politicians within the House of Lords, delegates from national policy conferences and networking forums. The children and young people were facilitated to see that their action research should have an intended outcome. For many of the WYRED projects, these outcomes were met.

5.4 Educate and Legislate

These trends in relation to more convergent and connected findings, together with demand for greater online engagement give the project a greater weight as the next steps for the WYRED Association are planned. The key recommendations from these collective activities are pointing towards the critical importance of ensuring that the voice of children and young people is central in future developments in their digital society. Research as a tool of empowerment for these children and young people has been demonstrated throughout the work of the WYRED. Once these voices have been empowered, bringing their ideas to shared spaces and seeking to influence and reach a wider audience are further clear strategic priorities for future development.

Within these perspectives, central insights, across the consortium coalesce under two headings: “educate” and “legislate”.

Across each theme described above, the children and young people asked questions and developed responses about how their digital lives are being affected by ever evolving landscapes, where their experience of growing up and maturing has been in many ways mediated by technological developments and experiments. Whether they are examining the nature of digital addiction, online bullying or gender stereotyping, each time they are pointing to solutions and answers that are based on a need for increased education, supported by legislative responses putting the wellbeing of the child and young person ahead of corporate interests. In each thematic area, these common insights prevail.

While WYRED research projects into the attitudes and perspectives of young people tend to demonstrate that the majority feel relatively optimistic about their own future, they consistently

highlight better access to educational opportunities as critical factors in their digital lives. This does not simply mean more formal education. From the research activities and results, they are pointing to a more responsive and targeted education approach that takes the voice of the child and young person seriously. For example, when there are debates regarding online safety and privacy, a typical response of a more formal approach to “teaching” children and young people the “right responses” is not regarded as effective.

The second key insight is linked to the desire for a legislative response from the adult world. Many of the research outputs and online conversations have highlighted an almost pervasive lack of faith in institutions and in politics. The children and young people are extremely concerned about their environment and democratic structures. However, they do not regard themselves as “radicals” when they are posing questions regarding our “grown-up” responses to the many existential threats that they are highlighting. The WYRED projects have highlighted how these young people can shape and direct their online interactions, thereby appearing to enhance their autonomy and personal agency.

5.5 Conclusions

These two insights emerge and become evident throughout the WYRED body of evidence on the platform, through the reporting, through the online conversations and discussion. The children and young people consistently display a sophisticated analysis of their digital lives. They are managing a balancing act between public and private narratives, positive and negative self-image and these interplays. They are examining potential correlations between rates of depression amongst teenagers and time spent on social media. They are also demonstrating the pleasure and stimulation to be found on screens and smartphones that unleash positive and creative urges.

Through their engagement within the WYRED methodology, they are exploring their potential in a myriad of new and exciting ways. They are part of their analysis, situated as they are in an ever moving tide with unlimited availability of social media outlets for viewing, content-creating, and editing. Under such constant exposure, social comparison and an on-demand culture, they are also developing new ways of being parts of groups and social networks.

So when these same children and young people bring their sophisticated analysis and recommendations to the policy dimensions of education and legislation, we must recognise that they are reaching these conclusions as members of a more digitally informed and oriented

social environment and as part of the WYRED process, whose critical analysis is framed in relation to themes of inclusion and equality.

The children and young people have examined their “technology-rich culture” and have clearly stated that we need to review and re-examine whether this is working to inspire their skills and interests in relation to their formal and informal education experiences, in relation to better understanding mental health issues or social media impacts. From the perspective of WYRED participants, the response of education is not currently delivering. It is not embracing the voice of the child and young person.

Through WYRED project developments and responses, children and young people are also articulating questions that they want to answer about how their online lives are being governed. They are highlighting a lack of concern or humanity, pointing to structures that are promoting unhappiness, anxiety and lack of control. They are asking in this regard for a commitment to legislate for their wellbeing.

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