GLOBAL
KIDS
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Montenegro: a participatory approach in promoting digital 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 Montenegro country example highlights how UNICEF has used the data to start a nation-wide End Violence Online campaign to raise awareness and promote digital safety and literacy, which is understood as the ability to find, use, share, create and critically assess a variety of media content.[1] Through this campaign, a wide partnership was established between the government, UNICEF, private sector, media, academia, civil sector, children, parents and families. Global Kids Online research in this country fuelled a public debate about the best ways to support every child to learn how to use the internet safely and responsibly, as well as how to actively participate in the digital society.

The campaign granted children and young people a central role in the participatory research, social media campaign and public debate on the Global Kids Online research findings. The child-centred approach included a number of creative activities, such as participatory film-making, participatory research and designing of a mobile app with an anti-bullying game.

Global Kids Online research findings

UNICEF and Ipsos in Montenegro joined efforts in June 2016 to carry out a nationally representative survey of 1,002 children and parents looking at children's use of the internet (Logar et al., 2016).[2] The study found that in Montenegro, 91% of the children are online, with non-users being from economically deprived families. Children start to use the internet earlier than before, aged 7–8. Smartphones are the most-used device to access the internet, and children spend on average 3–4 hours online every day. While most children have a social network profile, it is worrying that 53% reveal the name of their school, 35% their home address, 13% use fake profiles and some send pictures to unknown people.

In terms of risks, 38% of the children reported that they had seen something upsetting online, but only 4% reported the problem. The majority of children turn to their parents when something upsetting happens (66%) and a third seek help from friends (31%). Children report being bothered by viewing violence and fights online – a fifth stated that they had seen recorded videos of their peers fighting. A total of 29% say they have seen sexual images online, while 4% of parents think their children might have. In terms of mediation by school and parents, younger children more often initiate discussions about online experiences. Parental support and protection are limited and mostly involve talking to the children. Moreover, parents' digital skills lag behind as the children grow up. Only every second child uses the internet at school. The children feel that they know more about the internet than their parents, and 1 in 2 older children (aged 15–17) feel they more know about the internet than their teachers. Over 50% of the parents named the school as their preferred source of getting information and advice on how to help and support their child on the internet and on how

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[1] See www.unicef.org/montenegro/campaigns_29360.html

[2] See www.unicef.org/montenegro/campaigns_29362.html

to keep their child safe.

Challenges presented by the Montenegrin context

- Global Kids Online research shows that children living in poverty are those who most often lack access to the internet and who have weaker digital literacy. Also, their parents, according to the research, are less engaged in the parental mediation of internet usage, making the children even more vulnerable. Building media literacy intergenerationally is challenging. It is especially hard to reach parents who are generally not interested or lack the time to commit to this topic, in particular when they are struggling with poverty.

- In order to overcome the digital divide, which mostly affects children who are already marginalised by poverty, every child needs to be provided with access and knowledge to benefit from digital technology. Therefore, digital literacy needs to become part of the regular, mandatory primary school curriculum. Just like every child learns to count and to read in school, in the digital age every child needs to acquire digital literacy in school.

- Global Kids Online research indicates that schools need to become the leaders of the process of building a safe, inclusive, digital society in Montenegro. One in two parents want to get information on how to support children online in their child's school. However, to assume this role, teachers need to be provided with systematic support to acquire digital skills and adopt digital pedagogy to teach children digital competencies, which are part of the 21st-century skills that the education system aims to develop.

Deciding on impact priorities

The approach of the UNICEF Montenegro team was to use the Global Kids Online data to open a public debate on digital safety and literacy in order to raise awareness and create public demand and

support for digital literacy education (Perovic, 2017).

Impact strategy and actions

- **Advocacy:** the Prime Minister of Montenegro Milo Đukanović and UNICEF Montenegro Representative Benjamin Perks launched the End Violence Online campaign together, giving it high visibility and placing digital literacy and online safety at the top of the public agenda. Representatives of the international community, civil and private sector, media, academia, children, parents and teachers joined the launch event.[3]

July 2016, press conference with Montenegro's Prime Minister Milo Đukanović and UNICEF Montenegro Representative Benjamin Perks launching the End Violence Online campaign in the capital of Montenegro, Podgorica

- **Social mobilization:** Global Kids Online data and its policy implications were discussed widely in the social media campaign[4] (#EndViolenceOnline, #ZaustavimoNasiljeOnline, #GlobalKidsOnline), national print and electronic media with spokespersons from all sectors of society – the government, UNICEF, academia, civil and private sector, media, children, parents and teachers. Videos created with the children's active participation were used in the social media campaign, as well as at campaign events and on national TV.[5]

- **Child-centred approach:** participatory research was carried out by young people in high schools in several municipalities in cooperation with the University of Sheffield, UK,

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[3] See www.unicef.org/montenegro/campaigns_29433.html
[4] See www.unicef.org/montenegro/campaigns_29644.html

[5] See www.unicef.org/montenegro/campaigns_29363.html

University of Montenegro and the Ipsos research agency. Young people conducted focus groups with their peers about their online experiences. They were also engaged in participatory film-making on this topic. Their findings and outputs were used in young people's debates on the topic, such as the one on cyberbullying organised for UNICEF's 70th anniversary with representatives from national and local authorities, the international community, the civil and private sector and the media, listening to children's voices on the issue.[6]

December 2017, young people discussing cyberbullying based on participatory research they had conducted within the End Violence Online campaign in Montenegro

- **Behaviour change:** Global Kids Online research showed that children aged 9–11 are the most vulnerable online as they have the weakest digital skills and thus need the most parental support. Global Kids Online research also indicates that this age group plays games online most of the time and so, teaching them how to be safe online should happen through play. NETprijatelji (NETFriends), an educational role-play online game about digital safety, was developed for children aged 9–11, with children and parents having participated in its development and pre-testing.[7] NETprijatelji takes children through real-life scenarios and teaches them how to recognise, prevent, stop and report violence. It is available both as an app for smartphones and as n online game at www.netprijatelji.me. Every parent, regardless of their digital skills, can use the app to talk to their child and support them to learn how to be safe online and offline. In this way, it can lead to changing parents and children's behaviour online. The game can be used as an innovative

tool in schools and to help every teacher, regardless of their digital skills, to promote a culture of non-violence and to teach children how to be safe in the digital age.[8]

- **Private sector partnerships:** a three-year partnership agreement has been signed between Telenor and UNICEF Montenegro. This includes introducing digital literacy into primary education, establishing communication with parents on this topic through schools and providing relevant resources for increasing the digital literacy of parents and teachers.[9]

October 2017, UNICEF Montenegro Representative Osama Khogali, Deputy Minister of Education Arijana Nikolić Vučinić and General Manager of Telenor Montenegro Sandra Štajner launching a three-year partnership aimed at providing digital literacy to every child by 2020

Outcomes and impact activities

- A public debate on Global Kids Online findings: hundreds of social media posts and national print and electronic media reports on this topic fuelled a public debate on digital safety and literacy. More than a million people were reached through the #EndViolenceOnline social media campaign.

- Thousands of children and parents were acquainted with the NETprijatelji game – data from the game app and website show that boys and girls aged 9–12 play the game in almost equal proportions; 95% say they like it and that they learned something new from it. Also, 95% say they feel more capable in dealing with online violence after playing the game. The children say they have learned from the game

[6] See www.unicef.org/montenegro/campaigns_30227.html
[7] See www.unicef.org/montenegro/campaigns_29976.html
[8] See www.unicef.org/montenegro/campaigns_30082.html
[9] See www.unicef.org/montenegro/campaigns_31500.html

who to report online violence to, who to talk to about it and how to protect their privacy online. After playing the game, they say they would report violence first to parents, then to Montenegro's Computer Incident Response Team, the police and then their teachers.[10]

November 2016, children aged 9-11 participating at the launch of the NETprijatelji app developed for them to learn how to be safe online

- The campaign based on the Global Kids Online research resulted in an initiative to introduce digital pedagogy and thus, to include digital literacy in the primary school curriculum across all subjects in Montenegro. This will have a long-lasting, sustainable impact on children's lives as it will help overcome the digital divide (1 in 5 parents and 1 in 10 children have no access to the internet in Montenegro). Children living in poverty are most often those lacking access to digital technology. Further, not all children and parents are equally skilled in using digital technology when they have access to it: Global Kids Online research shows that those from families with a low socioeconomic background have the weakest digital competencies. Also, 1 in 2 parents say they want to learn in the child's school how to support children online. Hence, the campaign will support schools in providing digital literacy to every child and to become the leaders of the process of building safe, inclusive digital communities. This is in line with the objectives of the education system to develop 21st-century skills, which include digital skills.

Future directions

- In 2018, nationally representative research of primary and high school teachers will be conducted on their knowledge, attitudes and practices related to digital safety, literacy and pedagogy.

- Based on the Global Kids Online research with children, parents and teachers, resources will be developed for inserting digital pedagogy and literacy into the education system. The NETprijatelji app will be used for this purpose, as well as additional resources for parents, teachers and children aged 9–11 and 12–14.

- There are plans for a second wave of the Global Kids Online nationally representative research for children aged 9–17 in 2019-20.

Global Kids Online's areas of impact	Areas of impact demonstrated by the case study
✓ Academic impact[11]	✓
✓ Conceptual impact	✓
✓ Capacity-building impact	✓
✓ Collective impact	
✓ Instrumental impact	✓
More about Global Kids Online'ss approach to impact and the five areas of impact: www.globalkidsonline.net/impact	

References

Logar, S., Anzelm, D., Lazic, D. & Vujacic, V. (2016). *Global Kids Online Montenegro: Opportunities, risks and safety*. Global Kids Online. www.globalkidsonline.net/montenegro

Perovic, J. (2017). Engaging with stakeholders: The experience of Montenegro. 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/

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[10] See https://youtu.be/Hm-ttm9Ht7I

[11] See Cortoni, I. (2017) Digital competence and family mediation in the perception of online risk to adolescents. Analysis of the Montenegro case study. *International Journal of Media*

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Appendix 1

Population (in 000s)[1]	620,029
GDP per capita[2]	6,701.0 PPS per inhabitant
Fixed-telephone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants[3]	23.8
Mobile-cellular subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	167.5
Fixed (wired)-broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	16.7
Mobile-broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	60.7
Households with a computer (%)	58.2
Households with internet access at home (%)	69.8
Individuals using the internet (%)	69.9

Sources:

[1] Logar et al. (2016)

[2] The World Bank (2016)

[3] ITU (2016)

Appendix 2

Survey sample size: 1,002 children and parents

National partner: UNICEF Montenegro

Age group: 9–17

Data collection: June 2016

Data collected by: Ipsos Montenegro

Areas: Rural and urban

Administration: Home, face-to-face

Language: Montenegrin
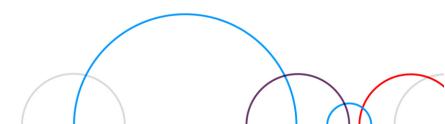
Complemented by: Qualitative study

Further details:
www.globalkidsonline.net/montenegro

End Violence Online campaign:
www.unicef.org/montenegro/campaigns_29360.html