GLOBAL KIDS ONLINE

Argentina: a multi-stakeholder approach to promoting digital citizenship and literacy

Summary

The Impact good practice examples aim to demonstrate how different research teams from the Global Kids Online network planned their knowledge exchange and impact strategies in a way that matches the particular country contexts, responds to the challenges faced and draws on the resources available to them. The examples introduce the key Global Kids Online findings and the challenges presented by the country context, outline the decisions made regarding impact priorities and the choices of impact strategy and actions, and discuss the outcomes and example activities. Some ways in which the impact has been measured are also outlined, mostly related to the short- and medium-term impact.

The Argentinian country example highlights how the UNICEF team has identified digital citizenship and literacy as the core focus of their campaigns and activities and the strategies used to increase knowledge exchange and impact. The areas of strategic work include policy-making, educational opportunities, awareness rising and multi-stakeholder engagement, and the team has managed to integrate a number of creative approaches to increase the success of their activities, including using media campaigns with public figures and children's theatre performances.

Global Kids Online research findings

Between August 2015 and May 2016 UNICEF Argentina, MBC Mori and Ipsos carried out a mixed method study on the knowledge, attitudes and practices of adolescents aged 13–18 who use the internet. The survey, part of Global Kids Online, included 1,106 young people, and was nationally representative at regional level. It was supplemented by 12 focus groups of adolescents and parents from the city and the province of Buenos Aires. It found that young people start using the internet at around the age of 11 and go online most often via a mobile phone (for 9 out of 10

adolescents), followed by desktop PCs and laptops (59%) (Ravalli and Paoloni, 2016). They spend a lot of time online – more than half said that they are online all the time, with girls spending on average more time using the internet than boys. Their home or the homes of relatives and friends are the most common places where adolescents connect to the internet (Ravalli and Paoloni, 2016). Almost all use social media, and Facebook is the most popular social media platform – 95% have a profile there (Ravalli and Paoloni, 2016).

The study demonstrated that many adolescents experience harm from online risk – 78% have experienced something upsetting during the past year, with the most common negative incidents being related to receiving unpleasant or disturbing messages (33%). As a response to something upsetting happening online, the most common reaction is to block the person (65%). When looking for help, the preferred person to seek support from is a peer (56%) rather than an adult (Ravalli and Paoloni, 2016). Even though the adolescents access the internet most often at home, 68% said that their families know little about their internet activities. Half of the adolescents do not follow the recommendations that their parents or carers make, and 9% are not given any recommendations (Ravalli and Paoloni, 2016).

Challenges presented by the Argentinian context

- Government policies focus on the provision of universal access to broadband internet and improvements in telecommunication services and infrastructure, but more efforts are needed to eliminate digital inequalities.

- A number of different government bodies and institutions are working towards reducing digital inequalities, but the main challenge remains the harmonisation and integration of these different internal public policies.

- A more comprehensive approach is needed that

also focuses on children's rights and digital citizenship, online opportunities, digital skills and online protection.

Deciding on impact priorities

While government policy focuses mainly on providing equal access, and the media often concentrates primarily on the negative aspects of the internet, the research findings highlighted the need to prioritise digital citizenship and literacy as a way of addressing the high proportion of adolescents reporting harmful experiences. By focusing on digital citizenship and literacy, the team wanted to explain the benefits of the internet when accompanied with the necessary digital skills, responsible use and support from parents and educators.

Impact strategy and actions

The team identified several strategic areas to work on digital citizenship and literacy (Ravalli, 2017):

- **Promoting digital citizenship policy:** endorsing a comprehensive and inter-sector digital citizenship policy, which may promote responsible, safe and effective use of media and ICTs and reduce digital inequalities. Taking into account the current debate about the converging communication laws, it is essential to consider both the opportunities as well as the risks for children and adolescents derived from ICTs. It is also important to identify mechanisms that may engage the opinion of children and adolescents in drafting legislation. Digital equality is also related to promoting the development of the necessary and adequate infrastructure of connectivity and digital inclusion, particularly in rural areas.

- **Development of educational opportunities:** creating more and better training and resources for teachers on digital citizenship, and using curricular and extra-curricular educational spaces attended by children and adolescents (including services for early childhood care, primary and secondary school, clubs, integration centres and libraries) to promote digital citizenship. Digital inclusion efforts must also pay particular attention to those who are more vulnerable, such as indigenous children,

migrants, children in poor or rural settings or those who suffer from some disability.

- **Promoting awareness among families and the wider public in a regular and sustained manner:** to that end, various instances are required such as face-to-face and mass media strategies as well as resources including training material and outreach initiatives.

- **Initiating a multi-player and cross-sector approach to work more effectively for digital citizenship:** working with representatives of civil society, academia, the private sector, business chambers, relevant international organisations, trade unions and the various provincial and national government agencies, such as the Ministries of Communications, Education, Social Development, Health, Modernisation, Justice and others.

Outcomes and impact activities

UNICEF Argentina had not carried out research on children, adolescents and the internet prior to Global Kids Online. The team had to develop new knowledge exchange and communication strategies, but the project can now be considered one of the frontrunners in the field of stakeholder engagement by key performance indicators (KPIs) and budgets allocated to this purpose. In order to make progress, UNICEF Argentina planned and carried out a number of activities (Ravalli, 2017):

- **Working with the media:** UNICEF Argentina has been maintaining a productive relationship with the media for more than 15 years, and recently initiated the creation of a network of journalists to work together to promote open and positive communication around issues related to children and the internet.[1] Journalists from every province in Argentina are involved in the network, and receive training and information on how to cover issues related to children and adolescents, including sensitive topics. UNICEF is currently developing guidelines for media on how to cover issues related to children's use of technology.

- **Media monitoring:** UNICEF Argentina also established a monitoring system through

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[1] See http://enredados.org.ar/

contacts with journalists and a partnership with the Ombudsmen for media, as well as the national authorities for Communications. These institutions have the power and are entitled to receive claims and mediate or issue warnings and advice on improving media coverage. UNICEF Argentina facilitates improvements in coverage by reaching out to media outlets, and offers guidance on how to cover issues around children.

- **Early engagement with stakeholders and an ongoing dialogue:** at the start of the Global Kids Online project in Argentina, the team from UNICEF Argentina initiated a dialogue with key stakeholders from government bodies, the public sector, industry, media, the academic sector and civil society to discuss the possibilities offered by the project and how best to inform policy and practice related to digital citizenship. Once the data was gathered, UNICEF held a series of dialogues on digital citizenship in order to deepen the analysis of the results and expand its implications for policy and practice. With the release of the final results, UNICEF Argentina hosted a number of roundtable discussions with representatives from academia, relevant ministries or bodies involved in policies around ICTs and the private sector. Following the roundtable meetings, individual meetings were also hosted. Reports were published in Spanish and English. This approach contributed to exploring the potential of the project, generating recommendations and identifying key challenges for protecting and promoting the rights of children and adolescents in relation to their digital citizenship.

- **Input into the legal framework:** based on its expertise from the study, UNICEF was invited to provide input into the new Convergent Communications Law discussed in government

that will change the regulation of telecommunications, cable, television and audio-visual services in general.[2] The commission working on the proposal issued a document stating the key principles, one of which refers to the promotion of digital and media literacy.

- **Curriculum development and training:** The team tried to use the new government's interest in digital education as a window of opportunity to promote a new training programme – the Digital Coexistence programme – which was created as an inter-sectoral programme in the province of Buenos Aires led by the Children's Agency, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Education, UNICEF and NGOs.[3] Its aim was capacity building for teachers, child protection and justice officers, children and families, and it employed face-to-face and digital training as well as an online campaign. As part of this work UNICEF is currently developing a curriculum for teachers and protection officers, parents and children in the largest province in the country.

- **The wider public:** UNICEF worked with a range of public figures, consultants and media partners to reach the wider public with its campaigns, choosing a range of formats to present the findings and lessons learned in a dynamic and attractive way, using humour in key campaign messages, theatre performances for children, public campaigns, concerts, etc. (see Figure 1). For example, a **theatre play** was created for children in which 10-year-old students participated under the Digital Coexistence programme. The play's script was based on research findings from the study. A 'Let's talk about everything' **web platform and chat helpline** was established with the National Youth Secretariat.

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[2] For details see
www.enacom.gob.ar//multimedia/noticias/archivos/201606/archivo_20160628124035_8431.pdf

[3] See www.gba.gob.ar/convivenciadigital

Figure 1: UNICEF Argentina's activities and results related to Global Kids Online communication and impact		
Report launch	Data were presented by a **stand-up comedian** before the conventional presentation took place	Front-page coverage by three newspapers
	An **exhibition** that showed devices from different eras of technological development was organised aiming for a more emotional response and engagement	The launch helped establish the report, which is now a valued resource in the country
'No Da Compartir' campaign	As cyberbullying was the most widespread negative issue for Argentinian adolescents, the team partnered with a government agency in the multi-year communication campaign, 'No Da Compartir' ('It's not cool to share'), which generated opportunities for audiences to engage with data and topics: Focus on **massive events** (Lollapalooza festival) Focus on **influencers** Days like Internet Day or Friends Day were used to highlight the message	The combination of data and influencers led to the message being widely distributed
#Replay for all campaign	Various activities were employed	The campaign achieved a good reach and became a trending topic

Measuring impact

Changes at the legislation and public policies level linked to the project (Ravalli, 2017):

- UNICEF took part in creating a Digital Coexistence programme with the Provincial Agency for Children of the Ministry of Social Development, the General Direction of Culture and Education and the Ministry of Justice in the province of Buenos Aires. The programme aims to create digital citizenship awareness by working with children and their families, youth leaders, representative of the education and justice systems, child protection services, and the media. As part of the programme a guide and special materials with information for adults were designed to raise awareness about the importance of accompanying children and adolescents in their digital consumption. Workshops were held with educators and practitioners.

- A provincial law was amended: the province of Buenos Aires Government recently repealed the banning of personal digital devices in schools that had existed since 2006, leaving it to the discretion of each school whether or not to allow the devices to be used. This was changed in October 2016 when the use of mobile phones, tablets, notebooks and PCs was allowed in Buenos Aires schools for educational purposes, and included references to UNICEF's study.

Curriculum changes: in the province of Buenos Aires, where the Digital Coexistence programme has been implemented, a week of citizenship and digital coexistence was created from 23-27 October 2016 to raise awareness of the issue.

Future directions

- Promote the Digital Coexistence programme at national level.
- Amplify the implementation of the Digital Coexistence programme in the province of Buenos Aires.
- Continue advocating for a Convergence Communication Law that respects the rights of children and adolescents.

Global Kids Online's areas of impact	Areas of impact demonstrated by the case study
✓ Academic impact	
✓ Conceptual impact	✓
✓ Capacity-building impact	✓
✓ Collective impact	
✓ Instrumental impact	✓
More about Global Kids Online's approach to impact and the five areas of impact: www.globalkidsonline.net/impact	

References

Ravalli, M. (2017). Engaging with stakeholders: The experience of Argentina. In S. Livingstone et al. *Global Kids Online: Knowledge exchange and impact meeting report.* London: London School of Economics and Political Science. http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/gko/working-on-knowledge-exchange-and-impact/

Ravalli, M. and Paoloni, P. (2016). *Global Kids Online Argentina: Research study on the perceptions and habits of children and adolescents on the use of technologies, the internet and social media.* Buenos Aires: UNICEF Argentina. www.globalkidsonline/argentina

Appendix 1

Population (in 000s)[1]	43.8 million
GDP per capita[2]	12,449.2 PPS per inhabitant
Fixed-telephone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants[3]	23.4
Mobile-cellular subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	150.7
Fixed (wired)-broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	15.6
Mobile-broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	150.7
Households with a computer (%)	67.6
Households with internet access at home (%)	59
Individuals using the internet (%)	70.2

Sources:

[1] UN

[2] The World Bank (2016)

[3] ITU (2016)

Appendix 2

Survey sample size: 1,106 young people

National partner: UNICEF Argentina

Age group: 13–18

Data collection: October 2015

Data collected by: Ipsos Argentina

Areas: A national sample of the population of large urban centres (largest cities of 500,000 inhabitants), including different regions of the country

Administration: Home, face-to-face

Language: Spanish

Qualitative research: 12 focus groups of 60 adolescents aged 13—17 and 32 mothers and fathers of the adolescents in the same age range, residents of the city of Buenos Aires and the province of Buenos Aires

Further details: www.globalkidsonline.net/argentina