

# Young people, sexual rights and the internet

## Focus Group General Report





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[eNACSO](#) (European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online) is a network of 24 NGOs committed to the protection and promotion the rights of young online users.

The European NGOs Alliance on Child Safety Online - eNACSO monitors and analyses emerging trends in the digital environment in order to identify opportunities, concerns and priorities in relation to children's rights online. We carefully examine emerging online practice and tools as well as relevant policy and legislation in order to develop strategies, policy and actions to address violations against children's rights online. We work to ensure that child protection and empowerment are high on the digital political agenda of the EU institutions and Member States.

In our work, we increasingly see that children and young people are among the fastest-growing groups of internet users (in many countries they constitute one in every three internet-users) and as they turn to, and increasingly rely on the internet as a means to access information and express themselves freely, as well as interact with their peers and experience their affectivity and sexuality, it is vital to develop a holistic approach that can, at the same time, maximize opportunities and protect child from harm. Furthermore, we increasingly see that the online environment has become an important tool that children and young people rely on to acquire information and experience their sexuality.

There is nothing odd or unusual about this, given that young people and children are so closely involved in the online environment. In fact, the online environment provides many positive opportunities for children to learn and discuss sex and sexual orientation and to explore their own sexuality. However, we also see that children and young people are sometimes exposed to the negative or harmful consequences of their own and other people's behavior online, often because of limited experience and knowledge. eNACSO intends to address this, so that children can enjoy the benefits of the online environment in a positive, empowering and safe way.

This calls for explicit attention to child protection issues whenever new online opportunities are created and, conversely, a strong recognition of children's positive rights (to information, expression, participation) when developing new safety practices or resources.

Sexual themes are inevitably found in a myriad of media forms which young people encounter online and, as such, sexuality is to be viewed as a multifaceted issue which needs to be approached from a range of perspectives, taking into account not only the emotional and cognitive development of children and young people but also the influence of family, culture and society as a whole.

Within this framework, contextualising sexuality in relation to children and the online world calls for an investigation of sexuality as a social construction, sexuality being so much more than a mere repertoire of sexual acts. It encompasses identity, social interaction, culture and it is shaped by a range of factors such as gender, class, ethnicity, as well as children's own understandings of the sexual cultures they live in.

For this purpose eNACSO commissioned to the London School of Economics in the person of Professor Sonia Livingston and her colleague Jessica Mason a review of the current academic debate regarding children and young people's developing sexuality in relation to new media environments.

The research has served as a basis for developing evidence-based recommendations to key stakeholders on what might constitute a holistic approach and what measures need to be taken to ensure that children and young people are empowered and protected from risks.

In developing such recommendations, eNACSO engaged with children and young people to hear their views and learn from their experiences.

To this end, the project has seen the organization of several focus groups in seven European countries (Italy, Norway, Finland, Greece, Poland, Lithuania, the Netherlands), involving boys and girls between 11 and 15 years of age in a dialogue about affectivity and sexuality education channeled but the use of new media.

Of particular interest in this respect is the data showing how boys and girls search and access information online, especially in respect to that stage in their development when great physical changes and the emergence of processes impacting identity, affectivity, relationships and representation all come into play. There seems, in fact, to be a gap to be filled, within academic literature, on the subject of how and where do boys and girls seek out online information on matters concerning their sexuality and emotional development. During this stage in a young person's growth, such development produces significant and observable changes both physical and relational. Hence, the use of new technologies, especially favored by the youngest as a means to access and share information among their peers on these subjects, requires that we combine together prevention, and therefore information, with new communication tools, to ensure children and young people can rely on adequate means to learn about their bodies and are made aware of the opportunities but also of the risks derived by insufficient information and protection.

## 1. Methodology and tools

### 1.1. Research plan

Seven eNACSO member organizations took part in the survey work:

- *Save the Children* Italy,
- *Save the Children* Norway,
- *Save the Children* Finland,
- *Obrela* Greece,
- *Empowering Children Foundation* Poland,
- *Children Support Centre (Paramos Vaikams Centras)* Lithuania,
- *ECPAT NL* The Netherlands.

Before work began, Save the Children Italy (as chair of the working group) outlined the general methodological framework, identifying and sharing with the partners involved the focus group goals and objectives and the following tools:

- the Focus Group Methodology (Annex I).
- A Focus Group question grid to stimulate dialogue (Annex II).
- A template for reporting the focus group findings (Annex III).
- the eNACSO Background paper "*Children and young people's participation based on Information and Communication Technologies and New Media*" which deals with children and young people's participation with a special focus on Information and Communication Technologies and New Media (it can suggest guidelines to be followed by eNACSO members in fostering child participation and ensuring this participation is of high quality).
- The Child Safeguarding Policy, which includes the Code of Conduct and the General Procedures which includes all the necessary information to report and response to any concerns, suspicions or certainties in relation to maltreatment, abuse or exploitation of children.

The research plan established the need to set up 4 focus groups for each country, designed to target two specific age-groups: young people between 11-12 years of age and 14-15 years of age. Each age group was then divided by gender, so the overall framework, for each country, was established as following: two female-only focus groups, consisting of girls between the ages of 11-12 and 14-15; two male-only groups of boys between the ages of 11-12 and 14-15. According to the research plan, the desired number of participants has been set to range between 6 and 10, with each session expected to last between one and two hours.

The focus groups collected children's perspective and points of view on **online sources of information about sexual health/sex education** according to following bullet points:

1. Sexual health/sex education and information-seeking online
2. The source and credibility of information (it is unclear which online sources youth are using, how they judge credibility, and whether or not they see pornography as a credible source of information about sex).
3. What types of information youth want and seek about sex, health and relationships.
4. What role parents, schools and web resources should play in informing youth, and if they use or trust information from some sources more than others

As soon as the general methodological framework had been defined and shared, the procedure followed<sup>1</sup> to initiate the research work began with the identification of contexts willing to partake in the research.

Within the timeframe available, a random sampling of schools (where most focus groups took place) was considered to be unfeasible, so each organization established and mined its own cooperation network. As soon as it received the go-ahead, each organization proceeded to establish contact with the school principal/manager to arrange the required locations, time-schedules and executive procedures based on the previously defined criteria (group structure, etc.). Each school received a proposal statement in which objectives, methodologies and research tools were described. In addition, consent forms to be signed by parents/caretakers were distributed, collected and returned by the school.

## **1.2. Methodological differences arising from the comparison between countries and subsequent critical issues**

The comprehensive analysis of data derived from comparing results from each of the seven contexts involved has revealed a number of critical issues, deriving not from the predictable contextual differences between each organization but from two factors: on the one hand, differences in the ways the focus groups were conducted and, on the other, different uses of the data analysis tool (survey format tool). Discrepancies have emerged, caused both by differences in how the surveys were performed and by differences in data collection praxis among each research pool, and these have often made it difficult to compare the data supplied by each country

For example, only two countries (Italy e Lithuania) out of seven have reported the exact number, age and gender of the participants for each focus group (as requested). The praxis followed by the other organizations has been to report an age-range for each group, instead of the age of each participant, and express a percentage instead of the gross number of participants, hindering an overall cross analysis of the sample. In some instances, in fact, the initially agreed-upon criteria have been completely ignored in the implementation of the survey, guidelines on age limits and the prescribed differentiation of the focus groups based on gender and age have not been followed.

In regards to the age specifications, the agreed-upon range of adolescents between eleven and fifteen years of age has been modified on both counts. In one country children as young as nine years old have been selected, while in another the maximum age limit has been extended to include participants of seventeen/nineteen years of age.

In regards to gender, not all nations have followed the agreed upon division between boys and girls by organizing mixed groups while others, assuming that the guidelines have been followed, do not make a clear

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<sup>1</sup> The aforementioned refers exclusively to Save the Children Italy, as it was not a part of the inquiry.

specification in their reports, thus not supplying precise data about the number of males and females involved.

As for date relating to the performance and location of the survey, one country has not supplied the relevant information.

Lastly, in regards to the setting, one country has opted to allow teachers to be present during the surveying. Some of the aforementioned variables, such as the presence of teachers or the constitution of mixed groups – could have had an impact in the results, inhibiting boys and girls from expressing their opinions freely during the focus group sessions.

## 2. Sample and setting

Given that the analysis of the total sample has been affected by the previously described methodological discrepancies, it was considered nevertheless useful to trace a profile based on the descriptive aspects of the sample, in order to make an overall assessment and open the debate about the results, bearing in mind the explorative nature of the present research and the project at large.

In the analysis of the reports, a comparison against the sample shows that out of a total of 245 participants, 132 are females while 113 are males; 117 belong to the youngest subgroup (56 M and 61 F) while 128 belong to the oldest (57 M and 71 F). The average participation of boys and girls is of 35 persons per country on average, the largest number being in Poland and Italy (45 and 42), the smallest in the Netherlands and Greece (24) (table 1).

**Table 1. Research sample by country, age and gender**

COUNTRY	Gender		Total	Age bracket by gender			
	F	M		M 10-12	F 10-12	M 13-15	F 13-15
Finland	18	19	37	7	12	12	6
Greece	12	12	24	6	6	6	6
Italy	20	22	42	16	13	6	7
Lithuania	22	14	36	7	10	7	12
Netherland	14	8	24	-	-	8	14
Norway	23	16	39	10	11	6	12
Poland	23	22	45	10	9	12	14
<b>Totale</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>71</b>

The age of participants, regardless of the proposed brackets agreed upon in the planning stage, range from a minimum of nine years of age (Poland) to a maximum age of 19 years (Netherlands). With the exception of Lithuania in which the minimum age is 10 years, the range covered by all the remaining countries is consistent with the agreed upon criteria shared in the planning stage (11-15 years).

With respect to the conduction of the focus groups, out of the seven organizations involved, the data analysis shows a total of ten facilitators, two in four countries (Italy, Netherlands, Norway and Poland), one in each of the remaining two countries (Finland and Lithuania). In two countries (Italy and Lithuania) the role has been entrusted to psychologists, while the remaining countries have appointed different professionals: a sexologist (Finland), two sociologists one of which a researcher (Poland) and an expert on sexual abuse who also chairs a national education program (Norway). In two countries the professional qualification has not been specified (Greece and the Netherlands). The gender of the facilitators is mixed in one country (Norway)

while being female in the remaining five (out of the total of the six out of seven organizations who have offered this information in the report).

Finally, with respect to the setting of the focus groups, nearly all the countries involved have chosen the school environment, primary or secondary schools depending on the age of the sample involved. The only exception (The Netherlands), carried out the research in an international school for young immigrants, while Poland has set up the two focus groups representing the younger age group within a young people’s community center (while the older age group met in a secondary school).

### 3. Outcomes of the survey

Here below are the answers obtained for each probing question administered, divided by age groups and gender (M and F).

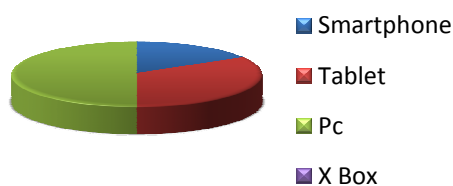
#### 3.1. Survey outcomes 11-12 age group<sup>2</sup>

##### *Availability of new technologies and modes of employ*

The young people of the 11-12 age group use new technologies mainly through smartphones, computers and tablets (table 2).

**Table 2. Tools by frequency of use**

COUNTRY	Smartphone	Tablet	pc	x box
Finland	1	2	3	
Greece	1	2		
Italy	3	2	1	
Lithuania	1		2	
Norway	1			
Poland		2	1	3



All respondents in the sample declare they usually use the internet at home, in their room, alone, after doing their homework, or, in some cases, at a friend’s house; only some respondent claim to use new technologies in school in the presence of teachers (table 3).

**Table 3. Where, when and with whom**

COUNTRY	Where			Alone	In the presence of		
	Home/spare time	School	Other (friends’home or wi areas)		Parents	Teachers	Friends
Finland	X			X			
Greece	X			X			
Italy	X	X		X		X	
Lithuania	X	X	X	X			X
Norway	X		X	X			
Poland	X		X	X			X

<sup>2</sup> The Netherlands are excluded from this survey since, as previously reported, they did not consider this age group.



Internet use is closely related to communicating with friends (What's App, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook), listening to music and watching fun videos (You Tube) and playing, alone or with friends, different online games (Hey Day, FIFA, Play Station, X Box) (table 4).

The one thing respondents claim not to like and consider inappropriate for their age, however, is the appearance of advertising with a strong sexual or pornographic content in the form of video or images on websites and gaming sites. They also dislike viruses, nasty comments, the abuse or insulting behavior that may occur on the web or via smartphone (cyberbullying) and they claim not to appreciate the possibility that they could be approached by strangers, especially adults, on social networks. Marginally, they also refer to the risk of becoming internet dependent, especially in regards to video games (Table 5).

**Table 4. Modes of employ (software, search-engines, etc. by purpose)**

COUNTRY	Interacting with friends	Sharing images or videos	School work	Gaming	Listening to music and/or watching videos	Other
Finland	What'sApp Snapchat Periscope Instagram Facebook		Kahoot	Wow, HeyDay	You Tube	
Greece	Facebook Instagram Whatsap Snapchat Viber			GTA FIFA NBA Play Station	You Tube e musical.ly	Gazzetta Sport 24
Italy	Whatsapp Facebook Instagram Snapchat Wattpad Twitter			X box	Spotify e You Tube	Netflix
Lithuania	Facebook Instagram Messenger, Snapchat Viber Skype		Google		You Tube	
Norway	Instagram Facebook Twitter Viber Snapchat			you play play station FIFA Cash of clans watch dogs hay day	You tube musical.ly	
Poland			Facebook giochizadane.pl		you tube	

**Table 5. What is not liked**

COUNTRY	Advertising	Ads and/or images of inappropriate sexual content	Contacts with strangers	Cyberbullying	Addiction to violent videogames	VIRUSES OR SPAM
Finland		X				X

Greece	X				X	X
Italy		X	X	X	X	
Lithuania	X	X	X	X		
Norway						
Poland	X					X

### *Affective education and online searches*

In regards to personal issues such as their wellbeing, the awareness of their desires and impulses in relation to their psycho-sexual affective and relational development, the near entirety of the sample (both female and male) claims to seek dialogue with members of their family, particularly with parents and, to a lesser degree, siblings: "we know from older girls that in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade we will have those topics" (Lithuania), "My parents don't get embarrassed, I don't use the internet to search for information" (Poland), "Some believe in it, but it is better to ask adults" (Norway). Marginally, the network of close friends is also mentioned. Secondary, but nonetheless present in the entire sample, is the use of the internet to acquire information (The SC Norway report quotes three websites - [www.ung.no](http://www.ung.no); [www.klaraklok.no](http://www.klaraklok.no); [www.116111.no](http://www.116111.no). "There is also a service call Spørrekroken ,that must be a kind of forum, did not manage to find it, but it might be a term that is used in different services to ask questions" (Norway) (table 6). Some female respondents also claim to use the internet to perform other kinds of searches (wikipedia and google) on specific topics, after having sought the advice of family, but with some degree of skepticism.

The Report from Lithuania cites information relating to a Youtube channel named "Relationship Guru"; two websites <http://www.cosmopolitan.lt/> and a Lithuanian online magazine for girls <http://www.panele.lt/> and one APP "Girls are using "Menstruation app".

In the Norwegian report we find mentions of a girls-only Facebook group (64.000 subscribers, all under 25 years of age) where girls share information about their sexuality and affectivity.

On the other hand, male respondents for the most part claim to use the internet to access pornographic material and to use social networks (Facebook) to share videos and ask friends for support.

These online groups/forums (such as the aforementioned Facebook group), clearly emerge as informal spaces within which peer-to-peer education, despite its limits, can offer new pedagogical possibilities. The value of these spaces, in terms of the dialogue they foster, depends largely on their 'openness'- which is to say, their avoidance of fixed moral positions – and the perceived plausibility and accuracy which enable boys and girls to feel part of a debate and transcend the sanctioned forms of discourse.

**Table 6. Information sources consulted**

COUNTRY	Family		School		Friends		Internet	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Finland	X		X					X
Greece					X	X	X	
Italy		X					X	X
Lithuania							X	X
Norway		X					X	X
Poland	X	X						X

Adolescents identify various criteria when it comes to testing the credibility of information found on the internet: attention to type of language used, the source of the information's perceived authoritativeness and

competence level, the verification of information found online consulting books and encyclopedias considered to be very reliable.

In general, however, boys and girls prefer to consult with people possessing some degree of expertise, or with parents and friends: *"I ask my dad, who has studied or I look it up in a book"* (Italy), *"if you see that it is a good person – you trust information he recommends"* (Lithuania), *" You can search at Google and find out if something is true"* (Norway), *"I think that this is wrong I ask [about this] friends, then I ask my brother, my mother and just how many votes will be on 'yes' so it is good, and how many on 'no' this is bad"* (Poland).

### **Box 1. Privileged criteria for testing a source's credibility**

When online, the boys and girls belonging to the youngest age group, claim to follow these criteria to verify the trustworthiness of a source:

- The formal style in which the content is expressed
- The author and his/her expertise
- The comparison with other reputable sources (people or texts)
- The input of parents and friends
- The comparison with other internet sources
- The comparison with the users' comments online (see for ex. forum or medical websites)
- Perusal of users' comments online (see for ex. Forum or medical website)

As for the contents of their online searches, the sample is divided between those who report having looked up information regarding the changes related to their physiology (body hair growth for boys, the menstrual cycle for girls, but also information concerning acne, puberty, hormonal changes) or else personal experiences such as falling in love and some of the emotional and physical responses experienced (first dates, new encounters) when encountering the opposite sex (palpitations, blushing, anxiety etc.) – as reported by the Italian respondents (*"What to do when you fall in love?"*), the Lithuanians (*"we know that boys don't get menstruations, but if something is happening with boys that is not happening with us?, How to know if you are in love and if this is a right person? How to know when to kiss/hold hands/have sex?"*), while the Polish and Norwegians and others claim to research mostly information regarding sex (only in one country, Poland, an apparent lack of interest in sexual urge has emerged).

In respect to this second category, as in the case of Finland, internet searches mostly concern themes such as masturbation (*"is it normal?"*), pornography (*"Is the sex accurate/normal"*), procreation (we find this also in Poland), contraception (*"What do you do with them"*), virginity (*"What does virginity mean"*) and anal sex (*"Can a guy get poo on his penis"*).

These topics are also those that the respondents feel should be better discussed online, made more accessible and trustworthy. The rest of the sample, on the other hand, wishes that the school system would implement better information programs (Greece) and that the internet environment would improve, by banning inappropriate advertisement with explicit pornographic content, and introducing more effective barriers such as age-limits, to websites offering explicit content: *"take down the fake photos, the underage girls, the smut"* (Italy), *"I firstly thought it is not true (sexual act), but then we talked with a friend, and she confirmed that it is true"* (Lithuania).

The content of some searches, and the consequent wish that the information supplied by the internet would improve, relate to themes such as sexual orientation, the institution of marriage and divorce: *" Why some parents are married and some not? Why parents are married particularly to each other? What is homosexuality? Why do they are like that? Is it normal or abnormal? How sexual relationship do happens between two men?"* (Lithuania).

Some of the respondents express a wish to see the online environment improve in regards to a number of high-risk activities, such as abusive dynamics among peers (cyberbullying): *"A lot of bullying is related to how your body and how you look. I used to be bullied about my looks, but our teacher has talked about it. But the boys still make comments about our bodies, how a girl looks like and they comment if she is beautiful or not. They say that we are fat and ugly"* (Norway) or contexts in which sexual content is used to impose threats or cause offence (Italy and Lithuania). In general, we clearly see the wish to receive better tools and protection, to be able to tell reality from fiction, and the perception that the internet often blurs the boundaries between the two (for example, respondents from both Norway and Italy refer to the difficulty of recognizing an image as digitally edited: *"We need information about how images are edited/photoshopped", "We need to learn what is real and what is edited"*. The Norwegian sample, especially, wishes for more support from parents and teachers, especially in regards to sexual content: *"We should have one hour with puberty, body and sex often, for example at school once a month". "Sex is also fun. Therefore, it should not just be about the dangers, but also how you can do it in a nice way. We need tips!"* (Norway)

The entirety of the sample, albeit with some internal differences, expresses a need for stricter controls over online activity, the elimination of inappropriate advertising and an age-limit (a minimum of 18 years of age) for the websites they deem unsuitable for their age: *"It is not good for children to watch pornography. We don't like to see it. It is disgusting"* (Norway).

*Children can find useful information about sex on the internet, but sometimes you get a false picture of it. To me porn provides a wrong picture of sex, allowing children to misunderstand how it really is. I believe that young children should be protected from "hard" pornography. They should not be able to enter these website, but it is difficult to control. I think the children should be supervised by their parents, but the government must also do something (Norway)There should be more focus on safety, I mean protection against diseases, but also that you should not have sex with someone you barely know (Lithuania)*

### 3.2. Survey outcomes age group 13-15

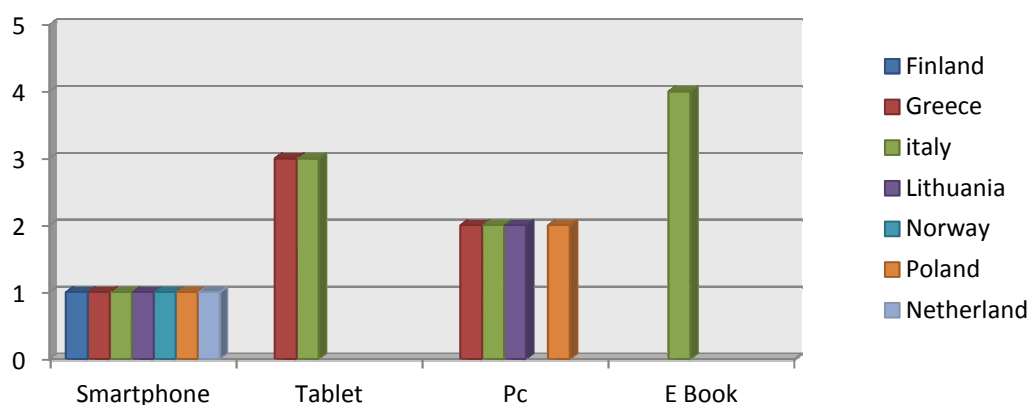
#### *Availability of new technologies and modes of employ*

The young people of the 13-15 age group use new technologies mainly through smartphones, computers and tablets (table 7).

**Table 7. Tools by frequency of use**

COUNTRY	Smartphone	Tablet	PC	E - book
Finland	1			
Greece	1	3	2	
Italy	1	3	2	4
Lithuania	1		2	
Norway	1			
Poland	1		2	
Netherlands	1			

The entire sample claims to connect at any time of day, and from anywhere, from their bedroom during school breaks, in the street or on public transport (table 8).



**Table 8. Where, when and with whom**

COUNTRY	Where			Alone	In the company of:		
	Home/free time	School	Other (on public transport or outdoors)		Parents	Teachers	Friends
Finland	X	X		X		X	X
Greece	X	X	X	X			X
Italy	X	X		X			X
Lithuania	X			X			X
Norway	X			X			X
Poland	X	X	X				
Netherlands	X	X	X				X

Internet use is closely linked to communication with friends (What's App, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook), listening to music and watching videos (You Tube), playing games either alone or with friends, keeping up to speed with the news or current affairs, sports and to research study material (table 9).

**Table 9. Modes of employ software, search engines, etc. by reasons for employ)**

COUNTRY	Interacting with friends	Sharing images and/or videos	School work	Gaming	Listening to music and/or watching videos	Other
Finland	Whatsapp Snapchat Instagram		Kahoot	Online Games	Netflix	News sport
Greece	Facebook Skype Viber			Online Games	You Tube	News sport
Italy	Whatsapp Facebook Skype Instagram					News sport
Lithuania	Facebook Instagram Snapchat Viber Skype		Diario elettronico	Online Games	You Tube	Films and tv shows
Norway	Instagram Facebook Tinder Snapchat			Online Games		News hotornot
Poland	Instagram Snapchat Facebook Tumbler			Online Games	You Tube	Blog
Netherlands	Whatsapp		Google	Online Games	You Tube	

What the respondents don't like about the internet, however, is the fact that it can cause addiction, isolation and changes of behavior as the result of playing violent games: *"it attacks you and you can't detach from it, it makes you nervous, you find you've run out of time to do stuff and you can't sleep"* (Italy), *"It is like a drug. You can get addicted, according to an article I read"* (Norway), *"I know that it is not good for us, it can damage our mentality"* (Lithuania); they also add that the use of social media can result in the creation of inauthentic bonds with people: *"phony people make me angry"* (Italy).

What is more, they recognize the dangers to one's privacy posed by the amount of personal information disseminated online and how other people can use it (cyberbullying): *"Girls are not "whores" if they do have many sex partners. It is not ok that girls get a bad rumor and get bullied if they have sex with many partners. Boys don't get bullied if they have many sex partners"* (Norway); *"a face to face relationship is better than one on the phone, because you don't see the other person emotions, you can't tell if they feel hurt"* (Italy).

Boys and girls alike all remark on the frequency with which online advertisement displays pornographic or content that is otherwise inappropriate for young people: *"Sometimes the commercial comes out and I don't manage to turn it off in time and then videos are already there [...] I don't pay attention to this kind of message – one can simply ignore them"* (Lithuania); *"If you search for information about sex there will come up a lot of information that you don't want to see"; "I believe that young children should be protected from 'hard' pornography (Netherland), "They should not be able to enter these website, but it is difficult to control"* (Norway) (table 10).

**Table 10. What is not liked**

COUNTRY	Privacy risks	Ads and/or images of inappropriate sexual content	Contacts with strangers	Cyberbullying	Addiction to/isolation caused by violent videogames	Inauthentic relationships
Finland		X				
Greece					X	
Italy	X				X	X
Lithuania		X	X	X		
Norway		X				
Poland		X			X	
Netherlands		X				

### ***Affective education and online searches***

Regarding personal topics such as their wellbeing, their desires and impulses in relation to their psycho-physical, affective and relational development, the near entirety of the sample (both female and male) claims to share these concerns with friends, with people they trust or experts: *"I speak to friends I can trust"* (Italy); *"We talk about these issues among friends"* (Norway) (table 11).

**Table 11. Information sources consulted**

COUNTRY	Family		Experts		School		Friends		Internet	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Finland					X	X			X	X
Greece		X		X			X	X	X	X
Italy				X	X				X	
Lithuania						X	X	X	X	X
Norway							X	X	X	X
Poland		X					X	X		X
Netherlands	X	X			X	X		X	X	X

Generally, they claim to search the Web whenever they need to learn about things they are too ashamed to talk to someone about, while maintaining that they usually prefer to talk face to face.

They access information through search engines (Google) or through social networks (Facebook). They believe that the internet offers them "protection" through anonymity and they judge it to be reliable: *"like to use the internet. You can ask question anonymous"* (Norway).

Moreover, many respondents cite specific sites and forums (Finland: "Suomi24.fi", "[www.vaestoliitto.fi](http://www.vaestoliitto.fi)" "[www.terveyskirjasto.fi](http://www.terveyskirjasto.fi)"; Lithuania: *Relationship Guru* "on YouTube and other "Youtubers, <http://www.cosmopolitan.lt/>"/<http://www.panele.lt/>", "Menstruation app"; Norway: "[www.ung.no](http://www.ung.no)", "I really enjoy the yahoo-answers; Netherland: "HelpWanted"; Poland: "There is a website 'mydziewczyny.pl' [being girls] and there is all the information about such subjects, like puberty, any problems, even some concerning fashion, there are such special pages, [edudu.pl](http://edudu.pl)). Despite this, the sample also expresses the need to take protective measures when using the internet.

They rarely bring their questions to their parents as they fear embarrassment and judgement: *"We cannot learn about this at home. It is embarrassing"* (Norway); *"who for example don't have a good contact with their parents and for example they are unable to talk about such things, then, you know, it's easier to just type it [into a browser] on the internet"* (Poland).

Both male and female respondents point at various *criteria available to test the credibility of information found online*: the way the information is written, the credibility of the author, the number of visualizations received by the website, the choice of search engine, the comparison between different sites: *"if you see that it is a good person – you trust information he recommends", " you see how many followers this youtuber has, and if it's a lot – you trust information he spreads"* (Lithuania) (box 2).

Generally, in any case, boys and girls like to check with friends or parents to verify the information found: *"Some spread wrong information. The say that you die if you PP pills. They "blow up" information that is wrong. They enlarged the problem. They spread rumors and you get really worried. Then it is important to talk to the nurse. They give corrections. They can give information and good information"* (Norway).

### Box 2. Privileged criteria for testing a source's credibility

When online, the boys and girls belonging to this age group, claim to follow these criteria to verify the trustworthiness of a source:

- The formal style in which the content is expressed
- The author and his/her expertise
- The comparison with other reputable sources (people or texts)
- The input of parents and friends
- The comparison with other internet sources

- Perusal of users' comments online (see for ex. forum or medical websites)
- The choice of search engine (the one deemed most trustworthy is Google)
- The familiarity of the website
- The consultation of EU or government websites

In regards to the content of online searches, the sample is divided among girls who claim to have sought information in relation to their menstrual cycle, romances and dating, while boys claim to use the Web to look for sexual content and pornographic sites, or information about certain emotional or physical changes (blushing, hormonal changes, changes in tone of voice).

As for the need for new information, the respondents from Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway wish that their parents were less judgmental, more understanding and supportive: they express a need for protection that would nonetheless allow them to explore their sexuality with curiosity, without taboos and shame: *"There are many taboos. Parents and children don't talk together about sex education issues. [...] The internet is so available, and the parents should get better control. But for me being a teenager I think I have a private life. My parents should not supervise me. I have a right to be private. It would also be a good idea to block and reduce the possibilities to search for information. You get more aware against false information the older you get."* (Norway); *"I believe that young children should be protected from "hard" pornography. They should not be able to enter these website, but it is difficult to control. I think the children should be supervised by their parents, but the government must also do something"* (Netherland); *"They get angry, it's hard to explain to them, that I wasn't searching on purpose but this content just came out. They fix me a punishment and I don't want to talk to them about this questions anymore". "It's hard to explain them that I don't know where else to search for this information, they don't talk to me about it"* (Lithuania).

In Finland, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Poland, boys and girls express the need to be informed about specific issues (puberty, STIs, contraception, sexual abuse): *"We need to learn more about prevention of abuse, rape and what to do if you are abused."*

The entirety of the sample would like to receive some form of Sex-Ed from the age of eleven and they would prefer it to be taught in school: *"We learn about sex education in 10 grade. It is far too late"* (Norway). Only in Poland and Lithuania do we find targeted educational programs in place, but the respondents judge them to be inadequate: *" For two years. I used to attend WDŻ classes and learned nothing, which could make my life easier in any way [...] in my opinion, when we talked about love and friendship, and this subject keeps coming back since the 6th grade or maybe 5th, every year it's the same and the same knowledge, you don't need this"* (Poland).

In Norway there is generally a nurse available in schools, the respondents, however, report that it is not a service that meets their needs: *"We have a nurse at school, but she is there once a week, not when I need here. It is not available. It does not help to get a scheduled time to talk. It needs to be here and now. If not, it is not a help. We don't want to talk in two weeks, we need it now. [...] Our nurse gives us condoms and says. [...] Have fun. She does not talk to us.;"* *"The school books are outdated: we had a book made in 2006 and since then since has changed a lot [...] If the teachers feel really uncomfortable to talk about the issues, they should ask someone else to carry out the sex education. It is better to get one who is trained to talk about these issues, and that really knows how to include everyone"*.

In this respect, many countries would like the school, as an institution, to assume a greater and more hands-on role in the delivery of sex education: *"We need information at school. We can't know if the information we find is true. We think it is important that the teacher explains and gives us real knowledge. [...] The*



*school should learn and warn children about the pornography, the school should explain that it has nothing to do with sex. It is exploitation. It is so unreal. [...] We think everyone should be informed about the "health service" for youth, it is important that it is available and that children get to know about all the different services" (Norway).*

#### 4. Concluding remarks

The survey has enabled the acquisition of considerable information about young people, regarding their feelings, thoughts and experiences about on-line research on issues related to emotion, sexuality and more generally their modes of socialization among peers. The present research has also made it possible to outline future operational strategies to improve what resources are available on the Web and, in general, identify what interventions can be made to promote emotional and sexual education.

What has proven essential in this sense are the voices of the boys and girls who participated in the focus groups. The sample considered, together with the evidence gained from previous studies are a major source and an excellent starting point on which to build future research and intervention programs.

To draw the final conclusion of the present study, it will be useful to compare our findings with those contained in the review commissioned by eNACSO to Sonia Livingstone and Jessica Mason (*Sexual right and sexual risk among young online*, 2015) which looks at the interactions between online and offline behaviors in relation to sexual activity.

The above mentioned study examines these issues taking into consideration various aspects that affect how young people experience their sexuality also in relation to their use of online research;

The two authors of the study, for example, take into consideration the concept of gender-pressure (masculinity / femininity), the cultural influence exercised by the media and the way young boys and girls respond to it with the tools available given the generation they belong to. It has been observed in this respect that said concept may affect the demand for online pornography, particularly with regards to boys. The review - which considers a sample aged between 10 and 17 years of age - also highlights the difficulties related to what strategies and policies are to be implemented, in order to mediate between the risks related to sexuality, in terms of prevention, and the need to freely express one's sexuality.

Now let us see examine the findings of the review with respect to three issues considered (1. Sex education and online research; 2. Exposure to pornography and other explicit sexual content; 3. Grooming, child pornography online and cyberbullying) comparing, from a qualitative and conceptual perspective, the results with the findings collected from the seven countries that participated in our study.

**1. Sexual education and online searching.** The analysis carried out by Livingstone and Mason (2015) shows how young people mainly seek online information about their sexual health and how in this respect they feel facilitated by anonymity. Despite the fact that consulting their peers remains a prime resource for finding information, the review shows that online searches about topics related to health and affectivity have been increasing steadily. Such finding is supported by our survey of Norway, but the same cannot be said of the groups surveyed in Italy (especially in relation to the youngest age bracket) or Poland, where male and female respondents express a preference for talking to people they trust, friends, family or people with recognizable expertise (especially if their questions relate to medical issues).

In the 2015 study, the content researched with respect to sexuality and health mainly revolve around issues such as HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, a conclusion that is confirmed by the data produced by the Dutch sample but not by Italian respondents, who mainly seek information about how to interact with the opposite sex, or understanding the physiological changes occurring during their sexual development (as is the case in Lithuania, Norway and Poland). The review also offers a wide range of data regarding homosexuality, which are, instead, scarce in our survey. Among the similarities, on the other hand, we find a confirmation of the role attributed to parents in dealing with sexual issues, wherever the family unit is

perceived as characterized by a positive atmosphere fostering relationships among its members - an aspect that is claimed to be important by young people in Italy, Lithuania and Poland.

**2. Exposure to pornography and other sexually explicit materials.** The British study (Livingstone and Mason, 2015) found that over 80% of teenagers have been exposed for the first time to pornography at an age between 14 and 17 years, with a higher percentage of boys. The data analyzed by the two researchers also reveals a greater exposure to sexual content among teenagers of northern European countries (Norway, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and Finland) and Eastern Europe (Czech Republic, Lithuania, Estonia and Slovenia). Within the present research, both Lithuanians and Dutch surveys reveal a greater male exposure, albeit involving different age groups: in the first country, the sample refers to young teenagers between 11 and 12 years while in the Netherlands the figure refers to adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age.

From the analysis of the existing literature the distinction between a voluntary search for pornographic content and accidental exposure (for example, through advertising or other content that appear online) is not clearly made. In the present research we have encountered both situations: on the one hand, the online voluntary search of explicitly sexual content and, on the other, the random and involuntary exposure experienced by boys and especially girls. For boys the risk of exposure to pornography and generally violent sexual content would seem to be greater; this is usually explained by scholars with their stronger adherence to cultural stereotypes of sexuality, compared to a different female perspective that would lead girls to regard pornography as something inappropriate.

In some cases, pornography is considered as a tool to verify or stimulate their own sexual performance: in our study, for example, we find that in the Netherlands boys and girls both view pornography as a tool to satisfy their pleasure and search for useful information. By contrast, the Finnish and Lithuanian samples (14-16 age bracket) believes that pornography is not a realistic representation of sexuality (“*it is done for money [...] it's fake and the people are acting*”) but, rather, a distorted view of relationships and sex. This perception is also supported by the Polish sample who expressed concerns that watching pornography can lead to addiction or other forms of psychological distress.

Livingstone and Mason’s review (2015) shows as possible factors linked to the risk of early exposure to pornography online low socioeconomic status and low educational level. The two researchers also suggest, to understand the 'propensity to pornography' of young people, the importance of assessing the impact of other factors such as religion, the use of the media, relations with their peer group, the type of parenting style received and the overall quality of family relationships.

### **3. Grooming, child pornography online and cyberbullying**

In the present research, unlike the analysis carried out in 2015, the data concerning the grooming phenomena and online child pornography has emerged spontaneously from the voice of the boys and girls interviewed, such as in Italy and Finland (age group 11-13): “*They also talked about a video about a 12-year-old girl who had been abused and a video about people with abnormally huge body parts*”. Also spontaneously, for example in Norway, in our study we found indications of other phenomena that can cause discomfort such as cyberbullying, a theme not discussed in the literature review.

**A final aspect to be considered in drawing our concluding remarks, is the body of answers offered by the boys and girls involved, to be considered as feedback, suggestions and opinions about the survey (“Impact of the activities on children and young people's lives”).**

From looking at the findings, the entire sample involved in the present research appeared cooperative and open to dialogue, recounting personal experiences and expressing feelings, considerations and suggestions, whether responding positively to the prompting of the facilitators, or offering them voluntarily.

Upon completion of the work, many expressed relief about having had the opportunity to speak with experts on the issues at hand and in general for being given a space to be heard and dialogue (One Italian: “*I feel more free; it has been liberating; I could finally express myself; I feel better, relieved*”).

The survey has been for some not only a space for listening and sharing, but also an opportunity to discuss issues that are rarely addressed in the family and their general environment, especially given the fact that in some contexts sexuality is culturally considered a taboo (such as in Lithuania). Talking about these issues was also a way to gain greater self-confidence (*Because of group and its questions, children get message that "It is ok to ask and to be interested in the topic", they might feel more self-confident*) and, generally, become more aware of their rights and the risks connected with online activity.

The space created by the focus groups was also helpful in stimulating the acquisition of certain basic skills (as well as protective factors), as noted in Norway and Poland, such as: a sense of efficacy and empowerment, self-esteem and self-confidence, the development of skills, access to wider opportunities and awareness of their rights. In the Netherlands, the respondents were enthusiastic about the focus group discussions and evaluated them very positively. They felt they had enough space to express their opinion without feeling ashamed or embarrassed. They spoke well and very openly about the subject. They thought it was 'cool' that their opinion was considered and taken into account.

In regards to the aspects to be implemented in terms of improving of the internet environment and outlining possible future interventions, the young respondents involved in our study, as occurred in previous surveys (as evidenced by Livingstone and Mason's review), report that they need more information about sexual pleasure, pregnancy and the wide range of experiences related to emotional and sexual relationships. In general, boys and girls have voiced the wish to see the quality of internet resources improved when it comes to accessing information about sex and would appreciate more effective monitoring systems in order to avoid unwanted exposure to pornography. The respondents' answers confirm the opportunity to introduce sex education programs in schools from an early age (some suggest as a start-up time the last two years of primary school) arguing their effectiveness in preventing and teaching how to cope with, and the risks related to, teen-age sexuality.

Finally, the information acquired and the positive reception demonstrated by the sample of children and adolescents involved lead us to emphasize the desirability of further research in this area, in order to acquire more useful tools to better protect young people using the Web from potentially malicious content but also to create a space for them to improve their knowledge about sex, share and dialogue as an opportunity for individual and collective well-being. Our recommendations, in this respect, is that in those countries where the education system does not yet systematically provide effective programs of affective and sexual education (from primary school) a series of institutional awareness campaigns were developed, advocating the need for their implementation.

## ANNEX I

### Young people, sexual rights and the internet - FOCUS GROUPS METHODOLOGY

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Focus groups aim at collecting children's perspective and points of view on **online sources of information about sexual health/sex education**. More specifically these focus groups consider to explore the following areas:

5. Sexual health/sex education and information-seeking online.
6. The source of information and its credibility (it is uncertain which online sources youth are using, how they judge credibility, and whether or not they see pornography as a reliable source of information about sex).
7. What types of information youth want and seek about sex, health and relationships.
8. What role parents, schools and online resources play in informing young people, and if these latter give priority to the use of a particular source.

Methods:

- four focus group interviews in each country;
- in each country: a group of younger girls (preferably aged approximately 10-11) and older girls (aged approximately 14-15), and a group of younger boys (aged 10-11) and older boys (aged 14-15);
- the countries involved should be enough representative for eNACSO space and be relevant for the EU space, i.e. a reasonable geographical coverage must be ensured (Northern, Southern, Eastern Europe).

The rationale for holding homogeneous groups according to age and gender stems partly from the sensitivity of the subject matter and partly from the likely need to develop policies specific to different target groups (rather than a 'one-size fits all' strategy).

Some further considerations are important:

- Each focus group should comprise between six and ten children. If fewer, then more groups should be conducted. If more, an experienced moderator will need to subdivide the children for a range of activities so that all get a chance to speak.
- If the focus groups are composed of 'random' children who do not already know each other, efforts should be made to minimise self-selection biases (e.g., not simply choosing enthusiastic volunteers). If focus groups are composed of children who already know each other (e.g., each group from a single school class), efforts should be made to gain diversity across groups (as a particular class may be influenced by local norms or subcultures).
- To move beyond superficial views and to develop an in-depth discussion in which everyone has time to speak, the groups should last around two hours.
- To maintain participants' interest and motivation, this will require careful planning of a series of activities, supported by appropriate materials to stimulate useful responses.

The focus groups should be organized willing to carry on with this action:

- Estimated time: 2-3 hours
- Ensure that all participants are given all the necessary information and collect their informed consent at the beginning
- Seek consent from parents and caretakers such as teachers
- One laptop each is necessary

- Snack and beverages (put in the centre of the table)
- A device to record the workshop

At the end of the Focus Groups each country should carry on the following actions:

1. To record focus group data (clarify research findings, transcribe focus group discussions, to draft a detailed report on findings).

As chair of the process, Save the Children Italy developed a focus groups report template. The purpose of this tool is to help to communicate the findings of the focus groups. The template represents a qualitative tool also useful to ask to the following general questions:

- What have you discovered?
- What insight have you gained?
- Is the knowledge something we know already, or is it new?
- How does the knowledge change your perspective on topic?
- What else do we need to know?
- What major themes emerge?

2. To present a final report of the study and its key findings according to the schedule (see paragraph timeframe).
3. To participate at the annual Members Meeting (expected to be held in Athens GR in March 2016) to brief on partners on the mid-results

**The Coordinator of the overall activity is Save the Children Italy.**

<b>Action points</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eNACSO provides each Member a lump sum of € 1.500 to implement focus groups. Eligible costs include: facilitator's per diems, travels, refreshments, renting of laptops, incentives/gifts for participants</li> </ul>	Members supported by the Coordinator	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing via Skype Call the methodology including the timeline and any other useful documents necessary to carry out focus groups.</li> </ul>	Coordinator	between 11 and 17 Feb
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members have to provide all requirements to make focus groups possible according to the Methodology proposed by the Coordinator, including policy sharing and obtaining consent from parents, teachers or any caregivers (attached to the kit provided by the Coordinator).</li> </ul>	Members	22 Feb
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft of the mid-results arisen and related report</li> </ul>	Members	15/03/2016

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An in person meeting will be organized in the mid of March in Athens where Members are requested to bring mid-term results achieved within the consultation process.</li> </ul>	Members and Coordinator	17 March
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft of end-results arisen and related report</li> </ul>	Members	18 April

## ANNEX II

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### A proposed methodology for consulting children and young people

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#### 1. *Purpose of the focus group and the ethical protections that apply.*

Focus groups aim at collecting children's perspective and points of view on **online sources of information about sexual health/sex & relationship education**. More specifically these focus groups consider to explore the following areas:

1. Sexual health/sex education and information-seeking online.
2. The source of information and its credibility (it is uncertain which online sources youth are using, how they judge credibility, and whether or not they see pornography as a reliable source of information about sex).
3. What types of information youth want and seek about sex, health and relationships.
4. What role parents, schools and online resources play in informing young people, and if these latter give priority to the use of a particular source.

Moreover in each country, specific ethical considerations may apply depending on the children's ages and cultural norms. However, to gain findings of value, it would be important that each group interview is free to address a range of sexual matters in some detail. In consequence, it is important that:

- appropriate permissions and informed consent are obtained from parents (or responsible caretakers) and the participants themselves;
- interviews take place in a comfortable and relaxed environment, preferably with no parent or teachers observing;
- ethical procedures are in place to ensure anonymity and confidentiality in reporting, ability to withdraw from the discussion at any time, care taken to respect what children say, and security in managing and storing data;
- follow-up procedures ensure that any risks or problems revealed during the research are treated with due consideration and necessary privacy.

#### 2. *Introductions and warm-up chat to get everyone comfortable in speaking.*

Suggested focus: how they use the internet and digital media in their everyday lives and what they like

<p>2.1 IF, WHERE and WHEN do you use the internet?</p> <p>This could be either at home or in other places, such as at school or friends' houses.</p> <p>By using the internet we include all the different options available: you might do when you use it i.e. emailing, visiting websites as well as chatting with your friends or other people by using MSN,Whatsup, etc.</p>
<p>2.2 HOW do you use internet?</p> <p>Alone, with friends, with your classmates at school, with your parents, etc</p> <p>Again, by using the internet we include all the different things you might do when you use it i.e. emailing, visiting websites as well as chatting with your friends or other people by using MSN, Whatsup, etc.</p>
<p>2.3 HOW LONG do you use internet?</p>

2.4 WHAT do you like and dislike?

**3.A Focus on sources of information, including personal, health, safety and sexual & relationship information.**

**NOTA BENE: This point is only related to young people from 14 to 15 years old**

The aim of this point is to know which online sources youth from 14 to 15 years old more often use, what they find helpful and why; how they judge credibility; how such information should be made available; what else is needed, what role parents, schools and online resources play in informing them, and if they prefer using or relying on some given sources.

*It would be useful to discuss also on alternative and potentially problematic sources of sensitive information (e.g whether or not they see pornography as a credible source of information about sex) You could shortly describe some of the key findings of the report – ie.: young people get sexual information from pornography or chatrooms or websites they don't really trust, they can't gain information at all. Discuss the pros and cons of this. Discuss how they decide what to trust, what guidance should be available, whether more protections are needed.*

Extend this into a wider discussion of the sex and relationship education curriculum at school: is this effective, what's needed and at what age?

3a.1 Sex and relationship information-seeking offline: where/who
3a.2 Which online sources you usually use on this topic
3a.3 What's helpful and why
3a.4 How you decide what to trust
3a.5 How such information should be made available; what else is needed and at what age
3a.6 If you could choose in which way would you prefer to receive the information you need Do you think sex and relationship education should be provided in school? <sup>3</sup>
3a.7 Do you have sex and relationship education curriculum in your school: is this effective, what's needed and at what age? <sup>4</sup>

**3.B Focus on sources of information, including personal, health, safety and relationship education**

**NOTA BENE: This point is only related to 11 13 target groups**

The aim of this point is to know which online sources children from 11 to 13 years old more often use, what they find helpful and why; how they judge credibility; how such information should be made available; what else is

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<sup>3</sup> The answer to this question will depend widely on the legislative situation in each country and it would be useful to contextualize the research: nowadays in the European Union education is controlled by the individual states which may leave decisions to the local level or may set guidelines for curricula and subject matter. Because sexuality education is nationally mandated, instruction about sexuality varies widely because decisions about curricula are usually determined at the state and local levels.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem



needed, what role parents, schools and online resources play in informing them, and if they prefer using or relying on some given sources.

*It would be useful to discuss also on alternative and potentially problematic sources of sensitive information whenever questions would emerge on this point (e.g access sites, contents, images that are inappropriate for their age. Children may stumble across content online or actively search for sexual content which isn't appropriate for their age. It is natural for children to push boundaries and explore, however, it can be risky. Online it is easy to quickly access a wide variety of pornographic content including hardcore and extreme images and videos).*

Extend this into a wider discussion of the relationship education curriculum at school: is this effective, what's needed and at what age?

3b.1 Relationship information seeking offline: where/Who
3b.2 Which online sources you usually use on this topic
3b.3 What's helpful and why
3b.4 How you decide what to trust
3b.5 How such information should be made available; what else is needed and at what age
3b.6 If you could choose in which way would you prefer to receive the information you need Do you think relationship education should be provided in school? <sup>5</sup>
3b.7 Do you have relationship education curriculum in your school: is this effective, what's needed and at what age? <sup>6</sup>

**4. Close and thanks. Inform participants of the next steps. Offer to follow up as needed.**

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<sup>5</sup> The answer to this question will depend widely on the legislative situation in each country and it would be useful to contextualize the research: nowadays in the European Union education is controlled by the individual states which may leave decisions to the local level or may set guidelines for curricula and subject matter. Because sexuality education is nationally mandated, instruction about sexuality varies widely because decisions about curricula are usually determined at the state and local levels.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem

## ANNEX III

### Young people, sexual rights and the internet Focus Group Report Format

1. General information	
Name and Country of the Organization	
Social context <sup>7</sup>	
Date and place of the activity	
<i>Context in which the focus group is being organized (school or other places)</i>	
Description of the group of children/young people involved (number of participants their ages, gender, abilities, different backgrounds)	
How do you determine the composition of focus groups? Do they know each others?	
The number of facilitators their professional profile/expertise and gender	
How long time did the focus group take? Were there any special observations that are relevant for the findings? (e.g. an argument took place or someone got angry and left etc.)	
Resources and tools at disposal for the focus groups (if any)	
Use of operational guidelines and procedures	
2. How they use the internet and digital media in their everyday lives and what they like (for both the target groups 11-13; 14-15)	
<p>How did children respond to questions related to the access and uses of different kinds of technology?</p> <p>WHERE they you use internet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- their bedroom or other private room;</li> <li>- at home (living room or other public room);</li> <li>- at school;</li> <li>- in an internet café;</li> <li>- in a public library or other public place;</li> <li>- at a friend's home;</li> </ul>	

<sup>7</sup> NB Take in account the diverse experiences of girls and boys from different backgrounds

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- at a relative's home</li> </ul> <p>HOW they use internet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- visited a social networking profile;</li> <li>- visited a chatroom;</li> <li>- used instant messaging, i.e. exchanged messages on the internet with online friends or contacts;</li> <li>- played games with other people on the internet.</li> </ul> <p>WHEN they use internet these days?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School time; free time, etc</li> </ul> <p>With WHO?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- alone</li> <li>- friends,</li> <li>- parents,</li> <li>- teachers,</li> <li>- peers, etc</li> </ul> <p>Please highlight reactions, opinions and quotes that might be relevant for the research</p>	
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**3. A. Focus on sources of information, including personal, health, safety and sexual & relationship information (FOCUS GROUPS GIRLS AND BOYS 14-15 YEARS OLD)**

<p>1. Please report how young people (target groups 14-15) responded to the question related to sexual &amp; relationship education and information seeking online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online sources of information about sexual health most important for youth (please consider especially low-income, LGBT and homeless youth, if any).</li> <li>- Which online sources they are using, credibility of information and whether or not they see pornography as a credible source of information about sex.</li> <li>- What types of information youth want and seek about sex, health and relationships.</li> <li>- What role parents, schools and web resources play in informing youth.</li> </ul> <p>2. Report (if any) gender differences in viewing content which isn't appropriate for their age or pornography, its impact and attitudes towards it.</p> <p>3. Report (if any) what types of content which isn't appropriate for their age or pornography youth are exposed to or seek access to, and whether this makes any difference in their attitudes and perceptions.</p> <p>Please highlight reactions, opinions and quotes that might be relevant for the research..</p>	
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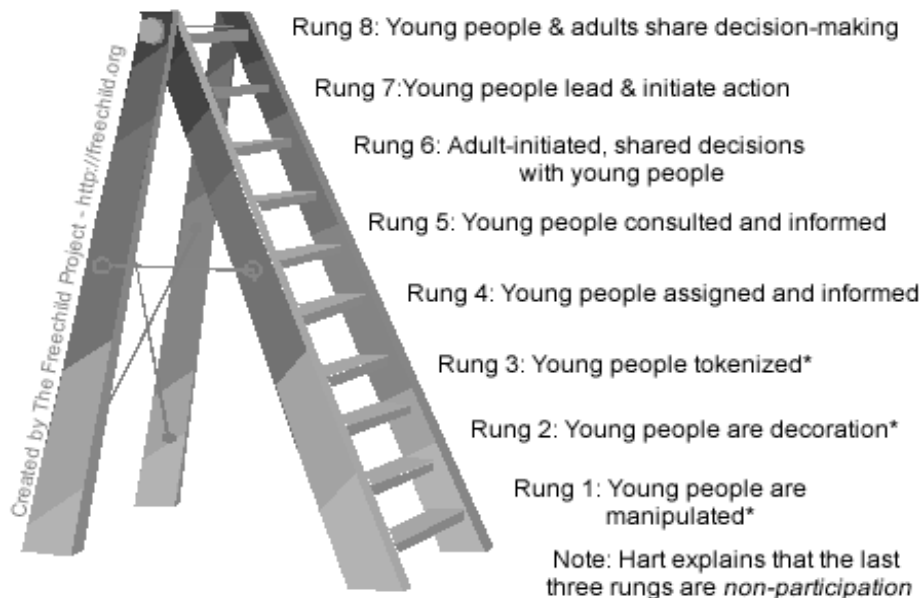
**3. B. Focus on sources of information, including personal, health, safety and relationship information (FOCUS GROUPS GIRLS AND BOYS 11-13 YEARS OLD)**

<p>1. Please report how young people (target groups 11-13) responded to the question related to relationship education and information seeking online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online sources of information about relationship education most important for youth (please consider especially low-income, LGBT and homeless youth, if any).</li> <li>- Which online sources they are using, credibility of information.</li> <li>- What types of information youth want and seek about health and relationships.</li> <li>- What role parents, schools and web resources should play in informing youth.</li> </ul> <p>2. Report (if any) gender differences in viewing content which isn't appropriate for their age its impact and attitudes towards it.</p> <p>3. Report (if any) what types of content which isn't appropriate for their age youth are exposed to or seek access to, and whether this makes any difference in their attitudes and perceptions.</p> <p>Please highlight reactions, opinions and quotes that might be relevant for the research.</p>	
<p>Anything else to add?</p>	
<p>Strong/Weak points</p>	
<p>Difficulties/Obstacles</p>	
<p><b>4. Impact of the activities on children and young people's lives</b></p>	
<p>The impact on children and young people's participation SHOULD BE ASSESSED by the FG staff in accordance with the objectives for involving them as users of ICTs and New Media as a means for expressing their view and being seriously listened to.</p> <p>The impact may include one or more of the following dimension:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Impact on children themselves</li> <li>2. Children demonstrate or experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- greater self esteem and self confident</li> <li>- access to more skills</li> <li>- access to wider opportunities</li> <li>- an awareness of right</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a sense of efficacy and empowerment</li> </ul>	
<b>5. Impact of the activities on parents/institutions</b>	
<p>The impact on parents/institution SHOULD BE ASSESSED by the FG staff by including the following dimension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Level of awareness of children’s rights and needs</li> <li>- A great level of sensitivity to children’s rights and needs</li> <li>- A greater understanding of children’s capacities</li> <li>- A willingness to consult with and take account of children’s view</li> </ul>	

Set the line where you think it fits on the “Ladder of Young People’s Participation

## Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

