GLOBAL KIDS ONLINE

Children's rights in the digital age

Gathering global evidence on children's online rights, opportunities, and risks

Tools for researchers

Research results

Research updates

About the project

Participating countries

Contact

Tools for researchers

A multi-method toolkit for investigating children's online experiences around the world

Research results

Our research results and latest findings from around the world

Children's participation in digital policy-making
2nd December 2022

A fundamental pillar to realise the rights of every child both in the online and offline space is the meaningful participation of all children, especially of those

Implementing child rights online: a Global Kids Online webinar
21st November 2022

With children's experiences of online risk of harm often in the headlines, we urgently need new rigorous comparative research

Three in ten children in Brazil look for mental health and well-being information online
16th August 2022

The 8th edition of the ICT Kids Online Brazil survey is launched today by the Regional Center for Studies on the Development of

pending time online can boost hildren's well-being– epending on their social ramework
4th June 2022

ontrary to what many fear, the ime children spend in front of a creen is associated with a good

Online sexual exploitation and abuse: new findings
1st June 2022

Protecting children from online sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA) has been at the forefront of international efforts over the past week. The

Children's experiences of risks online in Zambia
9th May 2022

Like children in many parts of the world, the COVID-19 pandemic profoundly affected the lives of children in Zambia, with many moving online for

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@EUKidsOnline
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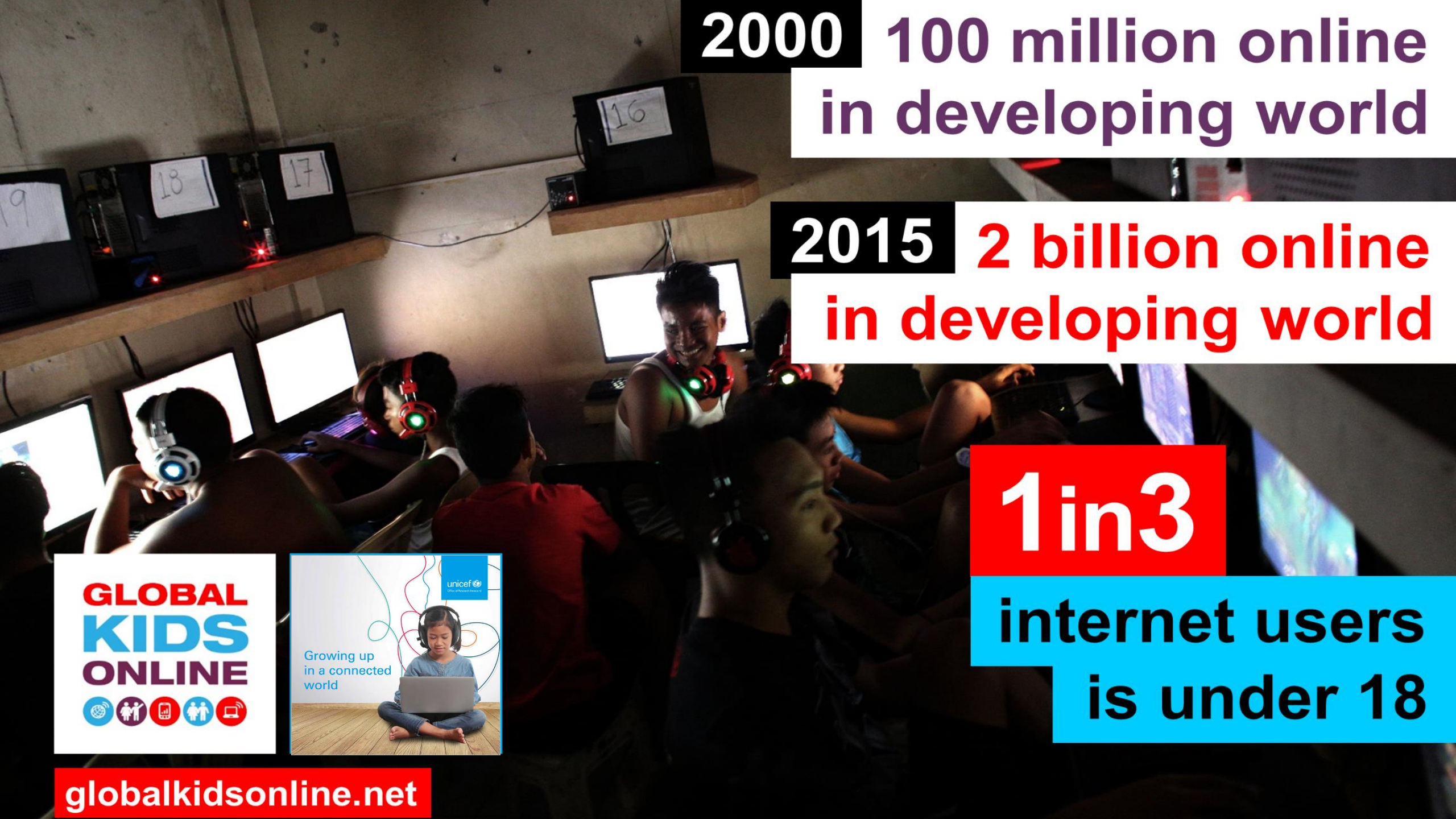
2000
100 million online
in developing world
2015
2 billion online
in developing world
1in3
internet users
is under 18
GLOBAL
KIDS
ONLINE
unicef
Growing up
in a connected
world
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Global Kids Online aims to:

- Construct a research framework and toolkit for global comparative research on children's online experiences
- Create an international network of researchers and experts and build national capacity
- Expand the evidence base and inform policy makers and practitioners to support children's rights in the digital age

unicef Office of Research–Innocenti

LSE THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

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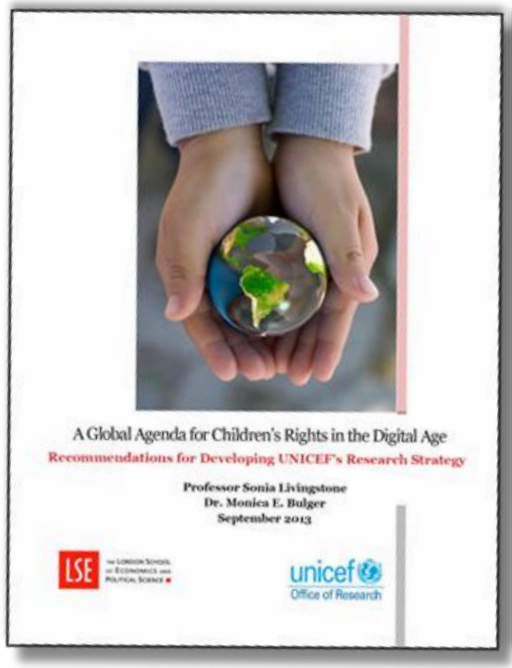

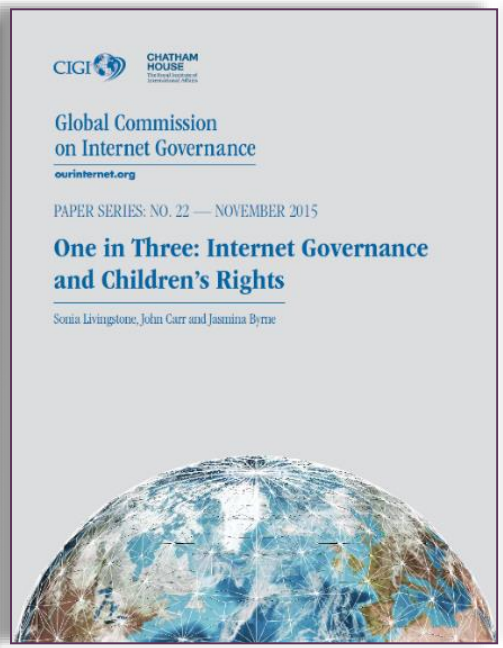

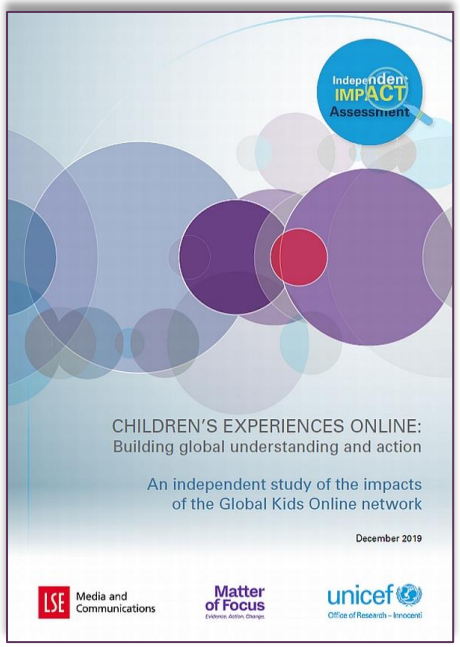

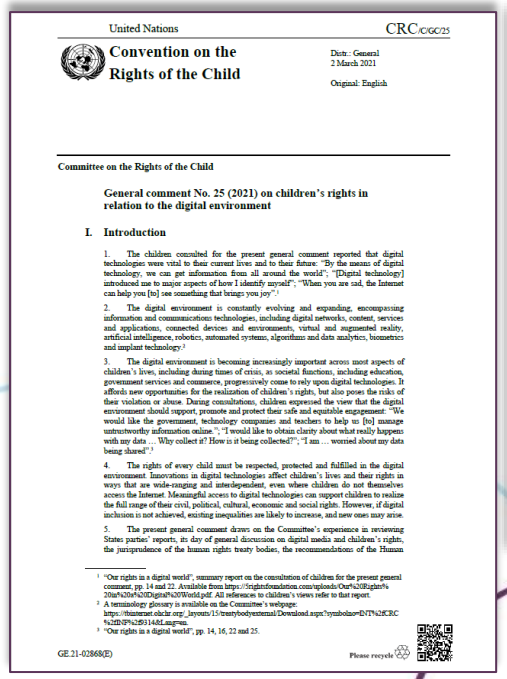

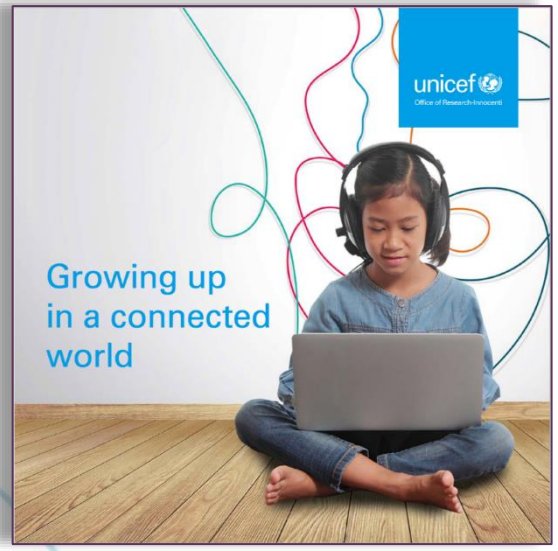

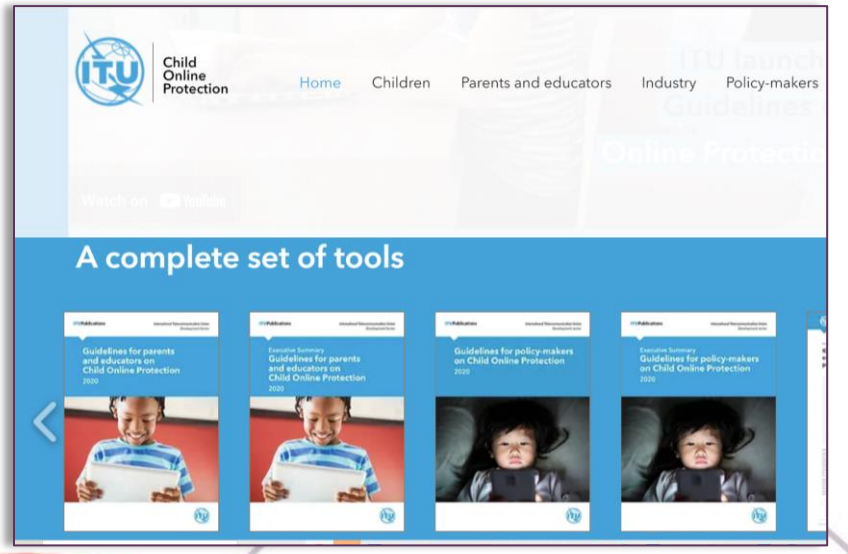

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Disclaimer: This map is stylized and not to scale. The information shown on this map does not imply official recognition or endorsement of and physical, political boundaries or feature names...

DISRUPTING HARM

DISRUPTING HARM FINDINGS REVEAL NEW AND CRUCIAL INSIGHTS INTO ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

Disrupting Harm is a large-scale research project generating unique insights on how online child sexual exploitation and abuse is manifesting in 13 countries and providing tailored roadmaps for countries to strengthen their prevention and response systems.

The findings from the first phase of Disrupting Harm are out now and provide crucial insights on online child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA), the gaps in existing systems at country level and highlight key recommendations for governments and other stakeholders on tackling online CSEA.

In early 2019, the Safe Online Initiative at End Violence Partnership invested $7 million to develop Disrupting Harm, a ground-breaking and innovative research project that aims to better understand how digital technology facilitates the sexual exploitation and abuse of children. The Partnership brought together and funded three global organisations – ECPAT International, INTERPOL and the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti – to undertake new research in 13 countries across Eastern and Southern Africa and Southeast Asia. This type of high-quality research and assessment is new and unique in that it uses a multi-sector approach and the specific expertise of these three global agencies and their local partners. Additionally, the scalable methodology of DH enables countries to compare results, identify national differences and global similarities, to help policymakers and practitioners understand how this problem needs to be tackled in-country and internationally.

The success of the first phase of the project has led to a renewed $7 million commitment in 2022 and expansion in 11 countries across 3 new regions.

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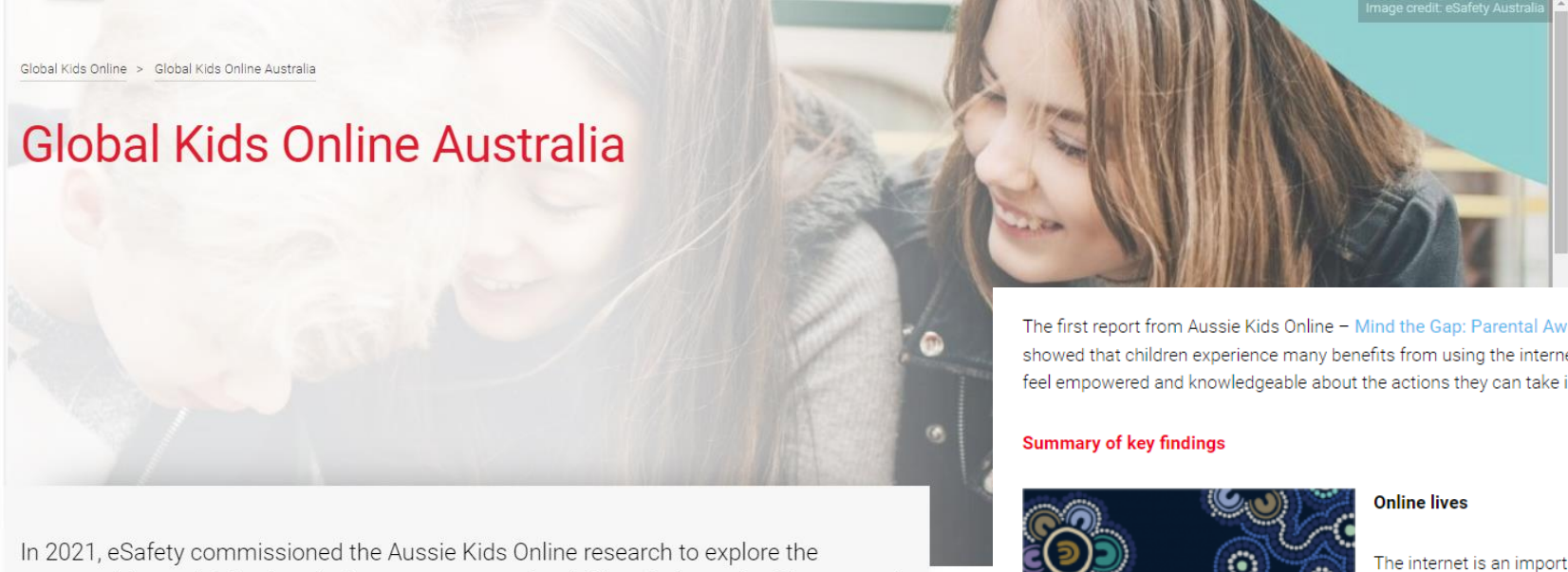
Global Kids Online Australia



Tools for researchers

Research results

Research updates
About the project
Participating countries
Contact

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In 2021, eSafety commissioned the Aussie Kids Online research to explore the opportunities and risks that the internet presents for children in Australia. The research was conducted in August–September 2021 and comprised a national survey of over 3,500 young people aged 8 to 17 and their parents. The survey was an adaptation of the Global Kids Online quantitative methodology.

Findings from Aussie Kids Online will inform eSafety's ongoing online safety programs, including future interventions to assist children to better identify and seek help for online harms, and to assist parents to support their children. This research also aims to contribute to the international evidence base on children's internet use as a member of Global Kids Online.

The first report from Aussie Kids Online – Mind the Gap: Parental Awareness of Children's Exposure to Risks Online – showed that children experience many benefits from using the internet and those who have had negative experiences online feel empowered and knowledgeable about the actions they can take in response.

Summary of key findings

Online lives

The internet is an important meeting place and platform for cultural expression for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, who are much more likely than the national average to:

- make new friends or contacts online
- post their own video or music content online
- use the internet to stay informed about the world around them, accessing news sites and regularly engaging in online discussions about social and political problems.

Negative online experiences

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are almost three times more likely than the national average to have had offensive things said to them because of their race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, age or disability.

These negative online experiences can have deep impacts that lead to impaired mental health, perceived reputation damage and lower grades at school.

Online safety awareness

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are proactive and knowledgeable in responding to negative experiences online, taking such steps as blocking or reporting the perpetrator and informing authorities about the incident.

While their parents are more likely than the Australian average to instruct their child on ways to use the internet safely, regularly monitor their child's online activities and use parental control tools such as blocking software.

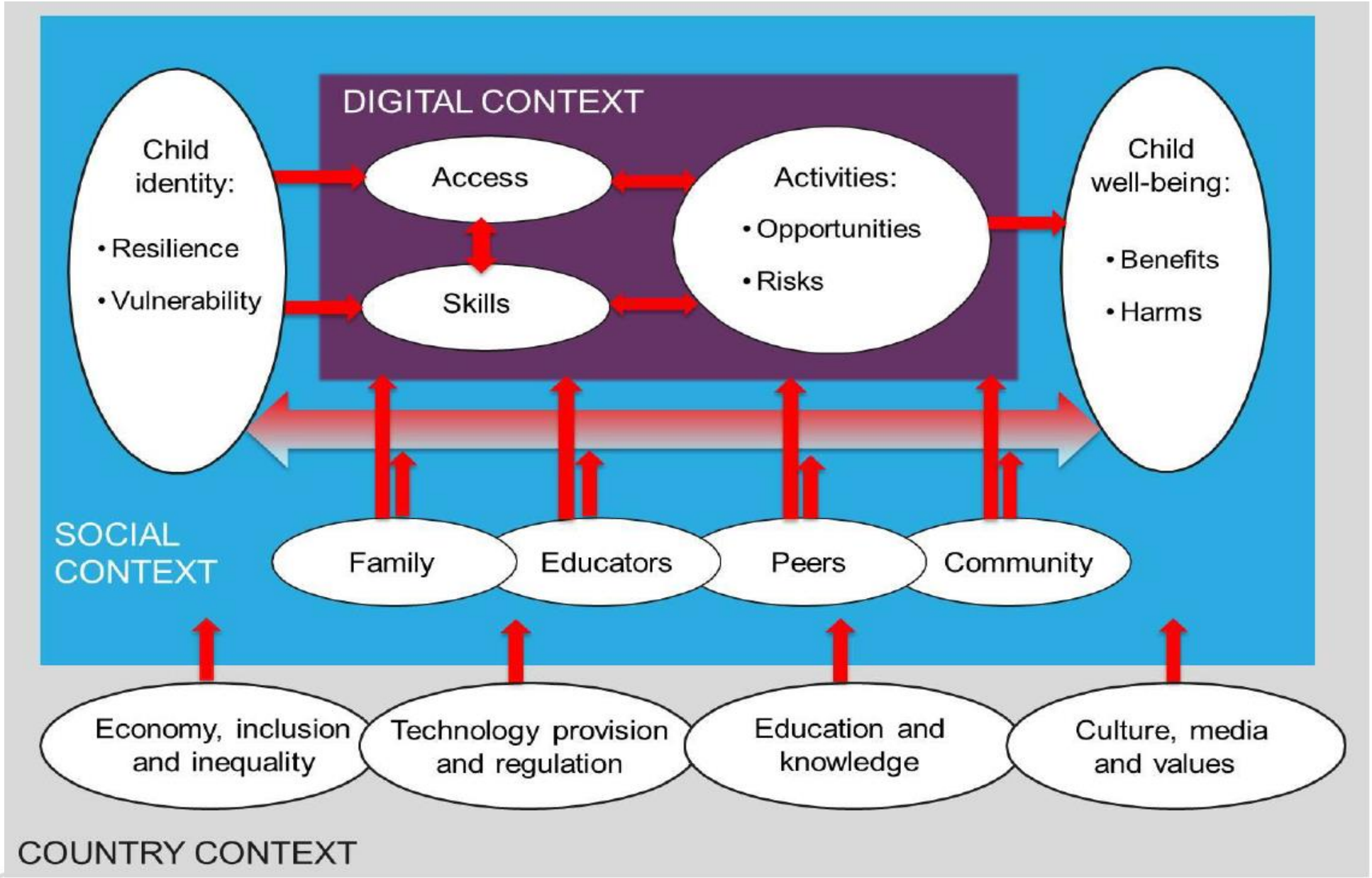
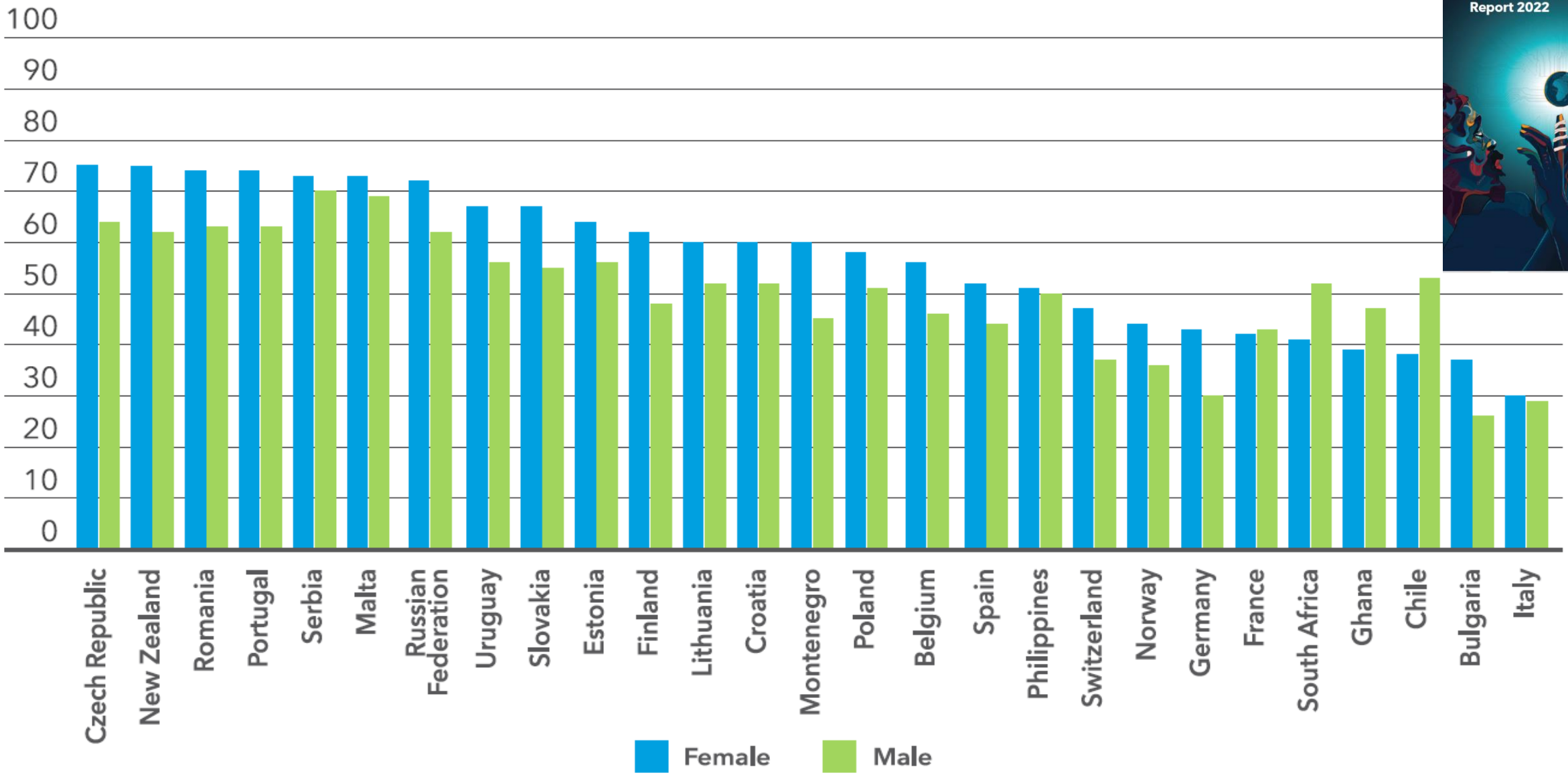
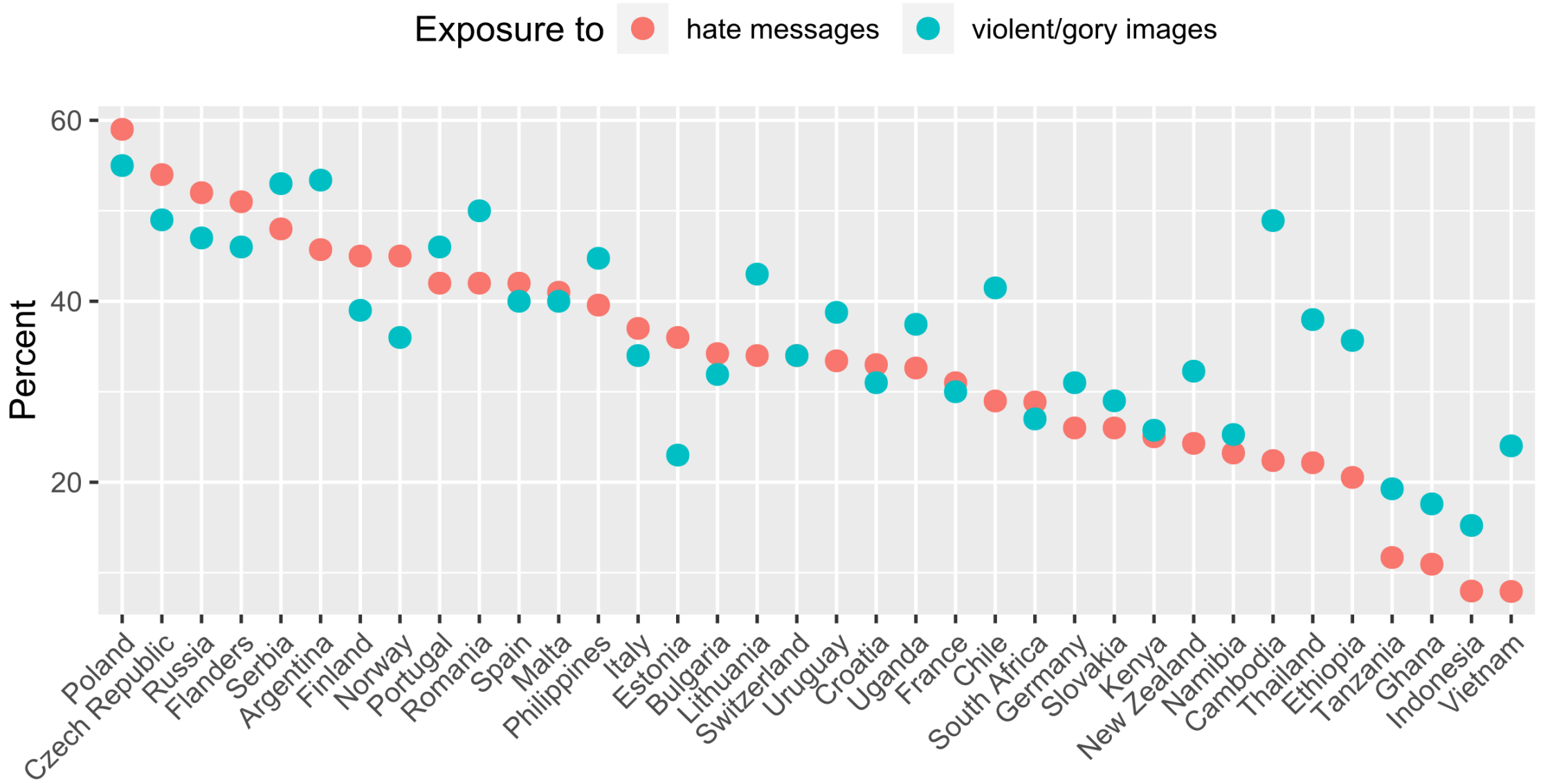

DIGITAL CONTEXT
Child identity:
• Resilience
• Vulnerability
Access
Skills
Activities:
• Opportunities
• Risks
Child well-being:
• Benefits
• Harms
SOCIAL CONTEXT
Family
Educators
Peers
Community
Economy, inclusion and inequality
Technology provision and regulation
Education and knowledge
Culture, media and values
COUNTRY CONTEXT

Figure 9.6: Finding information about health

Percentage of 12–16-year-olds who use the Internet to look for health information online at least monthly, by gender



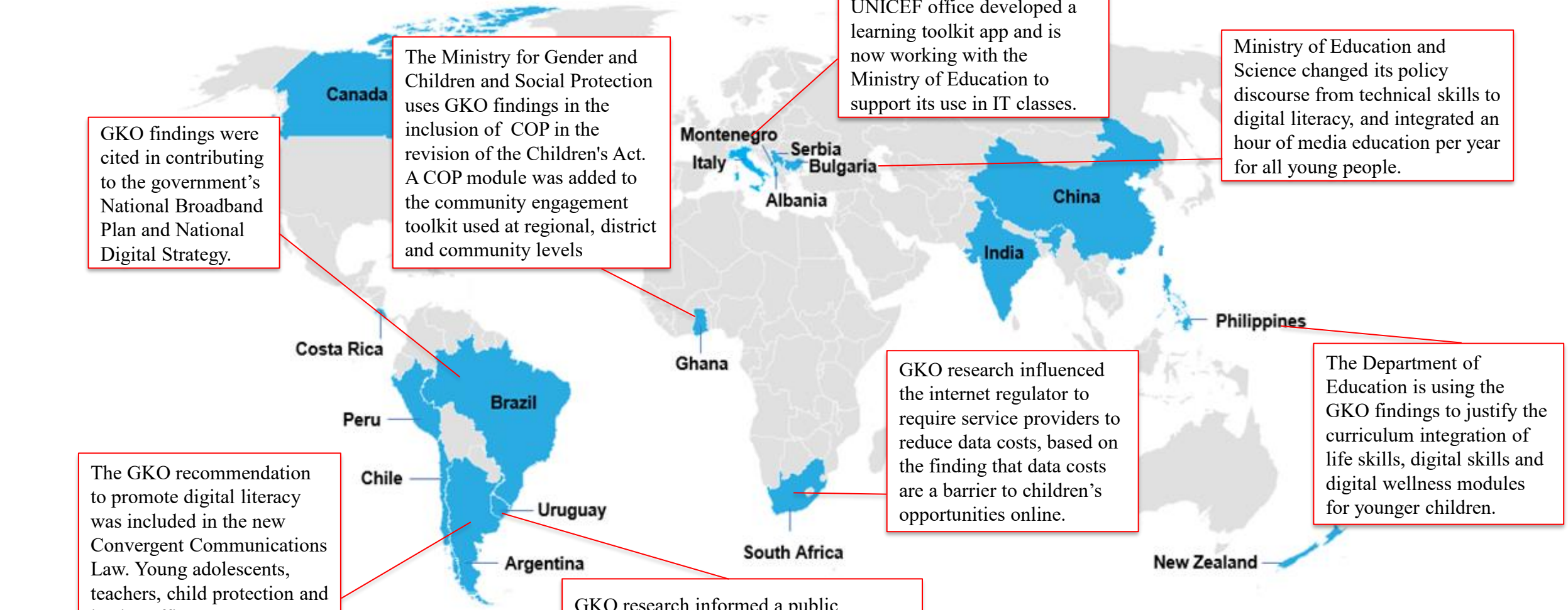


Data from 42,362 internet users aged 12-16 years from 36 countries who took part in Disrupting Harm, EU Kids Online or Global Kids Online between 2016-2021: “In the past year, have you seen online content or online discussions with any of these things: a) Hate messages that attack certain groups or individuals (e.g., people of different religion, nationality, or sexuality); b) Gory or violent images.”

How are children and young people using the Internet to be safer?

POP: Protection through online Participation

GLOBAL KIDS ONLINE



Building on GKO findings relating to 9-11 year olds, the UNICEF office developed a learning toolkit app and is now working with the Ministry of Education to support its use in IT classes.

Ministry of Education and Science changed its policy discourse from technical skills to digital literacy, and integrated an hour of media education per year for all young people.

The Ministry for Gender and Children and Social Protection uses GKO findings in the inclusion of COP in the revision of the Children's Act. A COP module was added to the community engagement toolkit used at regional, district and community levels

GKO findings were cited in contributing to the government's National Broadband Plan and National Digital Strategy.

GKO research influenced the internet regulator to require service providers to reduce data costs, based on the finding that data costs are a barrier to children's opportunities online.

The Department of Education is using the GKO findings to justify the curriculum integration of life skills, digital skills and digital wellness modules for younger children.

The GKO recommendation to promote digital literacy was included in the new Convergent Communications Law. Young adolescents, teachers, child protection and justice officers were provided training in Buenos Aires by creating a digital coexistence programme.

GKO research informed a public awareness campaign on internet security, guidance for parents was produced, and teachers co-produced interventions to share with other professionals.

globalkidsonline.net/impact-report/

Implementing child rights online: a Global Kids Online webinar

21st November 2022

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Research results

Research updates
About the project
Participating countries
Contact

Showcasing evidence from 47 countries around the globe, our panel explored children's internet-related risks and opportunities, framed in relation to children's rights. Drawing on the experience of Global Kids Online partners, the panel compared key findings and emerging issues in selected countries in South Asia, Africa and Latin America and discussed some priority areas for the international research and policy agenda on children's digital lives.

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Human Rights Instruments

CORE INSTRUMENT
UNIVERSAL INSTRUMENT

Convention on the Rights of the Child

ADOPTED
20 November 1989

BY
General Assembly resolution 44/25

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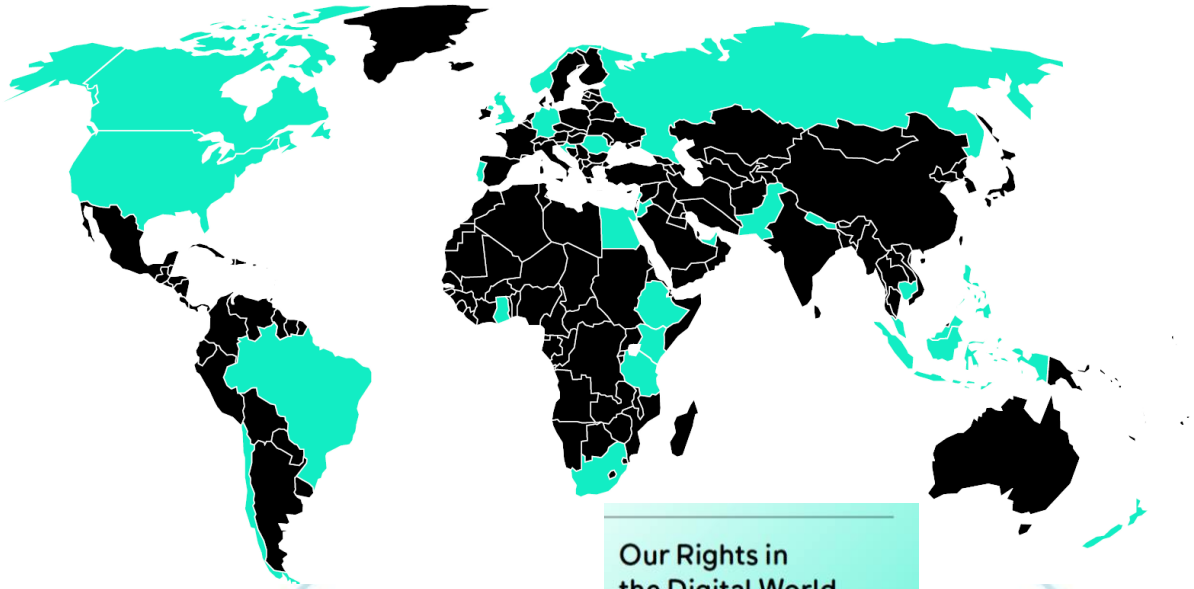
Documents

GENERAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General comment No. 25 (2021) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment



United Nations CRC/C/GC/25

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General
2 March 2021

Original: English

Committee on the Rights of the Child

General comment No. 25 (2021) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment

I. Introduction

1. The children consulted for the present general comment reported that digital technologies were vital to their current lives and to their future: "By the means of digital technology, we can get information from all around the world"; "[Digital technology] introduced me to major aspects of how I identify myself"; "When you are sad, the Internet can help you [to] see something that brings you joy".[1]

2. The digital environment is constantly evolving and expanding, encompassing information and communications technologies, including digital networks, content, services and applications, connected devices and environments, virtual and augmented reality, artificial intelligence, robotics, automated systems, algorithms and data analytics, biometrics and implant technology.[2]

3. The digital environment is becoming increasingly important across most aspects of children's lives, including during times of crisis, as societal functions, including education, government services and commerce, progressively come to rely upon digital technologies. It affords new opportunities for the realization of children's rights, but also poses the risks of their violation or abuse. During consultations, children expressed the view that the digital environment should support, promote and protect their safe and equitable engagement: "We would like the government, technology companies and teachers to help us [to] manage untrustworthy information online."; "I would like to obtain clarity about what really happens with my data … Why collect it? How is it being collected?"; "I am … worried about my data being shared".[3]

4. The rights of every child must be respected, protected and fulfilled in the digital environment. Innovations in digital technologies affect children's lives and their rights in ways that are wide-ranging and interdependent, even where children do not themselves access the Internet. Meaningful access to digital technologies can support children to realize the full range of their civil, political, cultural, economic and social rights. However, if digital inclusion is not achieved, existing inequalities are likely to increase, and new ones may arise.

5. The present general comment draws on the Committee's experience in reviewing States parties' reports, its day of general discussion on digital media and children's rights, the jurisprudence of the human rights treaty bodies, the recommendations of the Human

[1] "Our rights in a digital world", summary report on the consultation of children for the present general comment, pp. 14 and 22. Available from https://5rightsfoundation.com/uploads/Our%20Rights%20in%20the%20Digital%20World.pdf. All references to children's views refer to that report.
[2] A terminology glossary is available on the Committee's webpage: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2fCRC%2fINF%2f9314&Lang=en.
[3] "Our rights in a digital world", pp. 14, 16, 22 and 25.

GE.21-02868(E)

Please recycle

CRC/C/GC/25

Rights Council and the special procedures of the Council, two rounds of consultations with States, experts and other stakeholders on the concept note and advanced draft and an international consultation with 709 children living in a wide variety of circumstances in 28 countries in several regions.

6. The present general comment should be read in conjunction with other relevant general comments of the Committee and its guidelines regarding the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

II. Objective

7. In the present general comment, the Committee explains how States parties should implement the Convention in relation to the digital environment and provides guidance on relevant legislative, policy and other measures to ensure full compliance with their obligations under the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto in the light of the opportunities, risks and challenges in promoting, respecting, protecting and fulfilling all children's rights in the digital environment.

III. General principles

8. The following four principles provide a lens through which the implementation of all other rights under the Convention should be viewed. They should serve as a guide for determining the measures needed to guarantee the realization of children's rights in relation to the digital environment.

A. Non-discrimination

9. The right to non-discrimination requires that States parties ensure that all children have equal and effective access to the digital environment in ways that are meaningful for them.[4] States parties should take all measures necessary to overcome digital exclusion. That includes providing free and safe access for children in dedicated public locations and investing in policies and programmes that support all children's affordable access to, and knowledgeable use of, digital technologies in educational settings, communities and homes.

10. Children may be discriminated against by their being excluded from using digital technologies and services or by receiving hateful communications or unfair treatment through use of those technologies. Other forms of discrimination can arise when automated processes that result in information filtering, profiling or decision-making are based on biased, partial or unfairly obtained data concerning a child.

11. The Committee calls upon States parties to take proactive measures to prevent discrimination on the basis of sex, disability, socioeconomic background, ethnic or national origin, language or any other grounds, and discrimination against minority and indigenous children, asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children, children who are victims and survivors of trafficking or sexual exploitation, children in alternative care, children deprived of liberty and children in other vulnerable situations. Specific measures will be required to close the gender-related digital divide for girls and to ensure that particular attention is given to access, digital literacy, privacy and online safety.

B. Best interests of the child

12. The best interests of the child is a dynamic concept that requires an assessment appropriate to the specific context.[5] The digital environment was not originally designed for

[4] General comment No. 9 (2006), paras. 37–38.
[5] General comment No. 14 (2013), para. 1.

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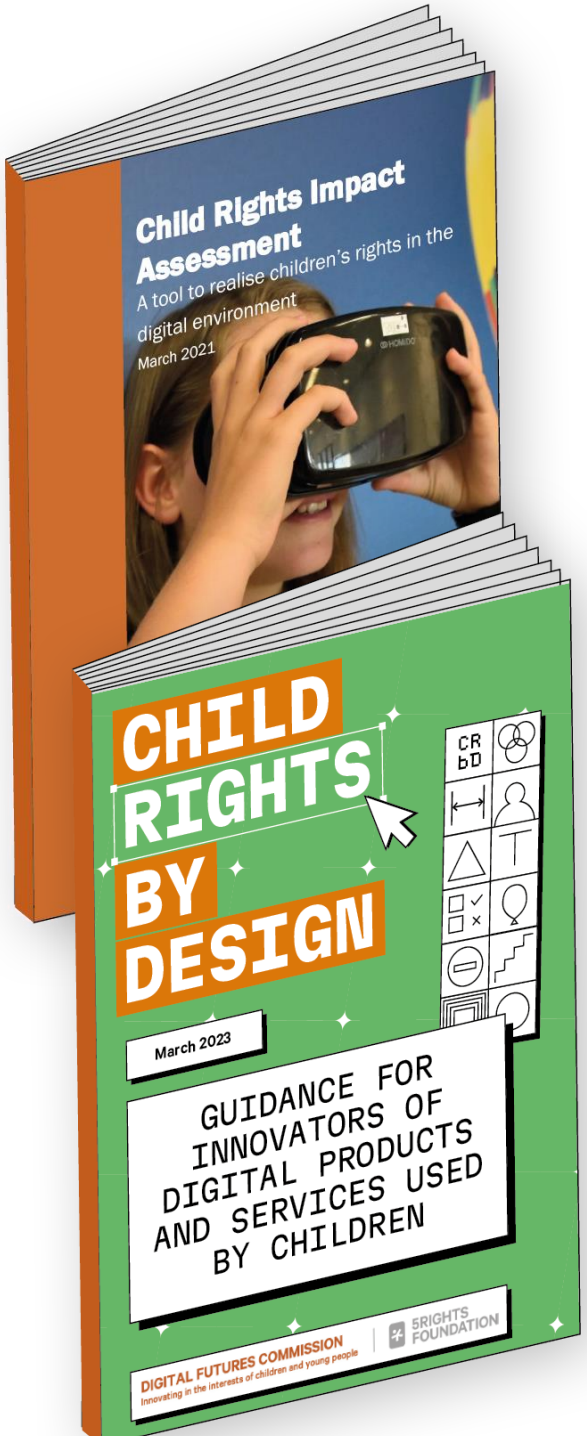
DIGITAL FUTURES COMMISSION
Innovating in the interests of children and young people | 5RIGHTS FOUNDATION

The Digital Futures Commission is dedicated to placing children's interests at the centre of the design of the digital world. Our ambitious research program, led by Professor Sonia Livingstone OBE, has been guided by a group of Commissioners with expertise in how children and digital technology intersect. Over the three-year duration of the Commission, our focus has been on driving real world change for children and young people.

Discover all our outputs, findings and resources on this website and join us in shaping a better digital future for children and young people. Read our final report here.

Beeban Kidron
Chair, 5Rights Foundation



CHILD RIGHTS by DESIGN PRINCIPLES

1. EQUITY & DIVERSITY
Do you treat all children equally, fairly and support vulnerable children?

2. BEST INTERESTS
Are children's best interests a primary consideration in product design?

3. CONSULTATION
Are children meaningfully consulted in developing your product?

4. AGE APPROPRIATE
Is your product appropriate for child users or adaptable for different ages?

5. RESPONSIBLE
Do you review and comply with laws and policies relevent to child rights?

6. PARTICIPATION
Does your product enable children to participate in digital publics?

7. PRIVACY
Have you adopted privacy-by-design in product development and use?

8. SAFETY
Have you adopted safety-by-design in product development and use?

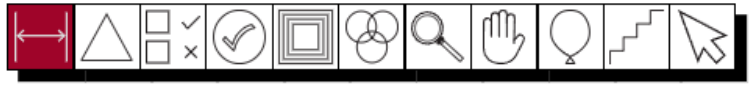
9. WELLBEING
Does your product enhance not harm children's physical & mental health?

10. DEVELOPMENT
Does your product enable children's learning, imagination, play and belonging?

11. AGENCY
Have you taken steps to reduce compulsive and exploitative product features?

CHILD RIGHTS BY DESIGN

- Child Rights By Design
- Who is this for?
- Using the guidance
- Principles
- Children's voices
- Checklist
- Next Steps



1: EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

QUESTIONS FOR DESIGNERS | SUGGESTED DESIGN TOOLS

Be inclusive, treat everyone fairly and provide for diverse needs and circumstances

Equity and diversity in digital design means that all children, regardless of their characteristics and circumstances, are treated fairly and have equal access to digital products and services, and the opportunity to use them in ways they find meaningful. It also means that children should not be treated unfairly or discriminated against through the design, operation or marketing of digital products that may impact their lives.

The principle of equity and diversity draws together three sets of children's rights [6]:

- Non-discrimination: the right to be treated fairly and not discriminated against.
- Family provision and alternative care: to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported, and that children living in alternative care do not miss out.
- Special protective measures: to make explicit provisions for children with disabilities or those living in disadvantaged, marginalised or vulnerable situations, and empower parents and caregivers to support their children.
- Equity and diversity does not mean that all children should be treated just the same, or that innovators cannot tailor their products to particular user groups. But innovators should prioritise fairness by recognising and addressing the diverse needs and expectations of the children likely to use or be impacted by their product or service and taking active steps to avoid or overcome potential forms of exclusion or discrimination. [7]

I would like to please not make apps so expensive because people can't all buy the apps they want

Child aged 7-8, Greater London

RELEVANT LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND GUIDANCE

Designing equity and diversity in products and services is mandated in specific ways by the UK Equality Act 2010 [8], among other laws, policies and standards. The Equality and Human Rights Commission's Equality Act 2010 Code of Practice gives practical guidance on how

How can you make your digital product or service inclusive, welcoming and fair for all?

Here are some questions to ask yourself throughout your design process:

DISCOVER
Insight into the problem

- Can children from a diversity of backgrounds use your product or service equally?
- What risks of inequality, exclusion or discrimination could arise?

PROBLEM

DEFINE
Decide what to build

- How does your research, expertise or consultation with children help you identify the equity and diversity issues to prioritise?
- What barriers have/can you overcome?

DESIGN BRIEF

DEVELOP
Try potential solutions

- Which steps can you take to reduce inequality, exclusion or discrimination?
- Do the potential solutions meet children's rights and diverse needs?

SOLUTION

DELIVER
Solutions that work

- Check: can all children use your product or service and feel welcome, whatever their abilities and circumstances?
- Have you managed to prevent inequality, exclusion and discrimination?

Thank you

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