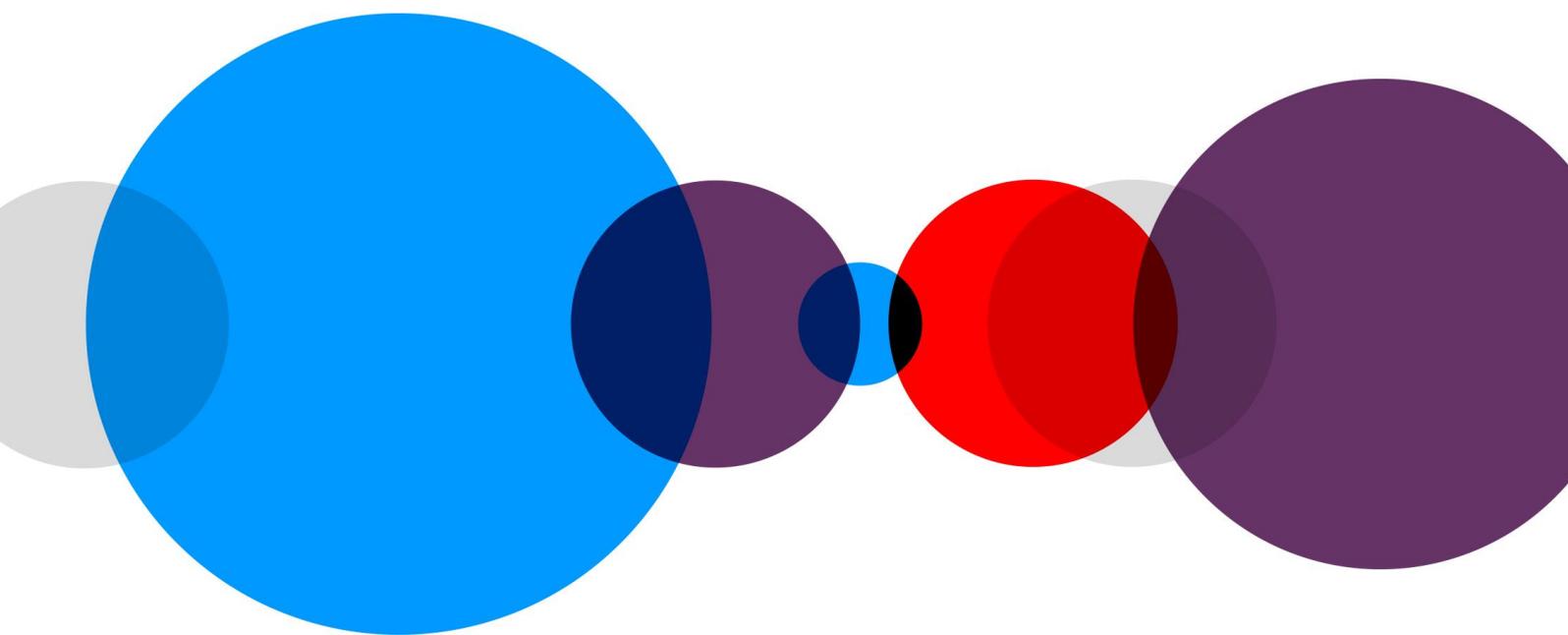


GLOBAL KIDS ONLINE

Research synthesis

2015-2016

November 2016



UNICEF OFFICE OF RESEARCH – INNOCENTI

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EU Kids Online is an international research network, which currently encompasses 33 countries. It aims to coordinate and stimulate investigation into the way children use new media in Europe and beyond, with a particular focus on evidence about the conditions that shape online risk and safety. EU Kids Online uses multiple methods to map children's and parents' experience of the internet, in dialogue with national and European policy stakeholders. The network has been funded by the European Commission's Better Internet for Kids programme (originally, Safer Internet) and coordinated by Sonia Livingstone (LSE). At present the network continues its work under the direction of Uwe Hasebrink (Hans-Bredow-Institut, Global Kids Online Expert Group). The EU Kids Online network developed an original theoretical framework for research on children's online experiences and a research toolkit that underpins the work of Global Kids Online. The network has also created a wide range of comparative research outputs and a public database of findings.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With children making up an estimated one third of internet users worldwide, living in the 'digital age' can have important implications for children's lives.¹ Currently close to 80 per cent of people in Europe,

North America and Australia have internet access, compared with less than 25 per cent in some parts of Africa and South Asia.² But this is bound to change soon, as there is already a steady increase in internet access in the global South where most investments are taking place. The international community has recognised the importance of internet access for development, economic growth and the realization of civil rights and is actively seeking ways to ensure universal internet access to all segments of society. Children should be an important part of this process, not only because they represent a substantial percentage of internet users but also because they play an important part in shaping the internet. The internet in turn plays an important part in shaping children's lives, culture and identities.

The many stakeholders responsible for children's safe and positive use of the internet (governments, civil society and the private sector alike) have an important task to formulate policies that are inclusive, balanced and based on solid evidence. But at present, the evidence on which such policies can rely is very scarce, especially in the global South. Through evidence-generation and research, one can identify both the commonalities and specificities of children's online access and opportunities, skills and practices, risks and safety. Research is also invaluable for contextualising online experiences in relation to children's and families' lives and the wider cultural or national circumstances. Prevailing social norms and value systems, prevalence of violence offline, places and access to use of the internet, children's support networks, can all contribute to the benefits or harm associated with internet use. At the global level, evidence is needed to help build a consensus among international actors on international standards, agreements, protocols and investments in order to make the internet a safer and better place for children.

Responding to evidence gaps, the Global Kids Online research project (www.globalkidsonline.net) was developed as a collaborative initiative between the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, the London School of Economics and Political Science, and the EU Kids Online network. Supported by the WeProtect Global Alliance, the project developed a global research toolkit that would enable academics, governments, civil society and other actors to carry out reliable and standardized national research with children and their parents on the opportunities, risks and protective factors of children's internet use. The research toolkit and other resources available to the public include:

- Modular survey and a range of quantitative research tools
- Qualitative research protocols and tools
- A series of expert method guides on key issues related to researching children's online risks and opportunities (e.g. how to carry out research on online sexual exploitation and how to follow appropriate ethical procedures when conducting research with children);
- National reports from Argentina, the Philippines, Serbia and South Africa;
- A research synthesis of the national reports from the four pilot countries;
- Website (portal) for hosting the research toolkit, national reports, and a synthesis report. Available at www.globalkidsonline.net

Global Kids Online (GKO) follows a child rights framework, as this offers a unifying approach to children's everyday experiences online, as well as offline, while also recognising the diverse contexts in which children live. The project aims to connect evidence with the ongoing international dialogue regarding policy and practical solutions for children's well-being and rights in the digital age, especially in countries where the internet is only recently reaching

¹ Livingstone, Carr and Byrne (2015).

² ITU (2016).

the mass market.

National research partners from Argentina, the Philippines, Serbia and South Africa, with support from UNICEF country offices, piloted the research toolkit and wrote national reports. These partners were instrumental in building and testing research resources and in demonstrating how research results can be used for policy and practice. The model that emerged was one of co-creation and co-ownership with centralized coordination and technical support and a de-centralized approach to national research and dissemination of the findings. The countries were selected originally as being middle-income, representing different continents, having a strong interest in pursuing research on this topic, and keen interest from both governmental and non-governmental sectors to provide universal access and promote safer and better internet for children. Each country also had its unique interests in investigating particular issues as follows:

- Argentina – rural/urban divide and opportunities for strengthening digital literacy;
- Serbia – conditions of internet use among different population groups (Roma, children with disabilities);
- South Africa – barriers to access and availability of online content in local languages;
- The Philippines – challenges of online sexual exploitation.

Methodology

Global Kids Online methodology uses both qualitative and quantitative tools designed for child and adult respondents. The qualitative tools include materials needed for conducting and analysing individual interviews and focus groups with children and parents/caregivers. Quantitative tools contain materials needed for conducting and analysing a modular survey, including core, optional and adaptable questions. It also includes a data dictionary and guidelines for preparing a clean dataset ready for sharing and comparing.

The qualitative and quantitative research sampled internet-using children aged 9-17 in the Philippines, Serbia and South Africa, and internet-using children

aged 13-17 in Argentina. The South African sample included both internet users and non-users but the internet-related questions were asked only of the users. The child sample sizes from the quantitative data collection were: Argentina (N=1,106), Serbia (N=197), South Africa (N=913) and the Philippines (N=121). Furthermore, three out of four countries (Philippines, Serbia and South Africa) also conducted interviews with parents. Conducting a survey with both parents and children in the same household provides an opportunity to understand and compare both parental and children's digital skills, as well as the level of parental engagement, support and monitoring and their general understanding of their children's internet use. Special measures and ethical considerations were taken when children were asked sensitive questions about online risks, harm, and sexual solicitation.

The findings presented below are indicative as this is a pilot research conducted to test and adapt the toolkit, based on small sample sizes, especially in the Philippines and Serbia. The presentation of these findings focuses on within-country and between-country comparisons where results are sufficiently large as to indicate that such age and country findings would be confirmed in representative samples. They are, however, sufficient to demonstrate the potential of the Global Kids Online toolkit for future research within and across countries as ever more children gain internet access around the world.

Key findings from the pilot research

1. Children predominantly access the internet at home and through mobile devices

- Children in all four countries report that they most frequently go online at home, with over 90 per cent in Argentina, Serbia and South Africa and 62 per cent in the Philippines doing so. Access to the internet through schools is not as common, with children from Serbia accessing the internet only in 20 per cent of the cases, while in other countries it ranged between 50 and 60 per cent. Not surprisingly, children use smartphones most to go online.

- Mobile access may be positive in terms of flexibility of use, enhancing children's opportunities for private or personalised benefits. But it can also reduce parents' and caregivers' chance to support children as they explore the internet. Moreover, the small screen limits the amount and complexity of content that can be readily viewed, and because of its privacy it may be associated with risk.

2. The majority of children learn something new by searching the internet

- Most children who use the internet say they learn something new online at least every week. In
- Argentina, it is common to look for information about work or study opportunities online, more so than in other countries. Around one third of children in Serbia and South Africa and one quarter in the Philippines look for health information online at least every week.
- It seems children are gaining information benefits from internet access. However, more research is needed to know whether they have access to the range of high quality information that they may need and whether they are successful in finding what is available.

3. Younger internet users lack the digital skills of their older peers

- There is a clear age trend in all four countries in terms of children's self-reported ability to check if information they find online is true. Older children were more confident in their ability to do so than younger children. This age trend, where younger children are less confident in their ability than older children, applied to most digital skills in this study. Gender differences were not so prominent.
- Access and skills are linked to opportunities and risks: in South Africa, for example, and especially the Philippines, younger children use the internet less, undertaking fewer online practices and developing fewer digital skills than children in Argentina or Serbia.

4. Younger children's digital safety skills also need support

- Most of the older children, but fewer younger

children, report knowing how to manage their privacy settings online, a key indication of their digital and safety skills. Children in the Philippines report the least competence in this regard overall, especially among the youngest age group. Similar findings were obtained for children's reported ability to remove people from their contact lists (on social networking sites, for example).

- Digital skills also matter for parents – the parent survey in South Africa revealed that parents are about as skilled as their 12-14 year olds. This means that although parents may be able to adequately guide the youngest children as they go online and help them develop their digital skills, they may not have the knowledge and ability required to guide children as they get older.

5. A substantial minority of young internet users have had contact with unknown people online

- Between 19 per cent (in the Philippines) and 41 per cent of children (in Serbia and South Africa) have been in touch online with somebody they have not met in person. These are not necessarily people without any prior connection to the child, and most children do not then go on to meet such a person face to face, but some do. Nonetheless, such activities clearly pose a risk of harm that merits awareness-raising and education, ideally without overly restricting children's opportunity to explore the online world.

6. Argentinian children are most likely to report having been bothered or upset online in the past year

- Between a fifth (in South Africa) and three-quarters (in Argentina) of children report feeling upset about something that happened online, with older children reporting more incidents.
- The qualitative research and an open-ended survey question allowed children to describe the concerns about what bothers them online in their own words. Children mentioned a wide range of issues, including internet scams, pop-up adverts that were pornographic, hurtful behaviour, unpleasant or scary news or pictures, discrimination, harassment (including sexual

harassment by strangers) and people sharing too much personal information online.

7. Countries vary in the amount of risks encountered and the balance with online opportunities

- As many as one third of children in Serbia reported being treated in a hurtful way by their peers, online or offline, though in South Africa and the Philippines only a fifth said this had happened to them. Older children are more likely to report experiencing such behaviour. Smaller proportions also report treating others in hurtful ways.
- The proportion of children who have seen sexual images during the past year ranges from about a third of all children in the Philippines to slightly over two-thirds in Argentina and Serbia. Boys and older teenagers are more likely to have seen such images. While online sources such as pop-ups and social networking sites account for a significant amount of this exposure, 'traditional' sources such as television or film are also sources of potentially pornographic exposure.
- Fewer than one in twenty children in the Philippines and South Africa reported some kind of online sexual solicitation – being asked for sexual information, to talk about sex or to do something sexual, although even these low numbers merit serious attention.
- A child-rights approach seeks to consider the balance between risks and opportunities in the round. In this respect, the findings show large differences across countries. In Serbia, South Africa and the Philippines, most children considered the internet beneficial, although around a third had experienced something upsetting online in the past year. In Argentina, most children reported experiencing a problem online, matching the proportion who found the internet beneficial. It is indeed possible that there are more problems for children online in Argentina, but it is also possible that the internet is more familiar to Argentinian children and they encounter more risks because they explore the internet more widely.

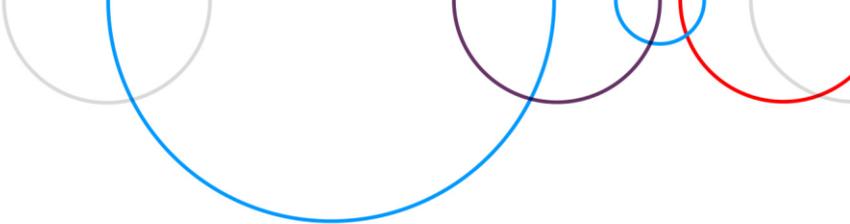
8. Children are most likely to seek support from a friend, and rarely from a teacher

- In all four countries the most common source of support is friends – between a third and two-thirds of children spoke to a friend the last time something upsetting happened online. The next most popular source of support is parents, followed by siblings. Few children confided in a teacher, and the follow-up survey questions suggested that few children had received e-safety or digital literacy teaching at school; more had received some guidance on internet use from their parents.
- The qualitative research suggests that children make a judgement about whether the parent needs to get involved or whether the problem can be handled by talking to peers. In a sense, children mediate their own negative experiences, figuring out the best coping mechanism based on the situation as they see it.

Policy implications

Access, skills, risks and opportunities are all part of the overall picture of children's well-being and rights in the digital age and should all, therefore, be kept in mind when developing policy interventions. Furthermore, children are not a homogenous group and their internet use, opportunities and risks are closely linked to their age, level of digital skills, places of access (school or home), devices they use and support they receive. It is important therefore to differentiate policy goals based on these differences and real life situations. Policy must also pay special attention to those who may be of greater vulnerability, such as indigenous or ethnic minority children, migrants, children in poor or rural settings or those who have some form of disability. Sources of potential vulnerability like these are measured in the Global Kids Online toolkit and can be investigated in depth in the future.

Children are generally positive about the opportunities available for them online. However, children do not use the internet in schools as much as expected and they generally do not see teachers as those they could confide in about what bothers them online. Improving school access, supported by teacher training, could further link internet use with education and information benefits, specifically by developing children's digital



skills which have been shown in this report to include notable gaps in competence, again especially among younger users.

It also appears that the internet and social networking sites represent both an opportunity for the majority of children to communicate and express themselves, but also a risk of harm for some. It should not be forgotten, however, that the offline world still poses risks to children – of bullying, pornography, sexual abuse and other harms. The findings suggest that use of the internet is now contributing to the risks facing children, but policy and practice focused on the internet should not neglect offline risks, while those focused on offline risks should now take into account online dimensions. The relationships between online and offline activity may amplify risk by extending the ways in which a child can be approached, but they can also help ensure children's safety, for example by providing online helplines or confidential support, for example.

Further research is needed to examine the outcomes of children's internet use in terms of their well-being and to investigate the circumstances under which the internet is beneficial for children, but also when and for whom it might enhance the risk of harm.

The strategies that promote empowered and safe online experiences should take into account children's agency, including their desire to experiment and sometimes to take risks, and also their desire to be responsible for themselves and their actions. As our research shows, children like to explore and seek information, news and answers to their concerns independently. Therefore the internet should be a place where they feel safe to do so and where there is enough good, age-appropriate, and locally adapted content.

Future policy and practice should encompass the full range of children's rights including the rights to information, education, protection, privacy and participation; it needs to be holistic but also integrated and mainstreamed in other national policies that a) deal with children's rights in general and b) are aimed at the development of ICT services and the information society.

Lessons from research

A decentralized approach to research was successful in that it enabled individual country teams to draw on

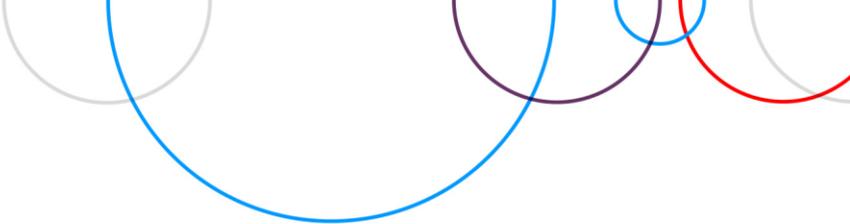
and adapt the Global Kids Online toolkit to develop their own national research toolkit, ready to be used in the local context. By involving government agencies and civil society stakeholders from start to finish, the national research teams were able to contribute to relevant agendas by asking questions that matter to stakeholders in their own country. At the same time, national research teams benefited from the centralized coordination and sharing of knowledge, resources and data within the Global Kids Online network.

Qualitative research has usefully informed the survey design and adaptation process. In the countries where interviews and focus groups with children and parents preceded the survey implementation, many useful insights were gained into children's contemporary engagement with the internet that helped further adapt the survey instrument.

In some countries, certain survey questions had comparatively low response rates; these were predominantly questions of a sensitive nature. However, in some instances the missing data could be explained by questions that are poorly phrased or worded in a language not appropriate for children, using terminology that is unfamiliar to them. Ideally, each team would carry out cognitive interviews to test how the survey works in practice, as well as a small-scale pilot study with the full questionnaire to assess both the quality of the data collected and the length of the survey interview.

Measuring socio-economic status by asking children proved difficult in all countries. Even after the adaptation and use of well-tested instruments for measuring material deprivation as a proxy indicator for socio-economic status, this approach was not successful. It is therefore recommended either to ask parents about the socio-economic status, or adopt the method judged most valid and reliable in the country.

A module introduced by South Africa on barriers to access to the internet was an important addition to the survey as it helps understand why certain children have unlimited access and some do not, and what socio-economic factors influence their ability to benefit from resources offered by digital technologies. Given that the digital divide between certain regions and countries is still significant, this module can help policymakers identify entry points for the provision of universal access.



In each partner country a combination of national researchers, government agencies, the private sector, civil society and UN agencies worked together to guide the adaptation of the methodology on a country level, ensuring that the questions asked were relevant in every country and to facilitate research uptake and dissemination.

Next steps

The Global Kids Online toolkit is intended for researchers worldwide, including both experienced and junior researchers, as well as those who contract and manage research, such as international agencies and non-governmental organizations. Anyone may use the resources under the Attributive Non-Commercial Creative Commons License (CC BY-NC), crediting Global Kids Online as the source.

It is important that the toolkit continues to evolve as it is adapted and used in new countries all over the

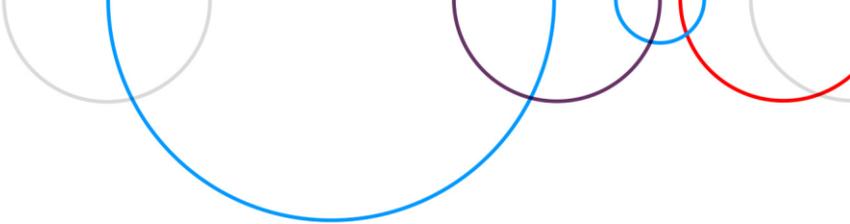
world, with each research team being able to create their own questions and topics to test and include in the full toolkit as optional elements. It is equally important that the core of the toolkit remains constant to enable longitudinal and cross-national comparisons with the goal of contributing to a global knowledge base around children's use of the internet and its associated risks and opportunities. It will also be important to develop standardized indicators of internet use for inclusion in other surveys. Many of the key surveys that track the conditions and outcomes in children's lives have developed robust ways of assessing the main influences in terms of family, education, community and culture and can also include key questions from the Global Kids Online survey.

We encourage researchers to communicate with us to share ideas of how they might use and adapt the existing toolkit as well as the lessons they have learned, thus contributing to the ongoing development and improvement of the Global Kids Online initiative.

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This report is part of the broader work of the Global Kids Online network, to which our Steering Group, Expert Group and International Advisory Group have contributed with their knowledge and expertise. More information on the Global Kids Online project members can be found at www.globalkidsonline.net/members.

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INTRODUCING GLOBAL KIDS ONLINE

Children's internet access around the world

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) in general, and digital devices accessible to children in particular, are configuring new pathways into learning, connections, work and civic engagement. It seems that the internet is poised to be the infrastructure underlying all dimensions of our daily lives – hence the notion of 'the digital age'. Increasing numbers of children around the world move seamlessly through their offline and online digital environments, increasingly using ICTs for information, education, communication and entertainment.

With an estimated one in three internet users worldwide being a child, the 'digital age' can have important implications for children's lives.³ Currently close to 80 per cent of people in Europe, North America and Australia have internet access, compared with less than 25 per cent in some parts of Africa and South Asia.⁴

However, there is a steady increase in internet access in the global South where most investments are happening. These countries dwarf the developed countries in terms of population, and in absolute terms there are already more internet users in the global South than in the global North. Given that between one third and one half of those populations are children, we are at a tipping point in the growth of the online child population.⁵ Therefore, it is timely to consider children's needs and rights in global and national internet policy, provision and governance.

Despite the relative lack of evidence, children are commonly celebrated as, supposedly, the tech-savvy pioneers of the digital world, while simultaneously, their internet use attracts considerable anxieties. Current indications are that the promised 'digital

opportunities' for children are not being fully realised, especially in the parts of the world where their access to online resources is limited.⁶ On the other hand, the harms that children have long faced in their daily lives – inequality and exclusion, violence, sexual abuse and exploitation – are gaining a new digital dimension.⁷

Previous international evidence reviews have attempted to document how use of the internet and mobile technologies shapes the risks of harm that children face and the opportunities that benefit them.⁸ However, many questions on associated risks and opportunities of internet and mobile use still remain. Who benefits and who is at risk? How can societies intervene to maximize the opportunities and minimize the risks? Can the successes or struggles of one country or context be helpful in guiding others?

Available data on internet use by age, albeit sparse in most countries, suggests that children below the age of 15 are often as likely to use the internet as adults above the age of 25, while youth (15-24) tend to be much more likely to use the internet than the general public (see Figure 1).

³ Livingstone, Carr and Byrne (2015).

⁴ ITU (2016).

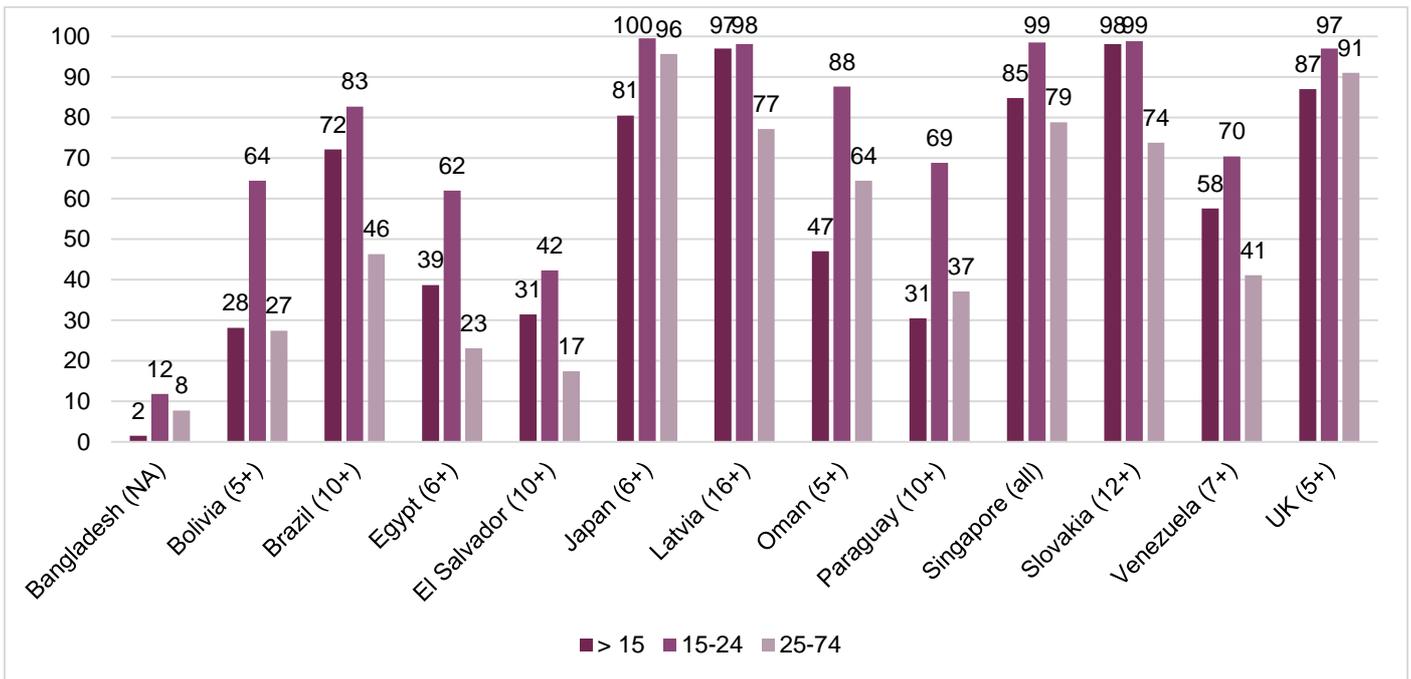
⁵ Ibid.

⁶ See *Method Guide 10: Addressing diversities and inequalities* at www.globalkidsonline.net/inequalities

⁷ See *Method Guide 7: Researching online child sexual abuse* at www.globalkidsonline.net/sexual-exploitation

⁸ For recent international reports, see Gasser, Maclay and Palfrey (2010), International Telecommunications Union (2013), OECD (2011, 2012), and UNICEF Research Centre - Innocenti (2012).

Figure 1: Individuals using the internet, by age (%)



Note: Age scope of population varies across countries as indicated in the brackets after the country name. Data from 2012 for Venezuela; 2013 for Bangladesh and Oman; from 2014 for Bolivia, Brazil, Egypt, El Salvador, Japan, Paraguay, and Singapore; from 2015 for Latvia, Slovakia, and the UK. Source: ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database (except UK data from Ofcom, 2015).

What are the implications of internet access for children's well-being and, thereby, for their rights to provision, protection and participation? What might children around the world want from the internet – as opposed to what adults think they might or should want– and what can they realistically hope to gain from it? The answers are likely to be complex and multiple, with the possibilities for and outcomes of internet use depending on the children, their life circumstances and the wider context, including the specific digital environments they can engage with.⁹

This context is intrinsically linked to children's ability to access ICTs and to benefit from them. Some barriers to access could include social norms and traditional value systems that discriminate against and marginalise certain groups (e.g. girls, children with disability, children from ethnic and minority groups). In some societies, even the concept of childhood differs from the established globally accepted norm: adolescent girls are treated as adults – married in childhood, pulled out of school, and expected to perform household duties and look after younger

siblings. Such social norms leave little time for learning and are likely to prevent them from benefiting from ICT or attending ICT classes in their schools and communities.¹⁰ Other contextual factors likely to influence children's internet use include:

- **Affordability:** while the internet is increasingly reaching all corners of the globe, the cost of internet connectivity and mobile devices will determine access by children from poorer backgrounds.
- **Languages:** with many countries having several official languages and in some cases dozens of languages in use (e.g. in the Philippines there are 150 spoken languages), the availability of content in the local language could act as a crucial enabler or a barrier to use.
- **Political instability, conflict and fragility** in many societies preclude children from having their fundamental rights fulfilled (access to schooling, health, shelter). In such societies it is easy to

⁹ See *Method Guide 1: Research framework* at www.globalkidsonline.net/framework

¹⁰ UNICEF 2013 and UNICEF 2012

imagine that access to ICTs could be a luxury, but in fact it can be life-saving as they can be used to reach helplines, report violence and navigate treacherous migration routes.¹¹

Therefore robust, contextually relevant evidence is greatly needed now that states, industry, governance bodies, educators, civil society and other stakeholders are actively seeking to design, regulate or deploy digital technologies, networks and services. These diverse stakeholders are seeking common ground and cooperative mechanisms for building an open, trustworthy, secure and inclusive digital environment.¹²

Nonetheless, much internet-related policy and practice implicitly anticipates a 'general' or 'adult' user, with insufficient recognition of the age and gender of the user or the conditions under which child users actually live. In developing policy and practice at national and community levels, children's experiences should be represented through research and processes of consultation that include their voices.¹³ Without this, children's needs could be misunderstood, misrepresented or neglected.

Policy context and challenges

At an international level, the high-paced technological growth and geographical spread of the internet and its penetration into almost all aspects of public life necessitates evolving international policies that can keep pace with technological changes. Such international policies should ideally bring together a range of international and national stakeholders in order to shape the vision and regulations about what the internet should look like and how it should be governed.

Initially, international policy focused on technical issues such as infrastructure, and underlying standards and protocols that enable the internet to function. Nowadays, internet-related policy extends to encompass security, economic development and human rights, among many other domains. These are

more difficult to regulate due to the transnational nature of the internet. Difficulties exist with the international application of cybersecurity, data protection and privacy laws due to the transnational nature of the internet, and challenges linked to international law enforcement. In addition, while there is a universal consensus that 'the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online,¹⁴ the application of this principle varies from country to country.

The majority of international internet-related policies and processes have emerged through consensus-building across multiple stakeholder groups. Together, these groups (governments, the private sector, civil society) aim to develop an agreement on the governance of the internet or shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet.¹⁵ However, these broader policy processes have barely recognised the distinctive rights and needs of children as a substantial subset of internet users. When children's issues are considered, it is usually in the context of child protection (cyberbullying, abuse and sexual exploitation), while other child rights (e.g. to privacy and freedom of expression) are often overlooked.¹⁶

In addition to the scant recognition of children's rights in the global internet governance debate, the lack of robust evidence on children's internet use makes it hard to predict the implications of the internet on children's lives and hinders the development of evidence-based policy.¹⁷ This is the case particularly beyond the global North where national policies were largely developed without prior evidence that takes into account children's views and experiences.¹⁸ It is easy to imagine that, despite the best intentions, such policies may give way to public pressure based on isolated incidents or media hype.¹⁹ In other cases, even where evidence is available and widely acknowledged, the policy frameworks may lag behind. For example, even though a growing body of research shows that children increasingly access the internet at

¹¹ Moestue and Muggah (2014); UNICEF (2011).

¹² Global Commission on Internet Governance (2016); World Bank (2016).

¹³ See *Method Guide 8: Participatory methods* at www.globalkidsonline.net/participatory-research

¹⁴ Human Rights Council Resolution 20/8. The promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet

16/07/2012.

¹⁵ Tunis Agenda for the Information Society WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/6(Rev.1)-E

¹⁶ Livingstone, Carr and Byrne (2015).

¹⁷ Byrne (2015); Lebegue (forthcoming).

¹⁸ Lebegue (forthcoming).

¹⁹ Byrne, Albright and Kardefelt-Winther (2016).

younger ages and that time spent online, including on games, can have a positive effect on their cognitive development,²⁰ most national policies that promote ICT in education and safe internet use are aimed at children above the age of 12.^{21 22}

Several recent policy mappings on child online safety and ICT in education show considerable progress in governments' cybersecurity legislation and online exploitation of children, particularly through child abuse material.²³ But they also reveal the disconnect between policies that address online exploitation and abuse and those that promote digital citizenship so as to build competent, confident and resilient young users of the internet who are able to enjoy the full benefits with minimized risk of harm.²⁴

In practice, child-related internet policy is either integrated into broader policies that deal with child protection or child rights in general, or policies that deal with education and promote digital literacy and competence; however these rarely refer to each other. The multiple stakeholders responsible for children's positive and safe use of the internet (governments and private sector alike) need to work hand in hand to overcome challenges related to policy coordination and its implementation. Finally, evidence on whether existing policies are effective in achieving their goals is very scarce, so the evidence-building agenda needs to include the evaluation of effectiveness of various interventions and policies.

In recent years the focus on the role of the internet in development and economic growth has been reinforced through international debate and policy. Increasingly, equitable access to and use of the internet is considered important for the realization of many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the internet is recognised 'not only as a development indicator but also as an enabler in itself'.²⁵ When it comes to young users, access to the internet could be an important predictor of

developmental success including the realization of opportunities for children for learning, gender equality, civic participation and engagement, promotion of peace, inclusion and equality.

As the Global Commission on Internet Governance points out, 'the internet is more than simply a system of wealth generation; it also acts as a platform for innovation, free expression, culture and access to ideas'.²⁶ Given the huge disparities that exist among and within countries, this potential for growth and individual development will depend on how well particular countries are managing to address the gaps in access, skills and literacies and on how successful we are in collectively making the internet a better place for children.

This change is already happening with increased recognition that child well-being online and offline are interconnected, and with growing attention to this issue among international child rights organizations, special rapporteurs, movements, alliances and bodies that seek to offer guidance, recommendations and support to national stakeholders.²⁷ The common position of these bodies and institutions is that when addressing child rights on the internet we need to strike a balance between opportunity and risk, freedom of expression and the right to privacy, children's right to special protection measures as well as the online and offline dimensions of children's experiences. They recognise that, in order to enable these benefits and minimize internet-facilitated abuse of children, we need coordinated international action and a global policy framework.

The establishment of the We Protect Global Alliance (WPGA) was an important step in this direction; it brings together national governments, civil society and UN agencies to jointly address the problem of child online abuse and build a better and safer internet for children. A model national response developed by the WPGA calls for cross-sectoral multidisciplinary

²⁰ Eichenbaum, Bavelier and Green (2014).

²¹ UNESCO (2016).

²² See *Method Guide 11: From research findings to policymaking* at www.globalkidsonline.net/policy

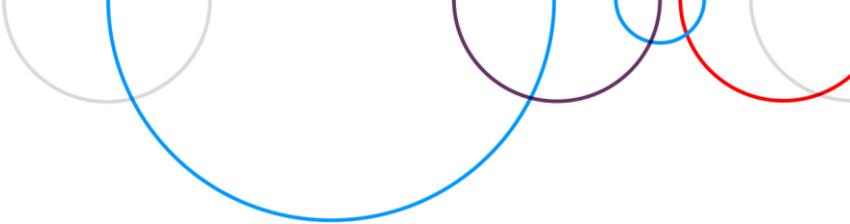
²³ See Lebegue (forthcoming), Baudouin et al. (2014), OECD (2011), UNESCO (2014).

²⁴ Digital citizenship can be defined as use of digital technologies in 'an ethical, safe, and responsible way without restricting users from fully participating in and contributing to the knowledge society' (UNESCO, 2014).

²⁵ General Assembly Resolution 70/125. Outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. Adopted on 16 December 2016

²⁶ Global Commission on Internet Governance (2016: i)

²⁷ See, for example, La Rue (2014), United Nations. Committee on the Rights of the Child (2014), Council of Europe (2016).



collaboration and recommends a whole range of programmes from awareness raising and education to child participation, protection and support for victims, law enforcement and corporate engagement.

Children's rights in the digital age

The work reported here is framed within the universal framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), in support of an evidence-based approach to children's rights in the digital age.²⁸ The UNCRC recognises that children enjoy many of the rights that adults do, together with some rights unique to them due to their special position and legal status as minors. However, ensuring that children enjoy their rights online may take particular efforts. Although not all policymakers or practitioners concerned with children's well-being or, indeed, with internet provision and governance, necessarily prioritise a child rights approach, we argue that such a framework offers a unified approach to children's everyday experiences online as well as offline, while also recognising the diverse contexts in which children live.

The four general principles that guide the implementation of the UNCRC apply equally in both digital and traditional environments – non-discrimination (Art.2), the best interests of the child as a primary consideration for all actions affecting them (Art.3), the right to life, survival and development (Art.6), and the right to have a voice and to be heard in matters that affect them (Art.12). The remaining articles of the UNCRC are commonly organized in terms of the *right to protection* from harm, the *right to provision* to meet needs, and the *right to participation* as an agent and rights-holder. While this three-fold distinction is useful, it is important to recognise that, when addressing child rights on the internet, and indeed in an offline environment, a balance must be struck that addresses both children's opportunities and risks, freedom of expression and the right to privacy, along with children's right to special protection measures and many other online and offline dimensions of children's experiences.

²⁸ See UN (1989).

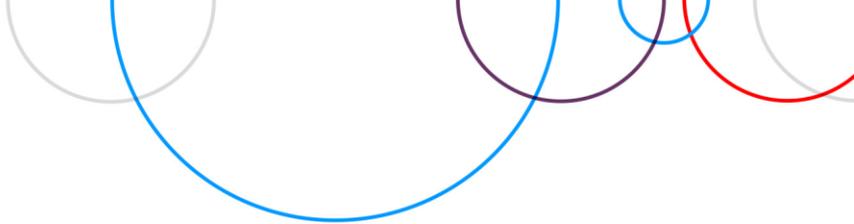


Table 1: Children’s rights in the digital age²⁹

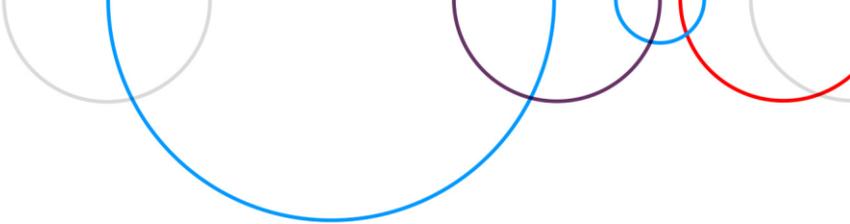
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child	Relevance to the digital age
<p><i>Protection</i> against all forms of abuse and neglect (<i>Art. 19</i>), including sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (<i>Art. 34</i>), and other forms of exploitation prejudicial to the child’s welfare (<i>Art. 36</i>). <i>Protection</i> from ‘material injurious to the child’s well-being’ (<i>Art. 17e</i>), ‘arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation’ (<i>Art. 16</i>) and the right of child to preserve his or her identity (<i>Art. 8</i>).</p>	<p>Sexual grooming and sexual exploitation; creation and distribution of child abuse images; online dimensions of child trafficking; new threats to privacy, identity and reputation; availability of (diverse, extreme) pornography; personal data exploitation, misuse and tracking; hostility, hate and bullying content and conduct; persuasion re. self-harm, suicide, pro-anorexia, drugs.</p>
<p><i>Provision</i> to support children’s rights to recreation and leisure appropriate to their age (<i>Art. 31</i>), an education that will support the development of their full potential (<i>Art. 28</i>) and prepare them ‘for responsible life in a free society’ (<i>Art. 29</i>), and to <i>provide</i> for ‘the important function performed by the mass media’ through diverse material of social and cultural benefit to the child (including minorities) to promote children’s well-being (<i>Art. 17</i>).</p>	<p>Formal and informal learning resources and curricula; wealth of accessible and specialised information; opportunities for creativity, exploration and expression; digital and information skills and literacies; expanded array of entertainment and leisure choices; access to/representation in own culture and heritage</p>
<p><i>Participation</i>: ‘In all actions concerning children ... the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration’ (<i>Art. 3</i>), including the right of children to be consulted in all matters affecting them (<i>Art. 12</i>); the child’s right to freedom of expression (<i>Art. 13</i>) and to freedom of association (<i>Art. 15</i>).</p>	<p>Scalable ways of consulting children about governance; user-friendly fora for child/youth voice and expression; child-led initiatives for local and global change; peer-to-peer connections for sharing and collaboration; recognition of child/youth rights and responsibilities.</p>

A child rights framework helps to focus and connect evidence to an international dialogue regarding policy and practical solutions although, no doubt, the evidence has value beyond as well as within a rights framework. In Table 1, we offer a mapping of UNCRC rights onto the emerging concerns – and research topics – already prominent in the digital age. While much has already been learned, especially in the

global North, it is clear that the task ahead is to understand how internet use mediates the conditions that facilitate harm, need and agency in children’s lives, thereby influencing the realization of their rights and improving their well-being. Crucially, although children’s rights are universal, what children need, what harms them, and how they can best express their agency – all these depend on the particular and often

²⁹ Adapted from Livingstone and Bulger (2014).





very local contexts of their lives. It is important that children's voices are heard within the research process and that they are included in discussions of research outcomes and uses.³⁰ Early indications are that how children engage with digital media and what consequences this has on their lives varies considerably around the world, although commonalities may also be notable. These differences and similarities may also shape the solutions that could enhance their protection, provision and participation, and many would subscribe to a common set of values by which to judge those solutions – namely, that they should be grounded in evidence and children's experiences, fair and inclusive, transparent and accountable, and be independently evaluated.

Still, it is an enormous task ahead to build a rigorous, globally comparative and contextually meaningful evidence base capable of supporting new programmes and policies.³¹ Evidence is also vital to help us understand if we are on the right track in addressing the problems, to evaluate possible solutions, and to help streamline and maximize the use of resources for the greatest benefit to children.

About this report

This report offers a synthesis of Global Kids Online's

work from 2015-2016. It has been written primarily for researchers, research funders and research users.³² An immediate objective of the project has been to construct a flexible, multi-method research toolkit for cross-national comparisons. This has been developed with and piloted by partners on four continents – in Argentina, Serbia, South Africa and the Philippines.

The project is first presented in Section 2, outlining the research questions and approach, project aims and objectives, and how we have worked with country partners. Then, key findings from the qualitative and quantitative research in four countries are presented in Section 3. Since they derive from the pilot testing of the research toolkit, they are indicative only, although in two countries (Argentina and South Africa), sample sizes were substantial.³³ In Argentina the sample was nationally representative, while in the other three countries the samples were not nationally representative.^{34,35}

In Section 4 we review the Global Kids Online research toolkit – its structure, key strengths and the process of its production, including lessons learned through piloting and partner dialogue. Finally, in Section 5 we draw conclusions from the findings and methodology, and indicate recommendations and future directions.

³⁰ Recent and current projects designed explicitly to include the voices of children, from which Global Kids Online has learned and also contributed, include Nordic Youth Forum (2012), Third et al. (2014) and U-Report (UNICEF).

³¹ See *Method Guide 9: Comparative analysis* at www.globalkidsonline.net/comparative

³² By 'researchers,' we have in mind academia, and social and market researchers. We particularly hope to reach researchers working in countries or contexts where little research has yet been conducted regarding children's internet use and consequences, and where research capacity may benefit from further support and training. By 'research users', we hope to address all those who

commission or benefit from research to guide their evidence-based policy and practice. In relation to children's internet use and consequences, this includes a range of stakeholders – governments, industry, educators, NGOs, internet governance and child rights organizations.

³³ See *Method Guide 3: Survey sampling and administration* at www.globalkidsonline.net/sampling

³⁴ For more information, see the four country reports at www.globalkidsonline.net

³⁵ Global Kids Online is a project that continues to develop and expand. For the latest updates, visit www.globalkidsonline.net/updates.

THE GLOBAL KIDS ONLINE PROJECT

Research questions and approach

The Global Kids Online project is founded on the belief that it is vital to generate and sustain a rigorous cross-national evidence base around children's use of the internet. This is needed to understand whether and how children's rights are being enhanced or undermined in the digital age, and so to inform policy-makers and stakeholders nationally and internationally when creating a better internet for children. Until recently, the evidence base has been largely concentrated in high-income countries. While it may be tempting to generalise what we know from the North to the South, this is inappropriate given that the step-change in where children go online raises new questions about how they go online and with what consequences. Indeed, it may even be argued that the meaning of internet use is itself changing as its users and contexts of use change – increasingly mobile, commercialised, taken-for-granted.³⁶

Now it is important to enhance evidence, and research capacity, in the global South. This will permit the generation of up-to-date findings and comparisons of findings across countries to support evidence-based policy and practice, and to provide governments with the comparative insights by which to anticipate future trends and learn from each other.³⁷

The Global Kids Online project has been established to gather rigorous cross-national evidence on children's online access risks, opportunities and rights, especially in countries where the massive expansion of the internet is relatively new. Two linked research questions drive this work:

- When and how does use of the internet contribute positively to children's lives – providing opportunities to benefit in diverse ways that contribute to their well-being?
- When and how is use of the internet problematic in children's lives – amplifying the risk of harm that undermines their well-being if they are unprotected?

To answer these questions, our international research partnership aims to generate qualitative and quantitative evidence on children's online access and activities, risks and opportunities, and to analyse how these affect their well-being and rights. Our contention is that, if research is to be global in scope, it must be comparative in nature, so as to recognise similarities and differences in the contexts of children's lives, both across and within countries, and to explain them.³⁸ This is productive in predicting findings from one country to another, and in understanding what policy levers or practical interventions might enable one country to benefit from the experience of others.

We also take a contextual approach, as this offers a necessary corrective against simple statistical comparisons. For instance, concerning the percentage of households with internet access in one country or another, a child with internet access at home may still not be allowed to use it. And conversely, a child without internet at home may still be an internet user by gaining access in a cybercafé or at school. A child who uses the internet may be more or less supported or restricted by their parents or teachers, while peers may facilitate or undermine online activities in yet further ways. Thus to know whether and how children use the internet requires researchers to engage with children directly, and to consider the contexts and consequences of internet use beyond basic statistics on access.

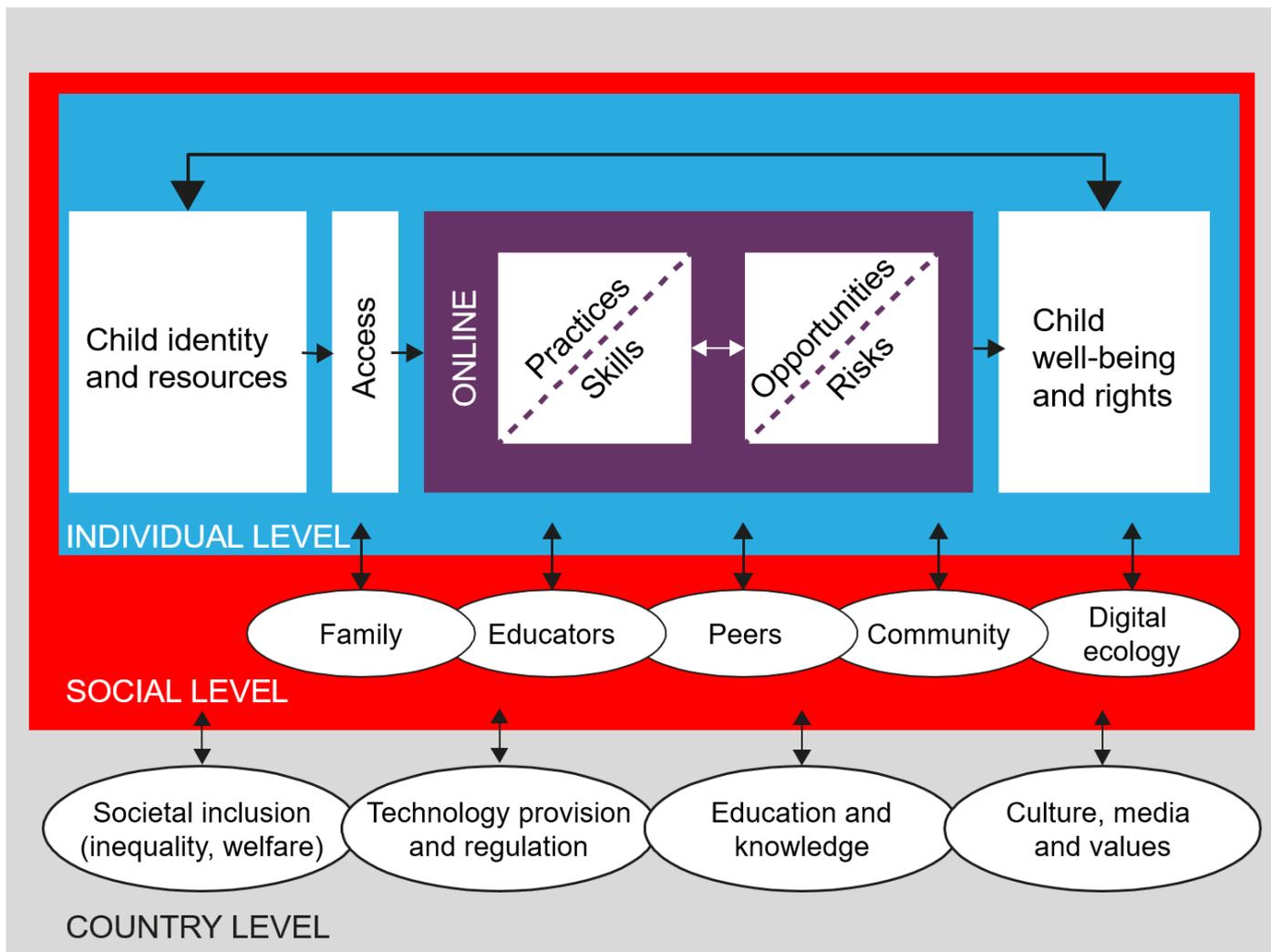
To scope the range of possible factors influencing children's well-being and rights in the digital age, Global Kids Online is working with the research model shown in Figure 2.

³⁶ Livingstone and Bulger (2013).

³⁷ See *Method Guide 11: From research findings to policy-making* at www.globalkidsonline.net/policy

³⁸ See *Method Guide 9: Comparative analysis* at www.globalkidsonline.net/comparative

Figure 2: The Global Kids Online model



Source: Livingstone, Mascheroni and Staksrud (2015).

This operates on three levels, with original data collection concentrated on the individual and social levels, and the country level providing necessary contextual indicators for cross-national comparisons:³⁹

- *The individual level.* This concentrates on the key influences (children’s demographics, identity and available resources), the conditions of their internet access, and the nature of their online experience (in terms of their online practices and skills, and the opportunities and risks they encounter). The focus is on whether and how the online experience changes long-established relations between the structures of children’s lives (as an input to the model) and their well-being (the balance of

benefits and harms, as the output of the model).

- *The social level.* Importantly, this level recognises that children’s lives – including their online lives – are lived in highly social circumstances. The actions, influences and resources of their family, school, peer, community and – increasingly – the digital ecology (online social networks, information, gaming communities, help services and more) all potentially shape children’s online experiences and resulting well-being.
- *The country level.* By pointing to a range of key structural variables at the country level, the model recognises that children’s experiences, and their social contexts, are in turn shaped by national and regional factors in ways that must be understood.

³⁹ This model is further explained in *Method guide 1: A framework for researching Global Kids Online* at www.globalkidsonline.net/framework. See also the Glossary

of the present report for definitions of key terms.

These may include severe economic adversity or political instability. Through cross-national comparisons, patterns of similarities and differences can be identified that will permit policy makers in one country to learn from the best practice or problems encountered in another country.

The basic premise of the Global Kids Online model is that all children have their own identity and a set of personal resources (psychological and material) which partly influence how they go online (access), what they do online (practices/skills), and what opportunities and risks they encounter. What happens online is assumed to have some kind of impact on the well-being of the child, influenced in part by their identity and resources (such as existing strengths or vulnerabilities), and in part by their social support systems and the country context in which they live. But this assumption is precisely what the model is designed to test. A child's circumstances and resources are also expected to influence their well-being independently of what they do online, but in this project the focus is on how internet use impacts on children's well-being in the context of their particular life circumstances.

Project aims and objectives

The main objectives of Global Kids Online are to:

- Enable and support rigorous research about children's internet use, online risks, opportunities, well-being and rights which is comparative over time and across countries and regions.
- Provide flexible and practical methodological tools for national researchers to collect data on and with children aged 9-17 who use the internet.
- Build capacity in developing countries to conduct research on children's internet use and contribute to evidence-based policy and action.
- Contribute evidence in support of policy development that promotes the holistic realization of children's rights online and their access to resources.
- Establish and strengthen an international network of experts in the field who can monitor global

trends, support the interface between evidence and policy, and help disseminate findings to relevant audiences on the global level.

During 2015-16, the specific objectives were to:

- Develop a global research toolkit consisting of a modular survey, qualitative research protocols and a survey administration toolkit that includes a series of expert method guides.
- Pilot the research toolkit in four countries in diverse national contexts and produce national reports.
- Produce a research synthesis of the national reports from the four pilot countries.
- Develop a website (portal) for hosting the toolkit, national reports and a synthesis report.

A partnership approach to research

In preparation for Global Kids Online, a multi-stakeholder, multi-national research seminar was held with the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti and the EU Kids Online network at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in February 2015.⁴⁰ The expert participants identified several overarching challenges for the global research agenda:

- Identifying the nature of the opportunities and barriers to children's rights in a digital, global age, given the diverse contexts of children's lives, so as to determine the priorities for research.
- Developing definitions, measures, standards and procedures for rigorous methods of cross-national design, data collection, interpretation and comparison.
- Recognising the characteristics and demands of particular research contexts, including recognising that contextualisation is often in tension with the standardisation expected of comparative research.
- Guiding the relation between research, policymakers and other stakeholders so as to embed evidence in policy and practice in diverse

⁴⁰ Livingstone, Byrne and Bulger, 2015

societies for the benefit of children.

Thinking through these challenges has shaped the development of the Global Kids Online research toolkit (see Section 4.1 for an overview). The seminar also alerted us to the importance of the best practices by which a toolkit can be employed – in terms of practical knowledge-sharing strategies, platforms for collaboration and dissemination, management of data ownership and authorship, quality control, scenarios for research implementation, and the development of necessary expertise and training provision.

After all, it is not only methodologically but also politically and ethically challenging to find a way to build on hard-won expertise, existing knowledge and carefully tested measures largely produced in the global North in order to share these with the global South where research on children's internet use is sorely needed.⁴¹ Clearly, this can only be contemplated if an equal and open dialogue is sustained among all the researchers involved.

Indeed, the scale of researching children's lives in relation to digital environments worldwide is beyond the capacity of any single research institution, especially one based in Europe, and nor would it be appropriate for one institution to conduct research across such diverse contexts. Consequently, Global Kids Online implements a partnership approach in which the benefits of central coordination of resources, expertise and tools are united with a distributed approach to evidence-gathering, contributing to the development of evidence-based policy and practice – locally and globally. This also means that the toolkit has been constructed in such a way as to encompass both common elements important for comparison, while also allowing local adaptation and for common future developments that incorporate local or national insights.

The development of the Global Kids Online research toolkit has been led by the project Steering Group and

has involved regular, ongoing consultations with experts and advisors.⁴² These are acknowledged on the project website, and their terms of reference are specified in the Inception Report.⁴³ Those listed as 'experts' have authored one of the method guides that form part of the research toolkit. Those listed as 'advisors' have been consulted at regular intervals during the conduct of the research and have undertaken the role of anonymous peer reviewer for the project outputs. Some individuals have played several roles to support the Steering Group.

The Steering Group itself comprised a collaboration between, on the one hand, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, LSE and EU Kids Online working as central coordinators and, on the other hand, country partners normally comprising the UNICEF country office, a reputable national/ research team and data collection organization, and national stakeholders. This has proved an effective model, permitting a dynamic process of co-creation of knowledge of both national and international value.

In developing the research toolkit and through the process of pilot testing (as discussed below), many methodological lessons have been learned, as discussed in Section 4.2.

Pilot country partners

To co-construct and pilot test the toolkit, thereby generating new data in four countries, Global Kids Online conducted primary research in Argentina, Serbia, South Africa and the Philippines. These were selected as being middle-income countries from different continents with strong interest in pursuing research on this topic, keen interest from both governmental and non-governmental sectors and strong support from national UNICEF offices.⁴⁴ Each country was also keen to strengthen their research capacities and technical know-how, as well as to foster regional and subregional exchange and learning. Each partner country worked in a slightly different way,

research children's online and mobile access, opportunities and risks around the world. This includes expertise in qualitative, quantitative and comparative methodology, especially as this applies to research with children. It also includes expertise related to country and regional specialism regarding technology, policy and child-rights issues.

⁴³ See www.globalkidsonline.net

⁴⁴ Argentina has since been classified as a high-income country by the World Bank (2016).

⁴¹ There are, fortunately, a number of highly reputable projects whose experience can be drawn upon. In the above meeting, researchers learned from, among other studies, the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborative Cross-national Survey, which examines 60+ topics related to adolescent health and well-being in 44 countries every four years, and from UNICEF's Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS).

⁴² Many forms of expertise are required to conceive, develop and implement a project with the scale and scope to

depending on its funding, policy context and other context-specific factors.

In terms of comparative method,⁴⁵ the selection aimed to maximize difference across case study countries in order to reveal the overall parameters and scope of children's experiences. Research in each country was expected both to reveal the nature of children's online experiences and to contribute specific insights to the wider comparative project – in terms of methodology and findings. For instance:

- Argentina has very large differences in wealth and resources across urban and rural contexts, with likely implications for children's internet and mobile access.
- In the Philippines, the research was expected to provide important insights into the challenges of child sexual exploitation and abuse in relation to internet and mobile use by both children and adult perpetrators. The widespread use of gadgets and devices, and internet shops (e.g. Pisonet) that are affordable and available to children in all income groups and that pose both risks and opportunities to child safety and development online makes the study equally noteworthy. The national practice of parents working abroad and communicating with their children via video communication platforms was another important dimension of the work conducted in the Philippines.
- In Serbia, we hoped to gain an understanding of the conditions of internet use among different population groups (Roma children, children with disabilities) in addition to being a small language market with, potentially, little local positive content provision for children.
- In South Africa, statistical data and research reveals that in general there are high levels of violence in society (especially against women and children), that more than half of the population is

still living in poverty and that only 35 per cent of children live with both parents.⁴⁶ This is likely to have implications for the incidence of violence online and the levels of support children may receive.⁴⁷

The pilot countries also differed in ICT access. Data on children's internet use were not available, but the national figures for the population available from ITU suggest some interesting comparisons: internet access is lowest in the Philippines (41 per cent of the population) and highest in Argentina (69 per cent). South Africa (52 per cent) and Serbia (65 per cent) fall in the middle.⁴⁸ If we count the number of users, then the Philippines has the highest number of individuals who use the internet: at over 44 million, this is the 15th largest population of internet users in the world.⁴⁹

Policy priorities in the four participating countries vary. Where there is a strong disparity in access (Argentina, South Africa, the Philippines), the policy focus is on universal access to the broadband internet, improvements in infrastructure and telecommunication services, and elimination of the digital divide. South Africa's Department of Telecommunication and Postal Services' 2015/2016 strategic plan places a particular emphasis on affordability of broadband services and harnessing the ICT for development. The Philippines government likewise prioritises the provision of 'strategic, reliable, cost-efficient and citizen-centric ICT infrastructure, systems and resources' and commits to ensuring universal access to quality, affordable, reliable and secure internet services.⁵⁰ Argentina, on the other hand, places strong emphasis on equal opportunity in access to ICTs in general, and especially by children and adolescents through their national programmes 'Conectar Igualdad', the Knowledge Access Centers (NAC) and the Federal Fiber-Optic Network (FFON). In Serbia, a country that is on the path to accessing the European Union, the key policy goal is to reach the average EU level information-society indicators, including the

⁴⁵ Kohn (1989).

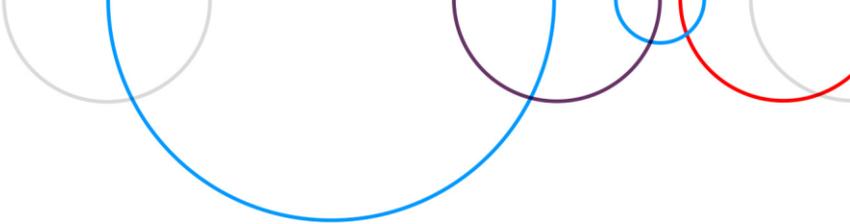
⁴⁶ South Africa Kids Online (2016). Available at <http://www.cjcp.org.za/cjcp-research-publications.html>

⁴⁷ Samuels et al. (2013); Livingstone, Byrne and Bulger (2015).

⁴⁸ Internet use by individuals (ITU 2015). Available at <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>

⁴⁹ Internet Live Statistics (1 July 2016 estimates, accessed in August 2016 from <http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users-by-country/>) describes their data as an 'Elaboration of data by International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Population Division, Internet & Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), World Bank.'

⁵⁰ Republic of the Philippines Act No. 10844. *An Act Creating the Department of Information and Communications Technology, Defining its Functions Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes.*



development of ICT knowledge and skills, and strengthening the role of ICTs in the education sector. In addition, the Government of Serbia aims to address new ICT-related challenges including: new security threats, privacy and data protection, addiction to technology, insufficient interoperability and the protection of intellectual property.⁵¹

When it comes to legislation and policies related to children and ICTs, all countries have a strong focus on protecting children through national legislation that covers protection from abuse and exploitation in general or through more specific ICT-related legislation such as Argentina's Grooming Law, South Africa's The Protection from Harassment Act of 2011 and the Philippines' Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012. However, sometimes the complexities of children's vulnerability, victimisation and agency are not adequately addressed in these laws, as in the case of

South Africa's Films and Publications Act of 1996 and Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act of 2007. These laws do not distinguish between the production and distribution of child sexual abuse material and voluntary 'sexting' among consenting teenagers, which may unnecessarily criminalise children.

ICT in education and the promotion of responsible and safe use of the internet are subjects of many policies in all countries. These policies range from general youth strategies (Serbia) to more specific guidelines on e-safety in schools (Serbia, South Africa). In all countries we see multi-stakeholder engagement emerging as a dominant approach that brings together diverse groups with convergent interests. However, as our country partners pointed out, the problem was not in the shortage of policies and strategies but in their implementation.

⁵¹ Republic of Serbia. *Strategy on Development of Electronic Communications in the Republic of Serbia for Period 2010-2020*.

KEY FINDINGS

Methodology: approach and limitations

Asking children about their experiences of the internet and the contexts and consequence of internet use is simultaneously an important means of data collection for research purposes and an important means of consulting children. Through qualitative research, children can voice their experiences in ways meaningful to them; and their voices can be heard, understood and acted upon by adults.⁵² Through quantitative research, children can also describe their experiences in ways that permit estimation of both common and rare occurrences. There is merit in conducting qualitative research before survey research and in the reverse order, with the former permitting children's experiences to inform the survey design and the latter making use of them to help resolve puzzles that may emerge from survey findings. Additionally, before finalising the survey instrument, cognitive testing permits careful adjustment of the exact questions to ask children in the light of their interpretations, possible misunderstandings and preferred modes of expression.⁵³

The qualitative and quantitative research sampled internet-using children aged 9-17 in the Philippines, Serbia and South Africa, and internet-using children aged 13-17 in Argentina.⁵⁴ The South African sample included both internet users and non-users but the internet-related questions were asked only of the users.⁵⁵ Three out of four countries also conducted interviews with parents. Conducting a survey with both parents and children in the same

household provides an opportunity to understand and compare parental and children's digital skills, in order to compare the level of parental engagement, support and monitoring, and to discover the general level of parental understanding of their children's internet use.

Considerable effort was dedicated by the Steering Group (which included and built on the work in each of the four partner countries) to ensuring the quality of the pilot research, bearing in mind practical constraints on time, finances and other resources. In what follows, we present findings from the research in four countries in order to demonstrate the potential of the research toolkit, to show the kinds of questions that can be answered by generating new data, and to showcase the potential of future research. As more countries join the project, and as data collection across countries moves beyond pilot studies to nationally representative research, the comparative insights will grow.

Note that while asking children about access and activities online is relatively, though not necessarily, unproblematic, it is more difficult to ask children whether they have been exposed to online risks and whether they experience harm as a result.⁵⁶ In circumstances of confidentiality wherever possible, and with appropriate ethical protections, children were asked about a range of online risks, about how often these occurred, and about whether or not they found them upsetting.⁵⁷ We were aware that there is considerable public and policy anxiety about the risks children encounter online, and yet the possibility remains that children may be

⁵² See *Method Guide 5: Research with young children* at www.globalkidsonline.net/young-children and *Method Guide 8: Participatory methods* at

www.globalkidsonline.net/participatory-research

⁵³ See *Method Guide 4: Designing a standardised survey* at www.globalkidsonline.net/adapting-surveys

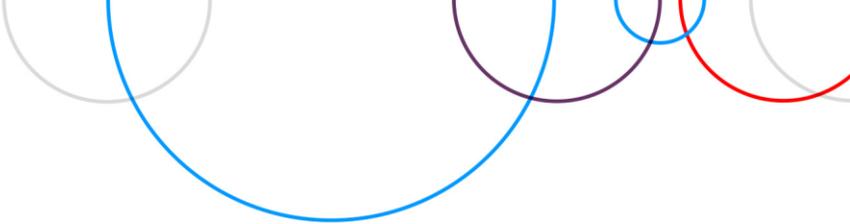
⁵⁴ See *Method Guide 3: Survey sampling and administration* at www.globalkidsonline.net/sampling

⁵⁵ Findings for Argentina are generalizable to the wider population, as they are based on a nationally

representative random sample of children aged 13-17. However, when comparing data from Argentina with data from other countries, the absence of the 9-12 age group should be remembered (this also affects cross-national comparisons for those aged 12-14, since in Argentina this group contains only children aged 13-14).

⁵⁶ While recommendations were made that responses to sensitive questions should be completed by the child, in practice this was not always feasible.

⁵⁷ See *Method Guide 2: Ethical research with children* at www.globalkidsonline.net/ethics



exposed to, say, a contact request from an unknown person or sexual images online without this being experienced as problematic; it could even be entertaining.⁵⁸ In designing the questionnaire, it was important not to put certain ideas or assumptions into children's minds, and to ask questions as clearly and simply as possible, avoiding emotive terms such as 'pornography' or 'strangers'. Children's experiences of harm were evaluated by asking them if anything happened online that bothered or upset them in some way, for example made them feel uncomfortable, scared or they felt that they should not have seen it.⁵⁹ Follow-up questions explored the duration of negative impact and children's coping strategies.

We emphasise caution insofar as this is pilot research conducted to test and amend the toolkit, based on small sample sizes especially in the Philippines and Serbia.⁶⁰ Thus findings reported here should be considered indicative only.⁶¹ Their

presentation focuses on within-country and between-country comparisons where differences are considerable and generally hold across countries, which provides reasonable confidence that these trends would exist also in representative samples.

The present focus is on summarising key findings and drawing out initial policy recommendations and pathways for future research.⁶² Further work is planned to model the patterns among the findings so as to predict internet-related influences on children's well-being and to interpret the cross-national comparisons. There are many factors that differ between the countries, which might explain the observed differences discussed below, including differences in the research methodology.⁶³ For further contextualisation and interpretation of findings in each country, see the full country reports.⁶⁴ These have been produced according to the methods shown in Table 2.

⁵⁸ See *Method Guide 7: Researching online child sexual abuse* at www.globalkidsonline.net/sexual-exploitation

⁵⁹ The research was carried out in circumstances of confidentiality, wherever possible, and with appropriate ethical protections, such as allowing children not to respond when they did not want to, or to pause or terminate the interview. The researchers were prepared to put children in touch with child support services if needed.

⁶⁰ Findings presented for Serbia and the Philippines should be interpreted with particular caution, and nationally representative work is now in preparation to enable reliable conclusions regarding the patterns observed here. The findings presented for South Africa are based on a larger sample size and with representative gender and urban/rural breakdowns, but respondents were recruited via convenience sampling methods and only from three provinces in the country, which prevents generalisation to the wider population of

children in South Africa.

⁶¹ Data were cleaned at country level and outputs used in this report were produced by pilot countries together with Steering Group members from UNICEF Office of Research, EU Kids Online and LSE. All items have been evaluated at country level in terms of response distributions; more extensive validation procedures are ongoing.

⁶² See *Method Guide 11: From research findings to policy-making* at www.globalkidsonline.net/policy

⁶³ For instance, the Argentinian research used a slightly different survey which means that some questions have dichotomous response options where other countries use Likert scales. We have tried to aggregate response options in ways that mitigate the problems that follow from the lack of comparable scales.

⁶⁴ Available at www.globalkidsonline.net

Table 2: Quantitative and qualitative methods, by country

	Argentina	Serbia	South Africa	Philippines
Survey pilot sampling frame	Nationally representative random sample, 1,106 children aged 13-18 who use the internet ⁶⁵	Convenience sample, 197 children aged 9-17 who use the internet and 197 parents	Convenience sample, 913 children aged 9-17 (both internet users and non-users) and 532 parents	Convenience sample, 121 children aged 9-17 ⁶⁶ who use the internet and 121 parents
Survey administration	Face-to-face interviews at home	Face-to face interviews at school	Face-to-face interviews at home	Tablet-administered survey at home
Location for quantitative pilot study	Large urban cities (population > 500,000) ⁶⁷	Belgrade, Voivodina, Eastern and Central Serbia; urban and rural	Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Gauteng provinces; urban and rural	Manila and Pampanga; urban and rural
Period	October 2015	March - April 2016	Feb - March 2016	May - June 2016
Qualitative pilot sample	8 focus groups with children aged 13-17; 4 focus groups with parents	8 focus groups with children aged 10-17, including Roma and disabled children	7 focus groups with children aged 9-17; 4 focus groups with parents	14 focus groups and 12 individual interviews with children; 2 focus groups with parents
Location for qualitative pilot study	Children and parents from the province of Buenos Aires	Belgrade	Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Gauteng provinces; urban	Manila and Pampanga
Period	February - March 2016	November - December 2015	December 2015 - February 2016	May - June 2016
Interviewers	IPSOS (market research agency)	Trained child psychologists	Recruitment and training by Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention	Recruitment and training by University of the Philippines, Manila
Language	Spanish	Serbian	English and verbal translation into local languages ⁶⁸	Tagalog

⁶⁵ In this report, we use a sub-sample from Argentina that contains children aged 13-17 (N=882).

⁶⁶ One participant in the Philippines turned 18 as the survey was conducted, but child and parent were still included.

⁶⁷ Only urban regions were included in the sample as this covers 91 per cent of the population. This is common practice in Argentina when the number of cases is based on the proportionate weight of each region.

⁶⁸ The South African questionnaire was translated during the survey interview into the required language. Interviewers were trained to provide similar translations of key concepts and terminology. See South Africa's country report at www.globalkidsonline.net/south-africa.

Access and opportunities

Children are keenly attached to digital technologies, as revealed by qualitative research in all four countries. Online devices offer a means of communication and entertainment, and allow children to keep up with friends and the rest of the world. Children feel themselves to be 'digital natives,' as one Serbian child put it:

"We grew up with the internet. I mean, the internet has always been here with us. The grown-ups are like 'Wow the internet appeared', while it is perfectly normal for us" (Boy aged 15).

Access and use

How do children gain internet access? Connectivity is not always easy to manage, especially for children. The survey findings shown in Figure 3 indicate that:

- In South Africa, most children (92 per cent) use prepaid internet or 'data' to connect to the internet, but 55 per cent are also able to use free internet and 30 per cent say they sometimes pay to use the internet (e.g. at an internet café etc.).
- In Serbia, three-quarters of surveyed children (75 per cent) use post-paid internet (monthly subscription), two-thirds of children (61 per cent) use free internet (in school, cafés, libraries etc.), nearly one-third (31 per cent) use prepaid internet (e.g. at home, on their mobile phone etc.), and only 11 per cent of children pay for internet use (e.g. in a cybercafé, game room).
- In the Philippines, over three-quarters of surveyed children (76 per cent) use free internet when they can and 41 per cent of children use pay as you go internet ('I pay for internet each time I use it' in Figure 3 below). About one-third of children (29 per cent) use prepaid internet to connect.

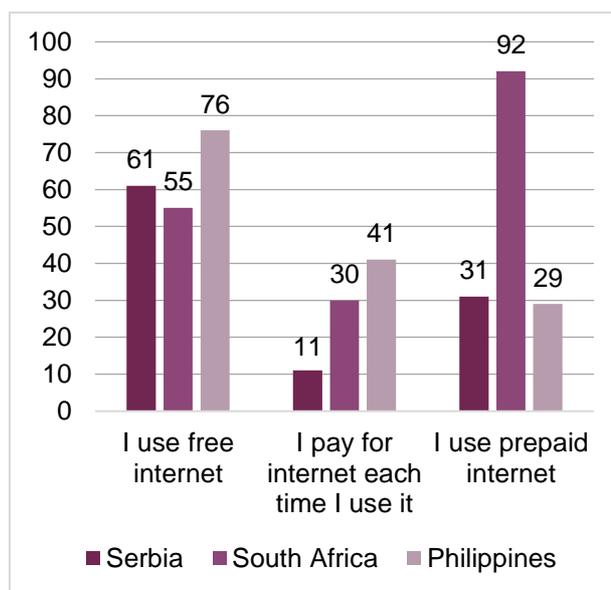
The qualitative work demonstrates that, even when

they access the internet through mobile phones, children do not necessarily think that they are online. For example, a child from Argentina said that:

"It's not like you connect, but rather you get a message on Whatsapp and that's when you connect. It's like permanent. You're interacting all the time" (Boy aged 15-17).

Mobile phones seem to allow further blurring between being offline and online, and children do not necessarily distinguish between the two. Therefore, it is not surprising that many children in Argentina stated that they are online all the time.⁶⁹

Figure 3: When you use the internet, how do you connect?



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17. Estimates are based on pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. This question was not asked in Argentina. Valid N: Serbia (N=176-191), South Africa (N=640), Philippines (N=113-117).

The South African study offered additional insights into the difficulties children can experience when trying to connect to the internet. The South African team surveyed non-users as well as internet users to understand the barriers to internet access that children face and to explore resulting inequalities

⁶⁹ See Argentina's country report at www.globalkidsonline.net/argentina

(see the South African country report).⁷⁰ Cost emerged as a problem for all children but in different ways. Among internet users, around one-third reported limitations on use related to the cost of data. Among non-users, one-third mentioned that the cost of devices was a barrier to access, while about half said that adults did not permit them to go online. For children, barriers to access can be frustrating, as this focus group in Western Cape, with 11-12 year old girls revealed:⁷¹

“But if you don’t have airtime.”

“Then you can’t chat.”

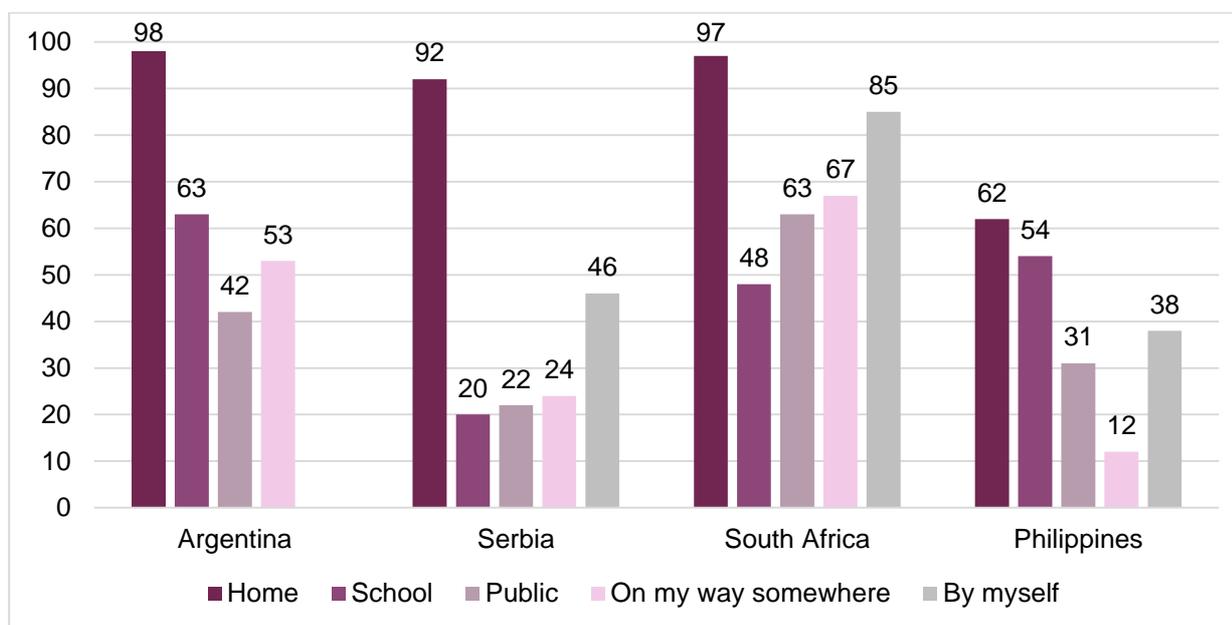
“Then you get mad.”

“And then you don’t have any pocket-money.”

Places of access

Where do children go online? As shown in Figure 4, with the proliferation of mobile access and personal devices, the locations where children go online and the devices they use are changing. Having a mobile phone means that children can go online not only in the home while, potentially or actually, supervised by parents, but also in private or from school, in public places or when they are on their way somewhere. This could have implications for the practices children develop and the content they access while online.

Figure 4: How often do you go online or use the internet at these places? (% who go online at least monthly in these places, multiple responses allowed)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Estimates from the other countries are based on pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. ‘Public’ refers to libraries, cafés, computer shops, etc. Response option ‘By myself’ not used in Argentina. Valid N: Argentina (N=880), Serbia (N=182), South Africa (N=640), Philippines (N=108).

- Children in all four countries report that they most frequently go online at home, with over 90 per cent of children in Argentina, Serbia and

South Africa going online at home at least every month or more, and 62 per cent in the

⁷⁰ See South Africa’s country report at www.globalkidsonline.net/south-africa

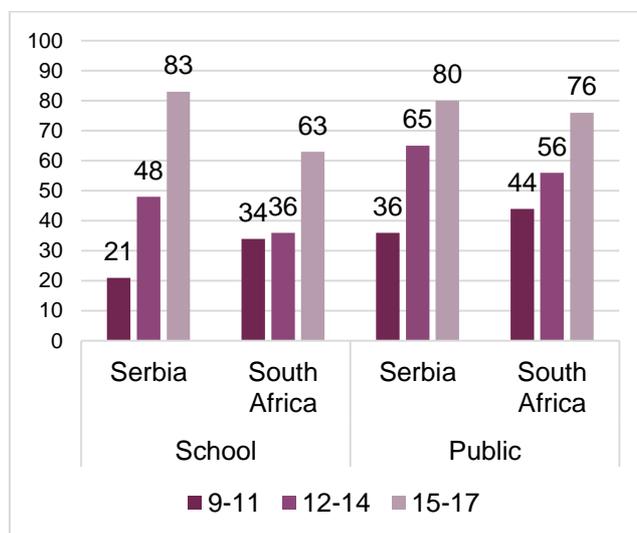
⁷¹ In this presentation of findings, quotations from children come from the country reports available at www.globalkidsonline.net

Philippines.

- There are noticeable differences between countries in terms of school access, with Serbian children being the least likely to go online in school at least every month (20 per cent), while for the other countries around 50-60 per cent of children do so.
- South African children seem to be the most likely to go online in public places, followed by children in Argentina and the Philippines, while Serbian children are the least likely.
- While children in the Philippines go online at home a bit less frequently than children in other countries, they go online equally or more often in school and in public.
- In South Africa and Argentina, over half of children reported that they use the internet while on their way somewhere. These numbers were considerably lower in Serbia and the Philippines.

Less than half of children in Serbia (46 per cent) and the Philippines (38 per cent) use the internet by themselves, while most children in South Africa (85 per cent) do so. Age differences were discernible in Serbia and South Africa, with older children more likely to use the internet at school or in public (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: How often do you go online or use the internet at the following places? (% who go online at least monthly in school or in a public place, by age)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17. Estimates are based on pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Serbia (N=182-186), South Africa (N=640-641).

There are noticeable age differences in where children use the internet:⁷²

- In Serbia, the older children become the more they are likely to use the internet both at school and in public places. Use among the 9-11 year olds is comparatively low – one-fifth use the internet at school, one-third in public.
- In South Africa, only one-third of the 9-11 and 12-14 age groups use the internet at school, suggesting that there may be some differences in internet-related school policies for younger and older children.

Online devices

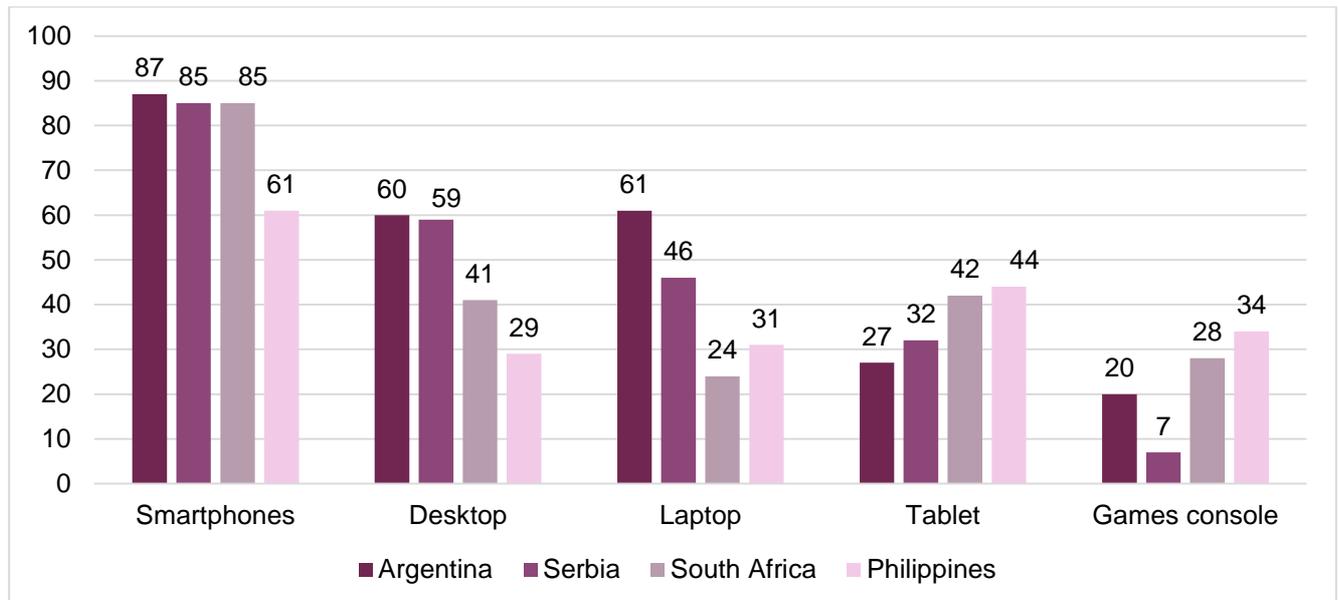
Mobile access may be positive in terms of flexibility and privacy, but it could also reduce opportunities

⁷² Here as elsewhere, due to the lack of representative samples in Serbia, South Africa and the Philippines, and the limited sample sizes in Serbia and the Philippines, we cannot reliably generalise the observed patterns to the wider population of children in these countries. Caution is needed especially in relation to comparisons of subsamples divided by age or gender.

for parents to mediate or support their children as they explore the internet. Moreover, certain locations or devices may be more associated with risky or positive practices. The quality of experience for a child who accesses the internet only through a mobile phone may differ from that of children who

also use desktops or laptops: the small screen limits the amount and complexity of content that can be readily viewed, and when searching information online mobile users tend to scan content rather than to process and analyse it more deeply.

Figure 6: When you use internet, how often do you use any of these to go online? (% who use the device at least monthly, by country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=882), Serbia (N=195-197), South Africa (N=636-639), Philippines (N=116-117).

- Smartphones are the most common device used by children to go online while desktops and laptop computers are used less frequently. Over 80 per cent of children in Argentina, Serbia and South Africa report going online via smartphones at least every month or more often. This number is lower in the Philippines (61 per cent), but smartphones are still the most common device used by Filipino children to go online (Figure 6).
- In the Philippines, more children go online via tablets or games consoles than in the other three countries, which might explain why fewer children in the Philippines go online via smartphones, desktop or laptop computers.
- Small age and gender differences exist in terms of which devices children use, but these differences vary by country. For example, boys

are much more likely than girls to use a games console to go online in Argentina, Serbia and South Africa, but girls are more likely than boys to do so in the Philippines. Also, in Argentina, girls are more likely than boys to go online on a smartphone (92 per cent vs. 84 per cent).

Focus group discussions in all four countries revealed that children prefer to use devices that belong only to them so they do not have to share it with others. Most often these devices are mobile phones and children feel protective of the details of their online activities and consider them private. A personally owned device also means that internet access and usage cannot be monitored easily by their parents.

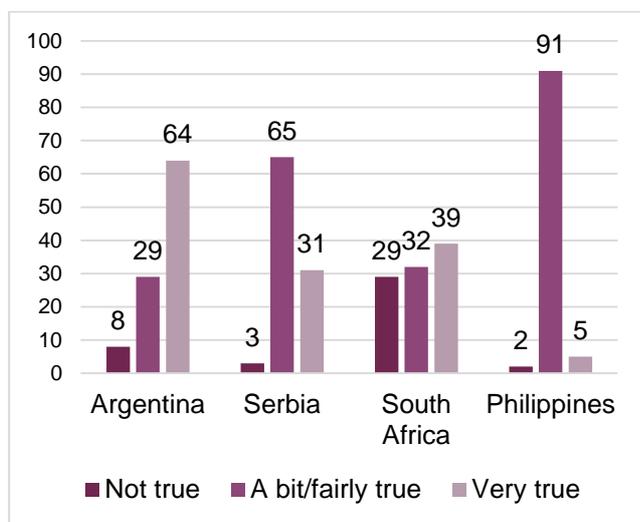
Children say that they prefer to go online when there is the least presence of adults, such as later in the evening, which the Argentinian study illustrated:

when a group of girls aged 13-14 were asked about their favourite time to connect to the internet, all of them chose night-time because 'it is quieter, [since] everyone's asleep'.

Online opportunities

Why do children go online and do they find positive experiences there?

Figure 7: There are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of my age (% by country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=882), Serbia (N=194), South Africa (N=619), Philippines (N=114).

Most children think that 'there are lots of things on the internet that are good for children my age' (see Figure 7):

- Most children in Argentina (64 per cent) believe it to be 'very true' that there are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of their age, followed by 39 per cent in South Africa and 31 per cent in Serbia.
- Only a few children find this to be 'not true': Argentina (8 per cent), Serbia (3 per cent) and

the Philippines (2 per cent). However, in South Africa, over 29 per cent of children indicate dissatisfaction with online content.

- While only 5 per cent in the Philippines find this statement 'very true', almost all of them (91 per cent) believe it to be 'A bit true' or 'Fairly true'.
- There was a tendency for boys to be more positive about online content than girls.

The South African country report adds that most children (96 per cent) say that they 'sometimes' or 'always' had fun when they went online, but 58 per cent of participants say that they wish there were more information resources online relevant to their particular community, culture and lifestyle.⁷³ Still, they find much to enjoy:

"You can also catch up with uhm...like soapies [soap operas] if it's your favourite soapie" (Boy aged 16-18, Eastern Cape).

"You know more about things you don't know much about" (Boy aged 16-18, Western Cape).

It is worth noting that being 'constantly connected' is generally regarded positively by children in all countries, but some of them express concern about their desire to be connected, or they worry that they spend too much time online. As the first quotation also illustrates, it is the connection to other people, rather than to the internet in general, that is most valued:

"It's not like you connect, but rather you get a message on WhatsApp and that's when you connect. It's like permanent. You're interacting all the time" (Boy aged 15-17, Argentina).

"We do not have choice.... Now, if we do not have Facebook or Instagram we do not know what is happening around us... who does what... we would not be able to know..."(Girl aged 15, Serbia).

⁷³ This question was designed by the South African team and only asked in their study. For further details, see South Africa's country report at www.globalkidsonline.net/south-africa

“Uhm, they waste your time, because like, instead of, you get tempted to use social media even though you have homework” (Girl aged 16-18, Eastern Cape, South Africa).

“Without the internet we would not have so much pressure. No more: I have to see it, did he send it to me, I have to answer... We wouldn't worry” (Girl aged 16, Serbia).

Such views are echoed by parents, and in all countries children discussed their parents' efforts to keep track of the time they spend online. Schools, too, try to regulate mobile phone use on the school premises (for example, see the Argentinian country report).⁷⁴ These discussions already raise a host of questions about the opportunities and social motivations for internet and mobile use. Indeed, the focus groups reveal a diversity of activities that children do when they are online, often related to their interests, hobbies, identities, friendships and problems. For example, children in Serbia use the internet to get news from sources that are not otherwise available to them, to get health information, or to express their identities:

“I watch the foreign news, because I like to see how a country is looking at a situation and how another country is looking at the same situation [...] I have several applications for news, but not our news. Ours are nothing special to me” (Girl aged 16).

“It was funny: I was saying that I had some health problem and they asked me if I had visited doctor, I said no, I had visited the internet” (Girl aged 15).

“Sometimes, as no one speaks our language in this school, I type something on YouTube into Romanian and hear our voice, and that's nice, I can understand all” (Roma boy aged 12).

The qualitative research also demonstrates the great variety of socialising that children engage in when they are online. Even though social networking sites are popular, children engage in a wide range of activities to communicate and socialise with friends, relatives, or people with shared interests. For example, Serbian children discussed that they like using the internet for activities such as:

“Meeting and spending time with new people on social networks” (Boy age 15).

“I can talk with friends and cousins who live on another continent” (Boy aged 15).

“Since we have some lectures on the website, we have a group of our class on Facebook, so we can talk about school there” (Girl aged 17).

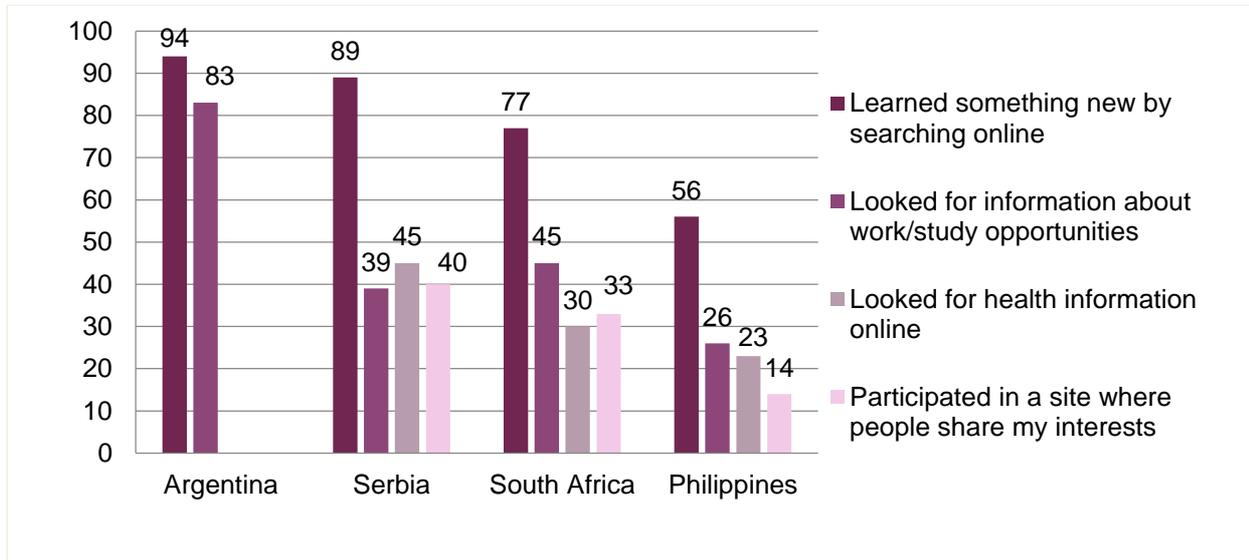
Online practices

To pursue how children take up these and other opportunities in practice, the Global Kids Online survey asked about their online practices. This offers an indication of whether children participate in activities that could have positive benefits for their well-being and, further, their positive rights – to education, communication, participation and so forth.

⁷⁴ www.globalkidsonline.net/argentina

Learning and information practices

Figure 8: How often have you done these things online in the past month? (% responding 'At least every week' or more often, by country)

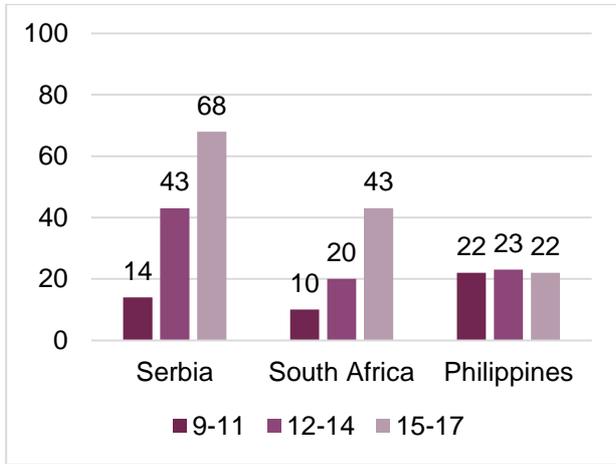


Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. The answer options in Argentina were 'Yes' and 'No' and the last two questions were not asked. Valid N: Argentina (N=867-882), Serbia (N=193-197), South Africa (N=641-643), Philippines (N=113-117).

One of the most important reasons why societies wish to provide internet access for children is to foster learning and information opportunities (Figure 8). To some degree, these are indeed reaching children:

- A majority of children in all countries report that they learn something new by searching online at least once a week.
- In Argentina, more so than in the other countries, it is common to look for information about work or study opportunities online.
- Around one-third of children in Serbia, South Africa and the Philippines look for health information online at least every week.
- Around one-third in Serbia and South Africa participate in a site where people share their interests, though fewer children in the Philippines do so.
- Boys are a little more likely than girls to look for work or study opportunities online in both Serbia and South Africa, but in Argentina girls are more likely than boys to look for such opportunities.
- There are clear age trends for all four activities presented here: older children are more likely than younger children to engage in them at least once a week. In Serbia and South Africa, older children are more likely to look for health information online than younger children, but in the Philippines there are almost no age differences at all (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: How often have you done these things online in the past month: looked for health information? (% responding 'At least every week' or more often, by age and country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17. Note:

Estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. This question was not asked in Argentina. Valid N: Serbia (N=193-197), South Africa (N=641-643), Philippines (N=113-117).

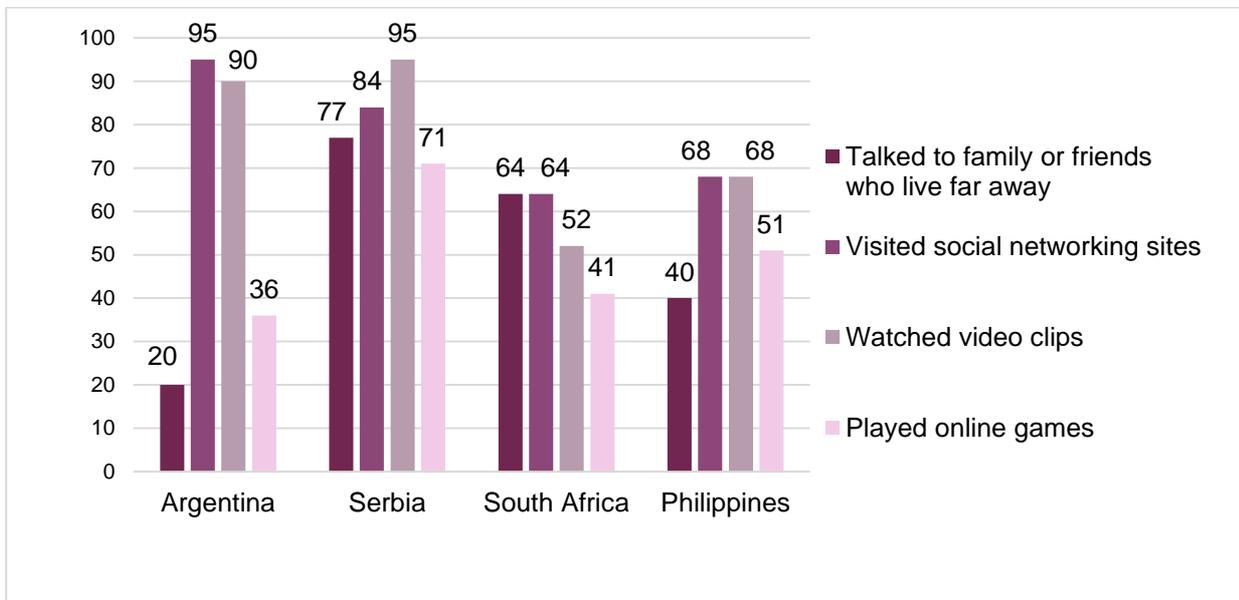
In all four countries, the focus groups revealed a wide range of learning activities that children engaged in, often to supplement what they were able to access offline. This is shown, for example, by the focus groups in Argentina where children spoke of learning new skills, like playing the guitar, or improving their knowledge on some school subjects:

“I wanted to learn to play the guitar and went online” (Boy aged 15-17).

- “I flunked math, so I watched a couple of vids where they explained what I had to study” (Boy aged 15-17).

Social and entertainment practices

Figure 10: How often have you done these things online in the past month? (% responding 'At least every week' or more often, by country)



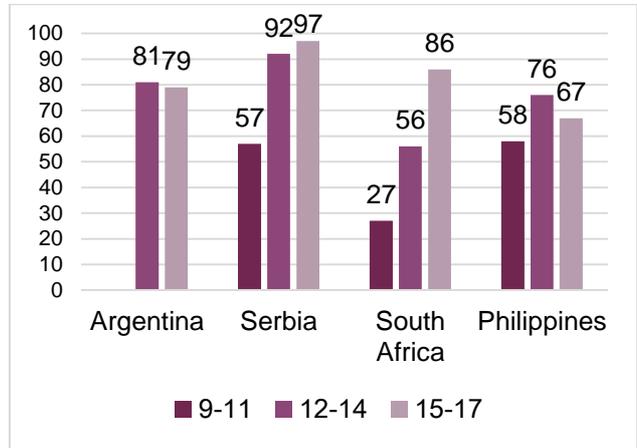
Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=867-882), Serbia (N=193-197), South Africa (N=641-643), Philippines (N=113-117).

While education and information are vital services provided by the internet, social and entertainment uses are generally more popular with children,

especially via social networking sites and watching video clips.

- In Argentina, talking to family or friends who live far away is not a very common activity, compared to the other countries. But in South Africa and, especially, Serbia, this is a common activity for children. We had expected higher rates also in the Philippines, given its tradition of parents working abroad – still, four in ten children report using the internet for such purposes.
- Visiting social networking sites and watching video clips are the two most popular activities in all four countries.
- Older children are generally more likely to participate on social networking sites than younger children. In Serbia and South Africa, a higher percentage of older children visit social networking sites compared to younger children, but this trend is less clear in Argentina and the Philippines (see Figure 11).
- Boys are a little more likely to play online games than girls in all four countries.⁷⁵ In South Africa, boys are more likely than girls to talk to family and friends who live far away as well as watching video clips online, but in the other countries these patterns are mixed.

Figure 11: How often have you done these things in the past month: visited a social networking site (% responding 'At least every week' or more often, by age and country)

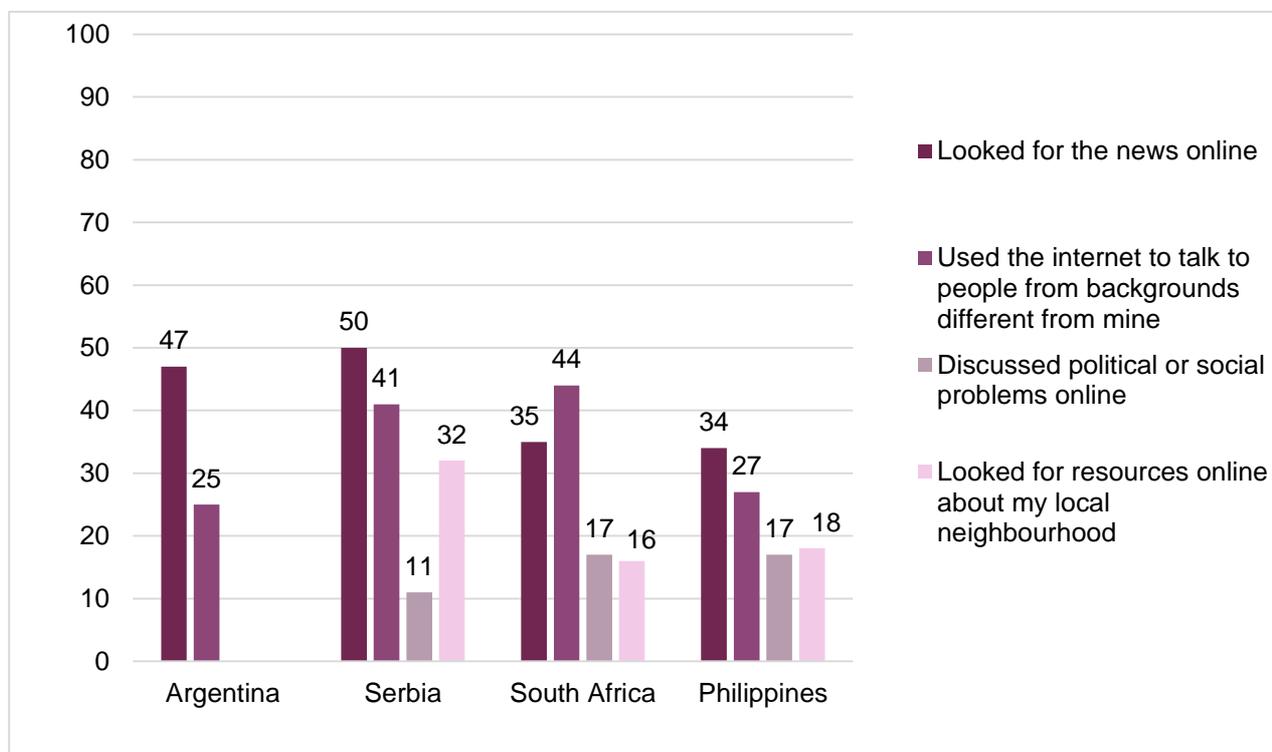


Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=867-882), Serbia (N=193-197), South Africa (N=641-643), Philippines (N=113-117).

⁷⁵ We asked children two questions regarding online gaming: whether they play online games alone and whether they play online games with others. The percentage reported in Figure 10 is the percentage of children who responded 'At least every week' to at least one of the questions.

Community, civic and participation practices

Figure 12: How often have you done any of these activities online in the past month? (% responding 'At least every week' or more often, by country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. The last two questions were not asked in Argentina. Valid N: Argentina (N=867-882), Serbia (N=193-197), South Africa (N=641-643), Philippines (N=113-117).

- In South Africa, boys (42 per cent) are more likely than girls (26 per cent) to look for news online. They are also more likely (21 per cent) than girls (13 per cent) to discuss political or social problems with other people online.⁷⁶
- Between a quarter and a half of all children who use the internet say that they use it to talk to people from different backgrounds at least once a week.
- While over one-third of children in Serbia report that they use the internet to look for resources about their local neighbourhood at least once a week, fewer children do so in South Africa and the Philippines.
- Boys seem somewhat more likely than girls to use the internet to talk to people from different backgrounds, except in the Philippines where the reverse is true.⁷⁷
- There is a clear age trend in that older children are more likely than younger children to participate in both community-related activities

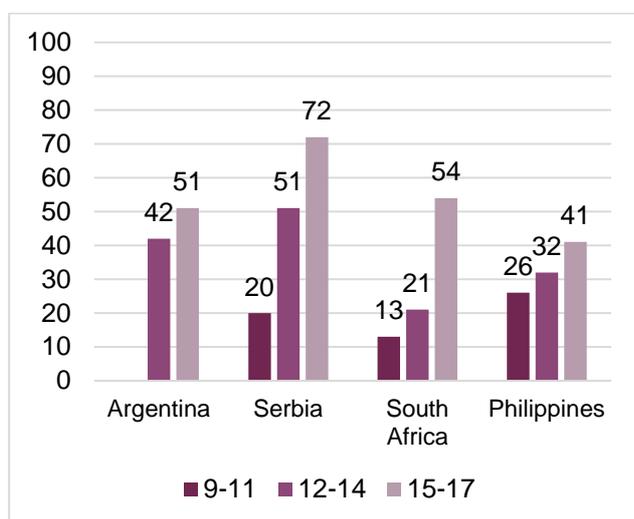
⁷⁶ Due to the lack of a nationally representative sample for South Africa we cannot generalize the gender differences to the wider population of children in the country, but the pattern may generalize fairly well to the three regions where the survey was conducted. In the other countries, including Argentina, gender differences were minor.

⁷⁷ However, due to the lack of representative data and small sample sizes, we cannot be sure if these gender differences are generalizable to the wider population of children.

online.

- In the four countries, between 34 per cent and 50 per cent report that they look for news online at least once a week. However, relatively few children report that they discuss political or social problems online at least once a week.
- There is a clear age trend in that older children are more likely than younger children to engage in civic activities online (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: How often have you done these things online in the past month: looked for news online (% responding 'At least every week' or more often, by age and country)

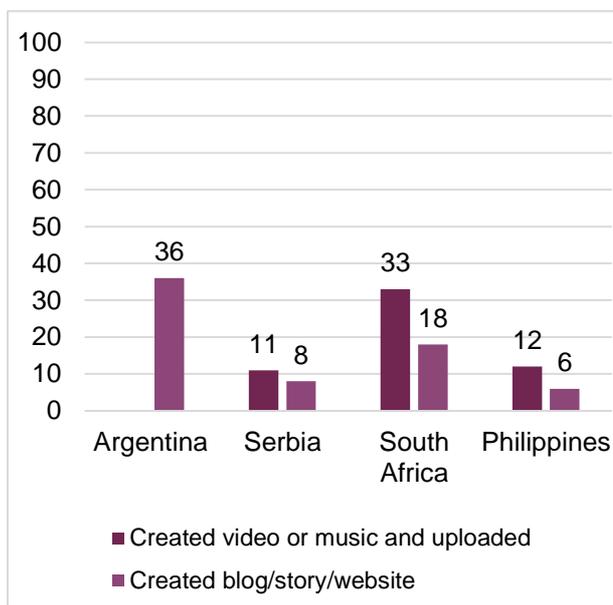


Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=867-882), Serbia (N=193-197), South Africa (N=641-643), Philippines (N=113-117).

Creative activities

The Global Kids Online survey asked about two creative activities in the core questionnaire, though the optional questions permit more depth.

Figure 14: How often have you done any of these activities online in the past month? (% responding 'At least every week' or more often, by country)

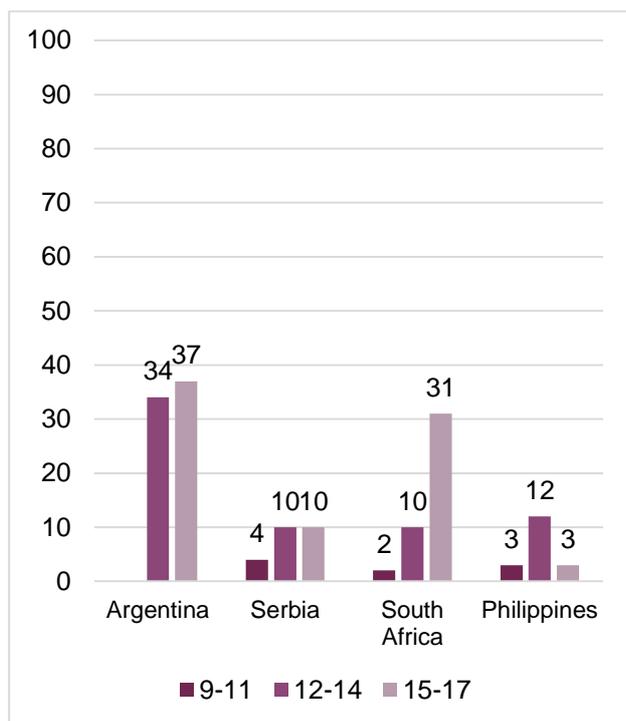


Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. The first question was not asked in Argentina. Valid N: Argentina (N=867-882), Serbia (N=193-197), South Africa (N=641-643), Philippines (N=113-117).

- In South Africa, more than one-third of children report that they created video or music and uploaded online to share at least once a week. These numbers are lower in the Philippines and Serbia, where just above 10 per cent of children do this at least once a week.
- In Argentina, more than one-third of children report that they create a blog/story/website at least once a week, but these numbers are lower in the other countries. In both Serbia and Philippines, the number is below 10 per cent.
- Boys in Serbia (20 per cent) and South Africa (37 per cent) are more likely than girls in Serbia (3 per cent) and in South Africa (28 per cent) to report that they created their own video or music and uploaded it to share.
- In the Philippines and Serbia the samples are too small for age trends to be confidently reported, but in Argentina and South Africa it

appears that older children are somewhat more likely than younger children to participate in creative activities online (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: How often have you done any of these activities online in the past month: created a blog or story or website online (% responding 'At least every week' or more often, by age and country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=867-882), Serbia (N=193-197), South Africa (N=641-643), Philippines (N=113-117).

Digital skills and literacies

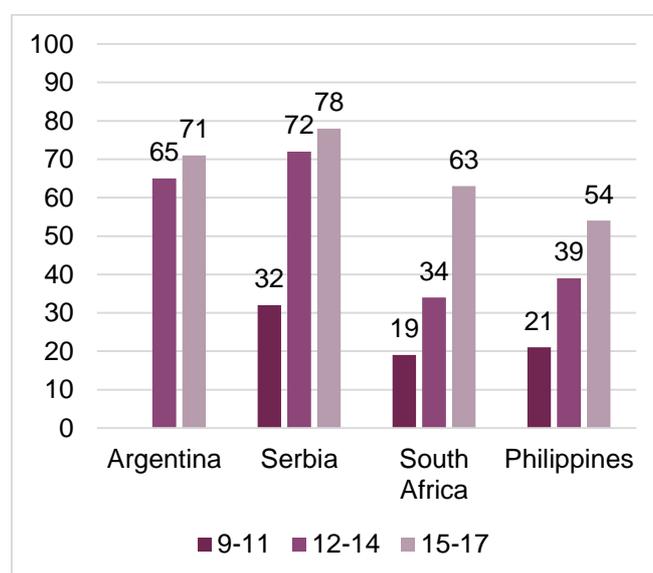
Online practices are strongly linked with the acquisition of digital skills, and these in turn enable children to benefit from online opportunities and to manage or reduce the associated risks of internet use. Skills and literacies, while much valued by educators and policymakers, are nonetheless difficult to ask children to report on, as skills are often tacit and taken for granted.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ See Van Deursen, Alexander, Helsper and Eynon (2016).

The Global Kids Online survey asks about a range of different skills for engaging with the internet and mobile media. A few questions were designated as 'core' and were asked in all countries. In this section we present findings on children's self-reported information literacy, safety skills and mobile skills.

Information literacy

Figure 16: How true are these things for you: I find it easy to check if the information I find online is true (% responding 'Very true' or 'Fairly true' ('Very true' in Argentina), by age and country)

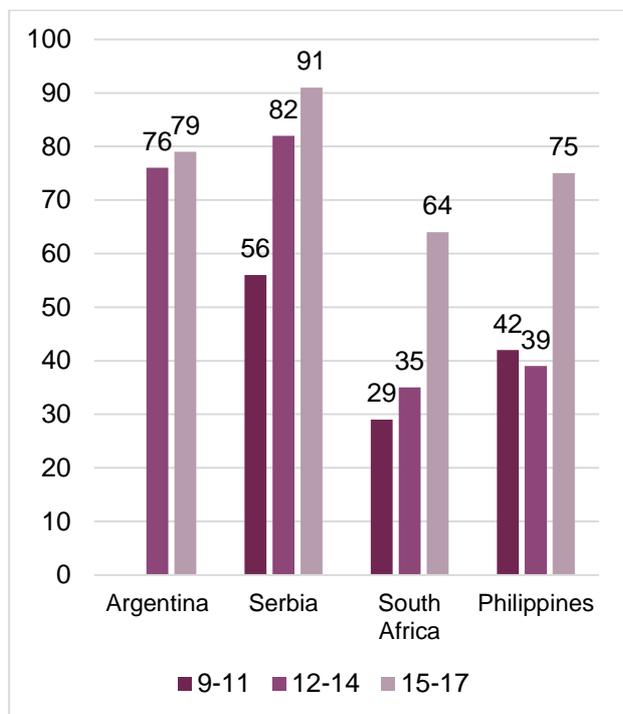


Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=856-881), Serbia (N=194-197), South Africa (N=641-643), Philippines (N=103-114).

- There is a clear age trend in all countries in terms of children's self-reported ability to check if information they find online is true. Older children are more confident in their ability to do so than younger children.
- In Serbia, boys are more likely than girls to say that they find it easy to check if the information they find online is true. In Argentina, South Africa and the Philippines the gender difference

appears to be reversed.

Figure 17: How true are these things for you: I find it easy to choose the best keywords for online searches (% responding 'Very true' or 'Fairly true' ('Very true' in Argentina), by age and country)



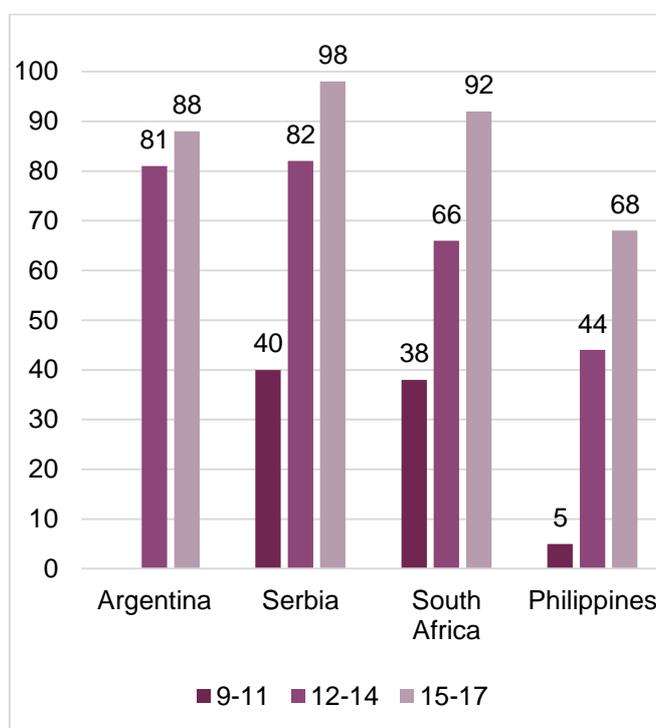
Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=856-881), Serbia (N=194-197), South Africa (N=641-643), Philippines (N=103-114).

- We find a clear age trend in terms of children's confidence in their ability to choose the best keywords for online searches, with older children being more confident than younger children. Older children in Argentina and Serbia are the most confident in their online search skills (Figure 17).
- As with the previous question, in Serbia, boys reported a higher level of agreement than girls when asked if they find it easy to choose the best keywords for online searches. We see a similar pattern in South Africa, but the trend is reversed in Argentina and the Philippines, where girls report a slightly higher level of agreement with this question.

The findings suggest educational interventions to teach children how to use the internet and search engines to find information could usefully be implemented in the school curriculum at an early stage, in particular as in some countries, the age when children first go online is getting lower (for example, see the country reports from Argentina and Serbia).

Safety skills

Figure 18: How true is this for you: I know how to change my privacy settings (% responding 'Very true' or 'Fairly true' ('Very true' in Argentina), by age and country)

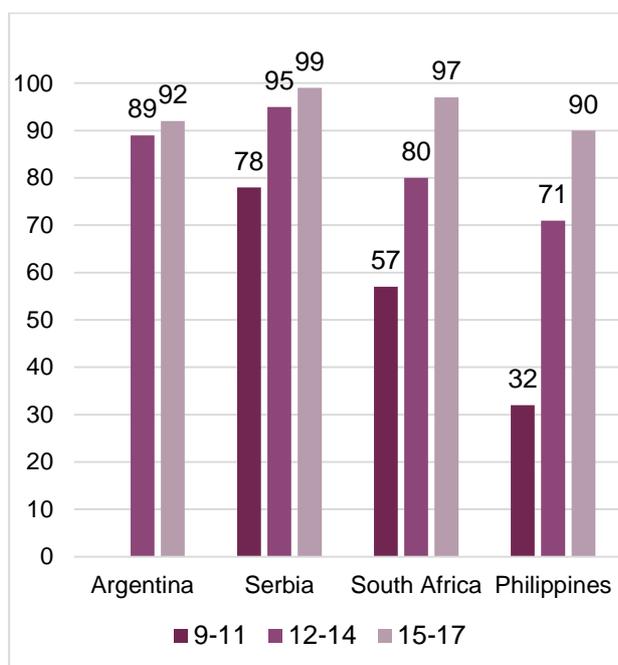


Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=856-881), Serbia (N=194-197), South Africa (N=641-643), Philippines (N=103-114).

- Most of the older children but fewer younger children report knowing how to manage their privacy settings online (Figure 18). This is perhaps indicative of their digital and safety skills.
- Children in the Philippines report feeling least

confident in this regard overall, especially among the youngest age group.

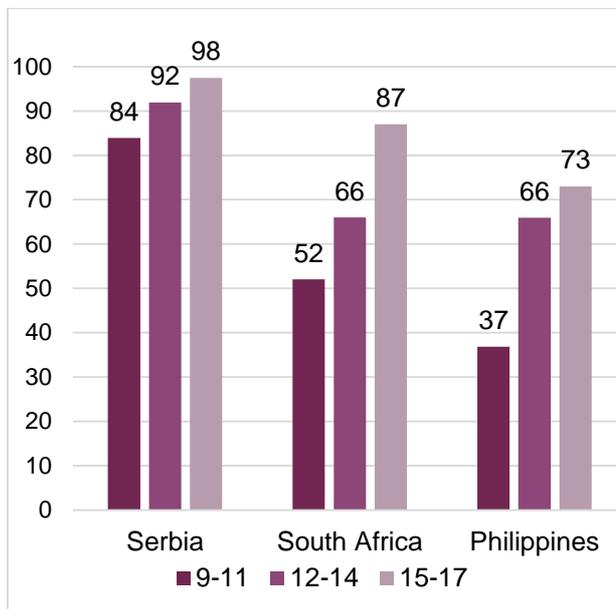
Figure 19: How true is this for you: I know how to remove people from my contact lists (% responding 'Very true' or 'Fairly true' ('Very true' in Argentina), by age and country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=856-881), Serbia (N=194-197), South Africa (N=641-643), Philippines (N=103-114).

- Similarly, in Figure 19, we see that most children in all four countries are confident in their ability to remove people from their contact lists (on social networking sites, for example).
- There is a clear age trend with regards to their level of confidence, with older children being more confident and younger children being less confident. In the oldest age group, at least 90 per cent of children in each country are confident in their ability to remove people from their contact list.

Figure 20: How true is this for you: I know which information I should and shouldn't share online (% responding 'Very true' or 'Fairly true', by age and country)

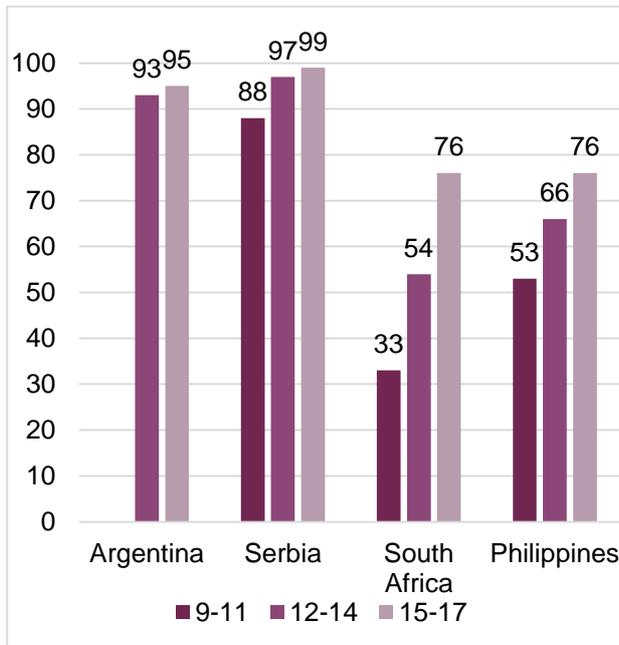


Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17. Note: Estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. This question was not asked in Argentina. Valid N: Serbia (N=194-197), South Africa (N=641-643), Philippines (N=103-114).

- We find that almost all of the oldest children in all four countries perceive themselves to be fairly knowledgeable in terms of knowing which information they should and shouldn't share online.
- Children in Serbia report the highest level of confidence in their knowledge, with small variations by age. The age differences are slightly more pronounced in South Africa and the Philippines, where the youngest children have noticeably lower confidence when it comes to knowing which information they should or shouldn't share online. This again points to the need for earlier interventions with regards to information and safety-related skills.

Mobile skills

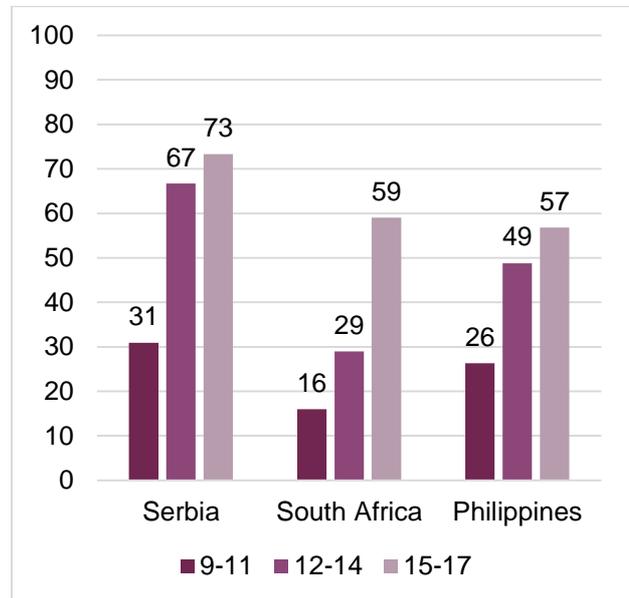
Figure 21: How true is this for you: I know how to install apps on a mobile device (% responding 'Very true' or 'Fairly true' ('Very true' in Argentina), by age and country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=856-881), Serbia (N=194-197), South Africa (N=641-643), Philippines (N=103-114).

- Almost all children in Argentina and Serbia report that they know how to install apps on a mobile device. A majority of children in South Africa and Philippines are also confident in their ability to do so.
- There are clear age trends in that a higher percentage of older children feel confident in their knowledge of how to install apps on a mobile device.
- In South Africa, boys (66 per cent) are more likely than girls (54 per cent) to report knowing how to install apps on a mobile device. No gender differences are apparent in the other countries.

Figure 22: How true is this for you: I know how to keep track of the costs of mobile app use (% responding 'Very true' or 'Fairly true', by age and country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17. Note: Estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. This question was not asked in Argentina. Valid N: Serbia (N=194-197), South Africa (N=641-643), Philippines (N=103-114).

- There is a clear age trend in that a larger percentage of older children feel confident in their knowledge of how to keep track of the cost of mobile app use than younger children.
- In Serbia and South Africa, boys are more likely than girls to report that they are confident in their knowledge of how to keep track of the cost of mobile app use. This trend appears to be reversed in the Philippines.

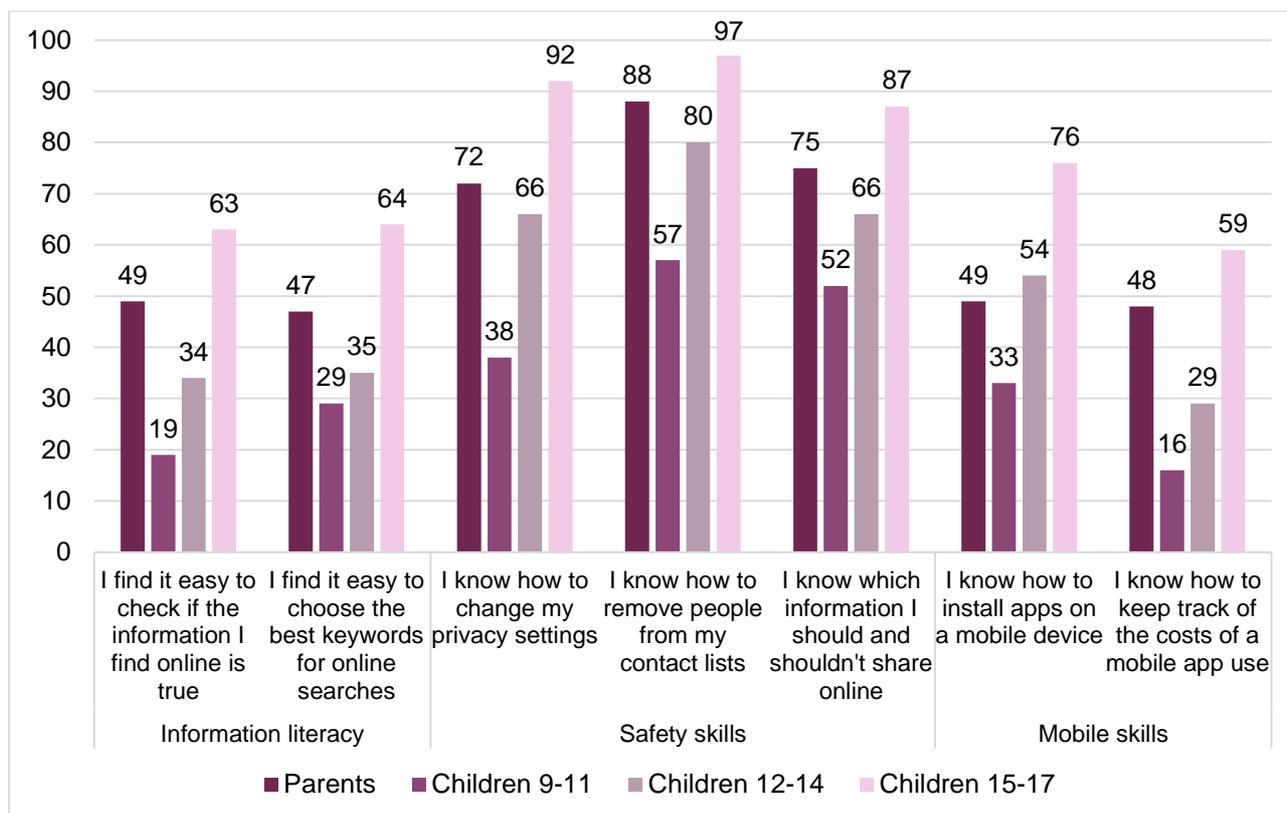
Parental versus children's skills

The Global Kids Online survey also collects data from parents of interviewed children on their own digital skills. Parent data can be used for more complex analysis, for example to explore how parental level of digital skills affects the development of children's digital skills. While such analyses are not within the scope of this synthesis report, parent and child data can also be directly compared in order to understand whether children

are, for example, more or less digitally skilled than their parents. Figure 23 provides one such example by drawing on parent data from South Africa,

containing parents' responses to each question on digital skills that was also asked of their children.

Figure 23: Digital skills and literacies for South African parents and their children



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 in South Africa, and their parents. Note: Estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Children (N=641-643), Parents (N=350-351).

- Across all digital skills, parents in South Africa report having higher skill levels than their children aged 9-11, but lower skill levels than their children aged 15-17.
- For the most part, parents report being slightly more skilled than their children aged 12-14, though this is the age-group to which the parent's skill levels are most similar.
- Knowing how to keep track of the cost of using mobile apps is the one skill where parents report being considerably more skilled than their children aged 12-14 – although children in this age-group know better than their parents how to install these apps.

Africa, parents are about as skilled as their children aged 12-14. This means that although parents may be able to adequately guide the youngest children as they go online and help them develop their digital skills, they may not have the skills required to guide older children.

Online risks

Meeting new people

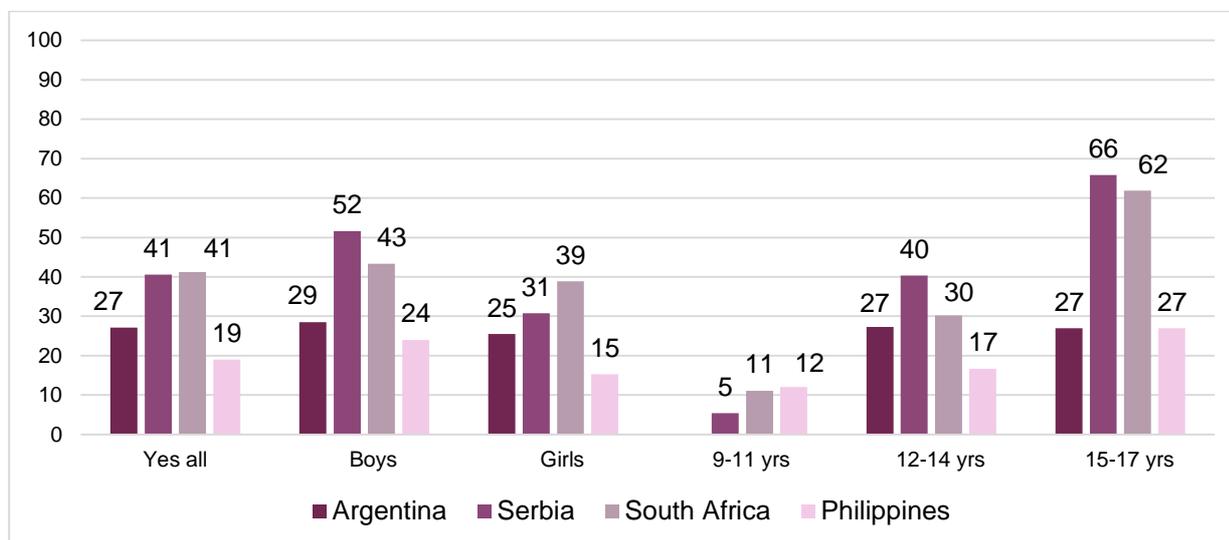
We explored the extent to which children are in contact online with people they have not met face-to-face before and if they meet in person people they first get to know online. Such contacts and meetings have been the subject of considerable public anxiety given the potential risk of harm, although such meetings may be innocuous, even

The implication of these findings is that, in South

friendly, and could be relevant for political and civic action.

Contact with unknown people online

Figure 24: Have you ever had contact on the internet with someone you have not met face-to-face before? (% responding 'Yes', by gender, age, and country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=882), Serbia (N=197), South Africa (N=643), Philippines (N=109).

- Most children in all four countries are in touch online only with people they already know offline. However, between 19 per cent (in the Philippines) and 41 per cent of children (in Serbia and South Africa) have been in touch online with somebody they have not met in person. These are not necessarily people without any prior connection to the child – for example, further research by our partners in Argentina showed that these new contacts are likely to be friends of friends.⁷⁹
- Boys are much more likely than girls to be in contact with new people online, ranging from one in four in the Philippines (24 per cent) to over half of the boys in Serbia (52 per cent).

The gender differences are small (4 per cent) in Argentina but more substantial (20 per cent) in Serbia.

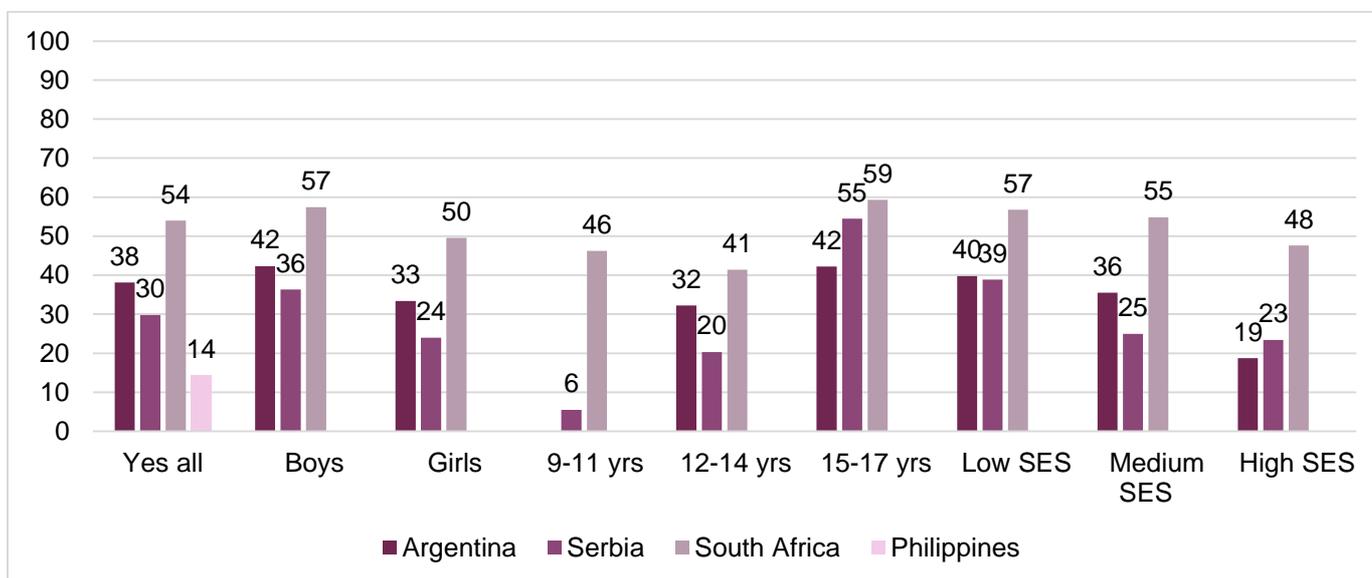
- The likelihood of communicating online with someone that the child has not met offline increases with age, rising to two-thirds of children aged 15-17 in Serbia and South Africa (Figure 24).

Meeting online contacts offline

We also explored whether children extend their online connections to the offline environment by meeting in person people they first get to know online.

⁷⁹ See Argentina's country report www.globalkidsonline.net/argentina

Figure 25: In the past year, have you ever met anyone face to face that you first got to know on the internet? (% 'Yes', by gender, age, socio-economic status (SES) and country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina).⁸⁰ Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=882), Serbia (N=191), South Africa (N=265), Philippines (N=112). Sample from the Philippines was not large enough for disaggregation.

- In Argentina, Serbia and the Philippines, the majority of children say they do not meet face-to-face people they get to know online (Figure 25). But half of South African children have been to such a meeting.
- In all countries, boys are more likely than girls to meet in person with someone they first met online; so are older children and those from lower socio-economic groups.

The qualitative fieldwork found that communicating with and meeting unknown people was of concern to both parents and children who discussed the associated risks during the focus groups. The research in South Africa found, however, that children's knowledge of 'stranger danger' often comes from films or television programmes rather than from personal or

peer experiences.

Children are also learning some safety practices: for example, the Argentina country report shows that nearly half (47 per cent) of children only accept as online contacts people they know in person, although 14 per cent of children accept all friend requests (the remainder accept those with whom they have friends in common).⁸¹

Self-reported harm linked to internet use

We asked children about a series of particular risks which are often high on public and policy agendas, and about whether these bothered or upset them.⁸² The South African study also included an open question that gave children space to report on any

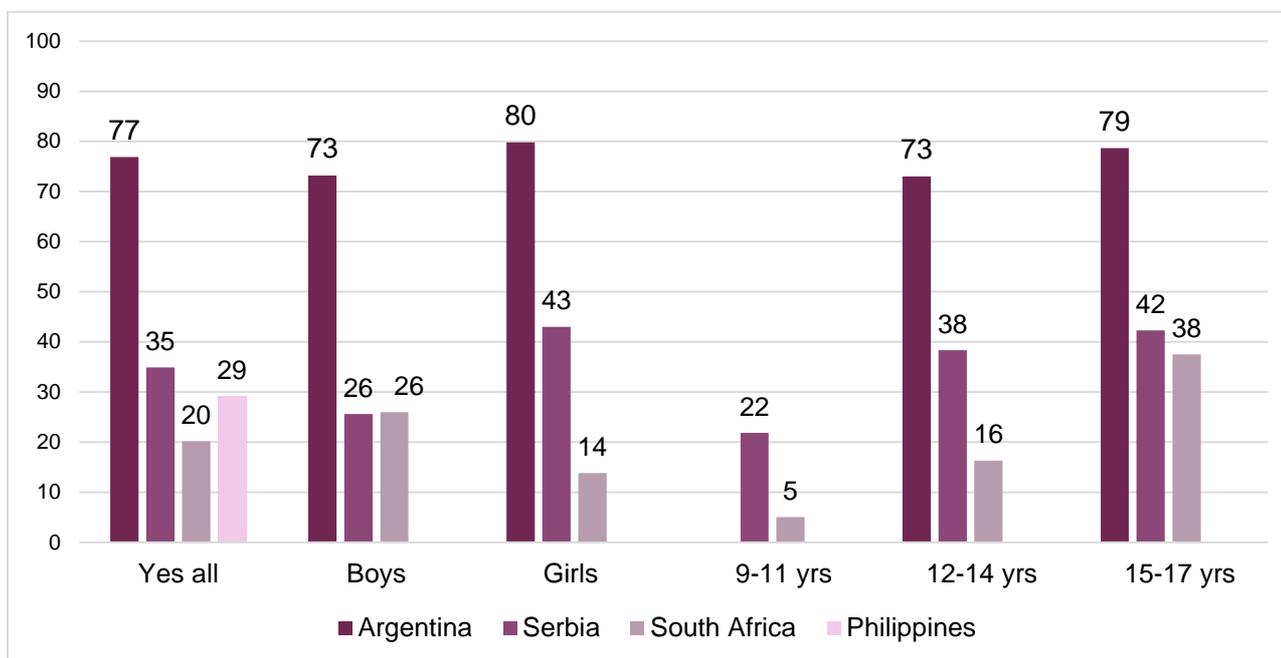
⁸⁰ In the South African questionnaire, the question on meeting online contacts offline was routed so that only children who ever had contact on the internet with someone they had not met face-to-face before were asked the question. This could partly explain why the point estimates for South Africa in Figure 25 are higher than for other countries, as the base for other countries also includes children who have never met anyone online that they have not met face-to-face before.

⁸¹ The report can be accessed at www.globalkidsonline.net/argentina

⁸² Within the confines of a survey to children, there is no clear way to assess the harm potentially resulting from exposure to risk: hence we followed the established research practice of asking children for a self-assessment of whether the risk bothered or upset them. The results thereby respect children's own account of their experiences, but should be interpreted with caution as they lack independent clinical assessment.

online problems as they saw them.⁸³

Figure 26: In the past year, has anything ever happened online that bothered or upset you in some way? (% responding 'Yes', by gender, age and country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=876), Serbia (N=186), South Africa (N=643), Philippines (N=96).

- Between a fifth and three-quarters of children report feeling upset about something that happened online, with older children reporting more incidents (Figure 26).
- In Argentina most children report being bothered or upset online – nearly twice as much as in other countries. Over a third of these children also report that such experiences happen at least every week or more often. Children with lower socio-economic status are more likely to report such experiences.
- In contrast, children in South Africa are the least likely to report such experiences – only 20 per cent report feeling bothered or upset by something that happened online. Children in Serbia and the Philippines report only slightly higher levels of concern.
- Gender differences appear modest, with girls in Argentina and Serbia a little more likely to report

online problems. Age differences are more marked.

The qualitative research and an open-ended survey question allow children to describe concerns about what bothers them online in their own words. Children mention a wide range of issues, including internet scams, pop-up adverts that were pornographic, hurtful behaviour, unpleasant or scary news or pictures, harrasment or sexual harrasment by strangers and people sharing too much personal information online. These are some examples of what children find upsetting online:

“I love horses, everyone knows that. I was searching some pictures for my wallpaper and stumbled on a gruesome picture of a man cutting a horse” (Girl aged 10, Serbia).

⁸³ See Livingstone, Kirwil, Ponte and Staksrud (2014).

“Gossiping about other people and there are ugly comments about other people” (South Africa, open-ended survey question).

“Lies. People pretend they are what they are not” (South Africa, open-ended survey question).

“Racism, xenophobia and killings” (South Africa, open-ended survey question).

“Frequently having older strangers inviting me, seeing nude adverts” (South Africa, open-ended survey question).

“Most people type sexual things that are not meant for the eyes” (South Africa, open-ended survey question).

“There was a time when I was impersonated by someone else on Facebook, the user has my photo as the profile picture but with a different name. The poser has set the account to private preventing me from seeing the profile aside from its photos” (Girl aged 12-14, the Philippines).

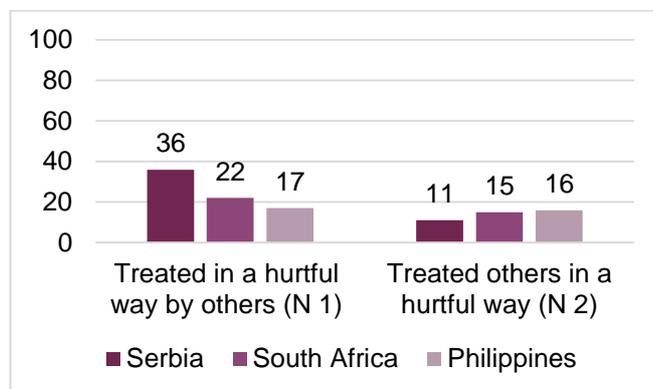
“I once experienced a stranger asking for ‘my price’ - meaning how much would it cost the stranger for them to have a sexual activity” (Boy aged 15-17, the Philippines).

Hurtful behaviour online

Global Kids Online sought to explore the extent to which children engage in or experience hurtful behaviour, whether online or face-to face, in order to understand whether use of digital technology might facilitate such hurtful exchanges. We also looked at the frequency of online hurtful behaviour and reported feelings of harm.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ We deliberately do not use the terms ‘victim’ or ‘perpetrator’, as children may engage in hurtful behaviour unintentionally, under peer pressure, or may perceive it as a joke. Often those who say or do hurtful things are also at the receiving end of such comments. Nor do we here use the term ‘bullying’ or ‘cyberbullying’, as these are difficult to translate and are subject to particular definitions that do not capture the range of hurtful online behaviours (see, for example, Finkelhor, Turner, Shattuck and Hamby, 2015).

Figure 27: In the past year, have you been treated in a hurtful way by others and have you treated others in a hurtful way? (% ‘Yes’, by country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17). Note: Estimates derived from pilot samples and should be interpreted with caution. These questions were not asked in Argentina. Valid N: Serbia (N1=191; N2=197), South Africa (N1& 2=643), Philippines (N1=107; N2=121).

- How often children are treated in hurtful ways by others varies across the countries, ranging from a third of children in Serbia (36 per cent) reporting this to about a fifth in South Africa (22 per cent) and the Philippines (17 per cent) (Figure 27).
- Older children report being treated in a hurtful way more often than younger children in all countries.
- Fewer children report treating others in a hurtful way than being treated in that way by others in all countries; the differences vary between 25 per cent (in Serbia) and 6 per cent (in South Africa and the Philippines).
- In all countries, social networking sites are the most common online platforms where people are treated or treat others in a hurtful way.

The numbers in the surveys of those who say they have been treated, or have treated others, in a hurtful way are small and so further analysis cannot be relied

upon. However, the results of further analysis are noted as worthy of future research:

- For those who have been treated in a hurtful way by others, around half say this occurred in person while around a quarter (rising to over half in Serbia) say it occurred on a social networking site and around a fifth said it occurred by instant messaging.

The qualitative research confirmed the complex interconnectedness of online and offline hurtful behaviour, and how digital technology sometimes offers new ways or platforms for these interactions. From the discussion of these issues it seemed that children experience both the transitioning of hurtful behaviour offline onto the online environment, as well as the rise of new forms of hurtful behaviour. This is illustrated by the following quotations from focus groups in Serbia, South Africa and Argentina:

“Sometimes, my friends threaten one another and they arrange a fight and go fight each other. For example, some friends from school get in a fight over the internet and they insult each other when they go home or come to school.” (Girl aged 15, Serbia)

“It also happened to me at school – a fake profile. An anonymous profile with a fake name that uploads pictures and insults you just to piss you off.” (Boy aged 13-14, Argentina)

“Western Cape, South Africa, focus group with

girls aged 11-12: They gossip about each other but you don’t put your names there.

Interviewer: Oh. How does that work?

So for example you can post something bad about her [points at one of the other participants] on ‘ou toilet’ but I don’t put my name there, I don’t put any other details, then she won’t know it was me.”

“I experienced chatting with kids who would only add me as friend to trash talk or curse at me” (Boy aged 9-11, the Philippines)

“I experienced being bashed by my classmates in Facebook and it hurt a lot!” (Girl aged 12-14, the Philippines)

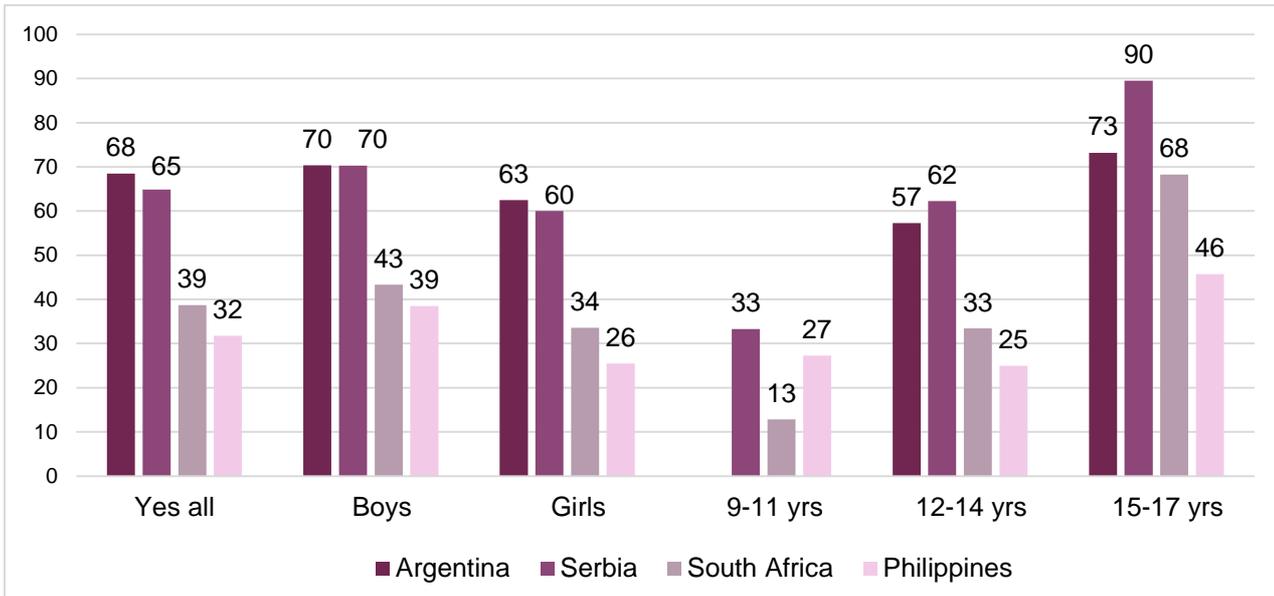
Country reports show some overlap between being treated in a hurtful way and being hurtful to others. In Serbia, for example, around a third of the children who report experiencing hurtful behaviour have also treated others in this way. Children who spend more time online are also more likely to be involved in both types of aggression.⁸⁵

Seeing sexual images

Children were asked questions about seeing sexual images both online and offline, how often this happened, and about their emotional reaction to seeing such images, including both positive and negative responses.

⁸⁵ See Serbia’s country report at www.globalkidsonline.net/serbia

Figure 28: In the past year, have you seen any sexual images? (% 'Yes', by gender, age and country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=859), Serbia (N=191), South Africa (N=643), Philippines (N=107).

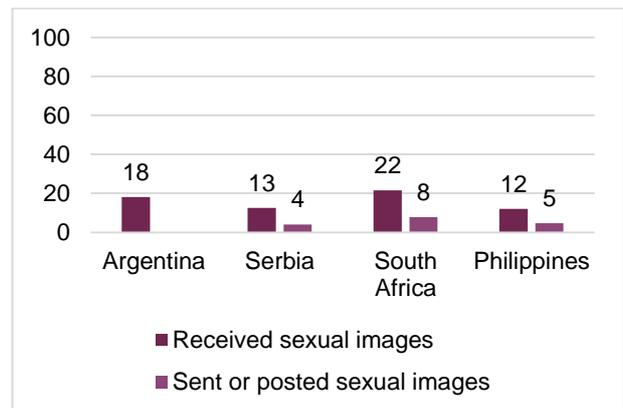
(N=107).

- The proportion of children who have seen sexual images during the past year ranges from about a third of all children in the Philippines to slightly over two-thirds in Serbia and Argentina (see Figure 28).
- Boys in all countries are more likely than girls to have seen sexual images and so are older children.
- The ways in which children see sexual content varies among countries, with social networking sites and television or film being the most frequent sources in both Serbia and South Africa.⁸⁶ Pop-ups are also a common source of exposure to sexual images in Serbia.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ This question was not asked in Argentina and the sample was too small to analyse in the Philippines.

Receiving and sending sexual images

Figure 29: Receiving and sending sexual images (% 'Yes', by country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=878), Serbia (N=191-196), South Africa (N=643), Philippines (N=108-109).

- Between 12 per cent and 22 per cent of children in the four countries have received images with sexual content during the past year. Overall, more

⁸⁷ Figures comparing pornography exposure online and offline are pending.

children receive sexual images than send them (Figure 29).

The focus group discussions in all countries suggest that many children are aware of the presence of sexual content online. Some have been exposed to such content, which was sometimes encountered willingly, but on other occasions accidentally or introduced by friends. This is shown by the following quotes from the Serbian focus groups:

“I was on Instagram and I clicked on a comment and it was so funny, so I wanted to see what other people had to say and I clicked on a link and suddenly naked women popped up” (Boy aged 10).

“[My friend] typed free xxx porn dot com, entered into something. He told me, ‘Close your eyes, turn around, it will be something, you’ll see a surprise’. When I turned around he started it and women started screaming” (Boy aged 11).

Even though many children said they do not enjoy exposure to sexual content, particularly some of the younger participants, others think that such content is OK and do not feel upset by it. While children discussed their awareness of or encounters with sexual content, they also spoke of the dangers of creating sexual content and posting it online:

“But you can also like, you mustn’t post pictures online that you...can like...never delete. Like you

post something, you post a nude picture of yourself and people react to it and stuff...its forever gonna be online on google and stuff. It’s gonna carry on” (Girl aged 16-18, Eastern Cape, South Africa).

“I realised that Facebook is a stupid thing because you can post a photo and the whole world can see it... I do not like the fact that people post private photos and then all the people on Facebook can find out and make fun of them when they see them in the street... and this is how violence starts” (Boy aged 16, Serbia).

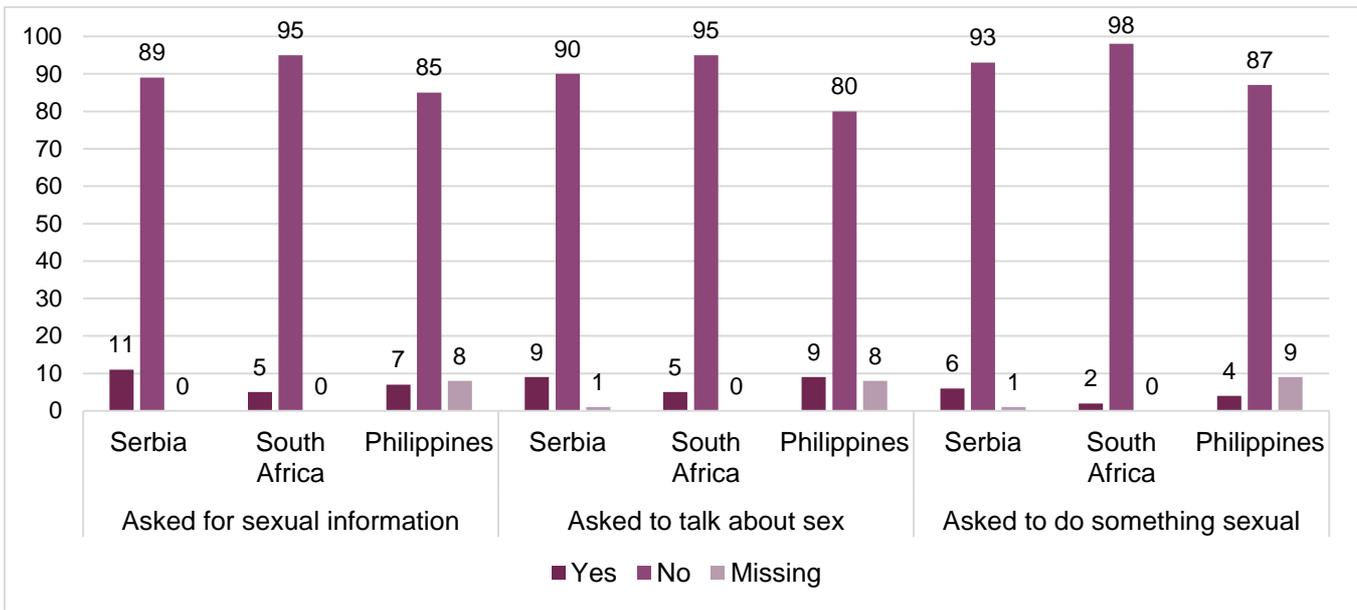
“I also go to flyingjizz (porn-site). My friends told me about it. I have already done this five times and I did not go incognito while doing so” (Boy aged 12-14, the Philippines).

Sexual abuse or exploitation

The internet has transformed and expanded the market for sexual abuse and exploitation of children.⁸⁸ The Global Kids Online survey includes a series of questions exploring both exposure and harm, emphasising unwanted sexual experiences linked to the internet and mobile technologies. These questions comprise an optional module, and in the pilot research only the Philippines and South Africa included this in their survey (in South Africa, the questions were only asked of children aged 12 years old and over).

⁸⁸ For terminology, see ECPAT’s ‘Luxembourg Guidelines’ at <http://www.ecpat.org.uk/content/%E2%80%98luxembourg-guidelines-terminology-step-forward-fight-against-child-sexual-exploitation> and *Method Guide 7: Researching online child sexual abuse* at www.globalkidsonline.net/sexual-exploitation.

Figure 30: In the past year, have any of these things ever happened to you on the internet?



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 in the Philippines, 11-17 in Serbia and 12-17 in South Africa. Note: The statements were: 'I have been asked for sexual information about myself (like what my body looks like without clothes on or sexual things I have done) when I did not want to answer such questions'; 'I have been asked to talk about sexual acts with someone on the internet when I did not want to'; 'I have been asked by someone on the internet to do something sexual when I did not want to'. Estimates derived from pilot samples and should be interpreted with caution. These questions were not asked in Argentina. Valid N: Serbia (N=159-160), South Africa (N=526-527), Philippines (N=104-108).

- The percentage of children who say that they have been exposed to online sexual exploitation is between 2 per cent and 11 per cent. Although the reported prevalence is based on pilot data, it is still worrying that any children are being approached and requested to act sexually in some way without their willingness or consent (Figure 30).
- There is a much higher proportion of missing responses to these questions in the survey in the Philippines, which may indicate unwillingness by the respondents to discuss such sensitive topics.

Further research with children who have experienced online sexual solicitation is needed to try and identify the characteristics of the children who get targeted (their life circumstances, vulnerabilities and support networks), as well as the perpetrators of such acts.

Further analysis of the sexual exploitation findings can be found in the country reports,⁸⁹ which also explore the ways children discussed their experiences of

online sexual solicitation, such as this boy from Serbia:

“A man sent me a message on Facebook saying: ‘Hello [name], I hope you have Skype so we can talk and do some stuff.’ I think that man is gay.” (Boy aged 13)

Similar experiences were reported by children in the Philippines:

“He (a friend) told me to talk to foreigners because sometimes you’ll be lucky to speak to a female or if it’s a male then just pretend you’re female then they will send you money and things.” (Boy aged 15-17)

“A stranger once tried to chat with me asking for my photos and sending his own nude photos to me.” (Girl aged 12-14)

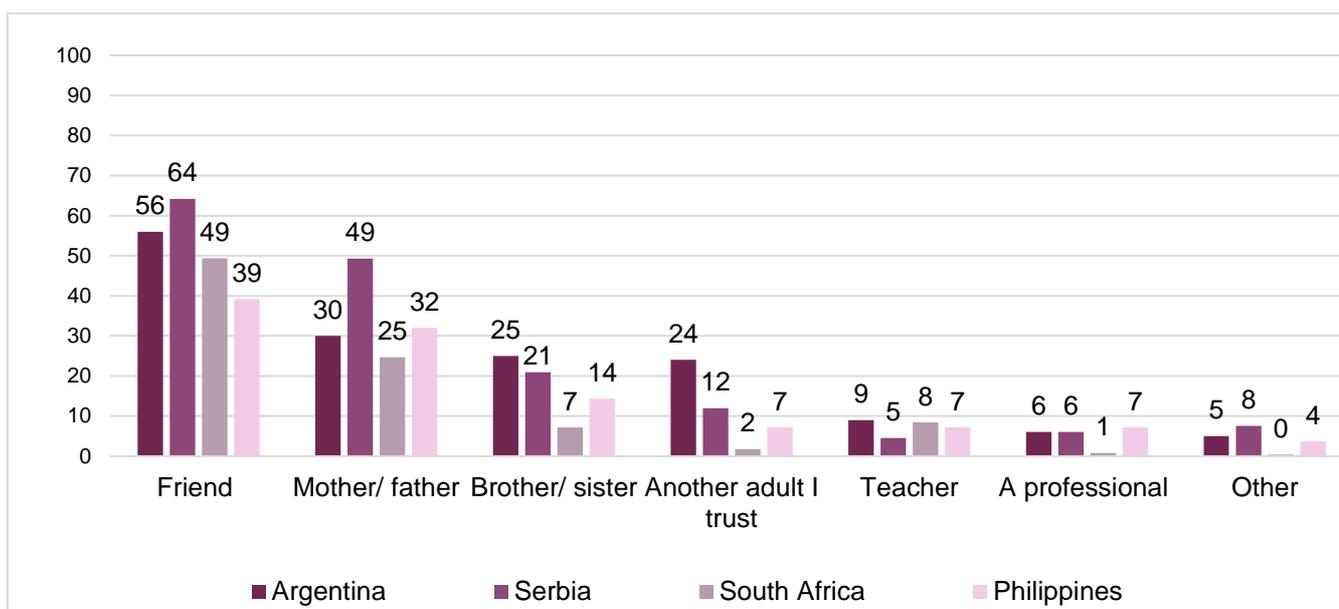
⁸⁹ See country reports from Serbia at www.globalkidsonline.net/serbia and South Africa at www.globalkidsonline.net/south-africa.

Safety and support

Research on children's rights in the digital age must go beyond tracking internet access and use of online technologies to explore how contexts shape children's online experiences and lives more widely. Drawing on the available research evidence, including the previous work on EU Kids Online,⁹⁰ we identified a range of vulnerabilities and protective factors which need to be considered when researching children's online experiences. These are related to the broader context of children's lives, their well-being and life satisfaction, relationships with family, peers and community, as well as the digital ecology experienced by children.

The individual country reports discuss these

Figure 31: The last time something happened online that bothered or upset you, did you talk to anyone of these people about it? (% yes, by country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina) who responded 'Yes' to: In the past year, has anything ever happened online that bothered or upset you in some way? Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative and the question was asked of all children in their sample. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=876), Serbia (N=67), South Africa (N= 80), Philippines (N=28). The valid responses from the Philippines are too low for detailed analysis.

- The most common source of support is friends in all four countries between a third and two-thirds of children spoke to a friend the last time something upsetting happened online (Figure 31).
- The next most popular source of support is parents, with nearly half of children in Serbia

turning to them on the last difficult occasion, with lower proportions in the Philippines (32 per cent), Argentina (30 per cent) and South Africa (25 per cent).

- A significant number of children also tell siblings or trusted adults, but getting help from a teacher or

⁹⁰ See Livingstone, Haddon and Görzig (2012).

another professional is rare in all countries (below 10 per cent).

- More children in Serbia seek support of all kinds than in the other countries, while children from the Philippines are the least likely to talk to somebody about an upsetting online incident.

The qualitative research showed similar patterns of help-seeking where other children (friends or family) are a preferred source of support, though parents are also important. Children’s explanations of why they would not go to their parents refer to fears of how they might react:

“Perhaps I share it with a friend or my cousins, but I wouldn’t tell my mom as she may get scared” (Girl aged 13-14, Argentina).

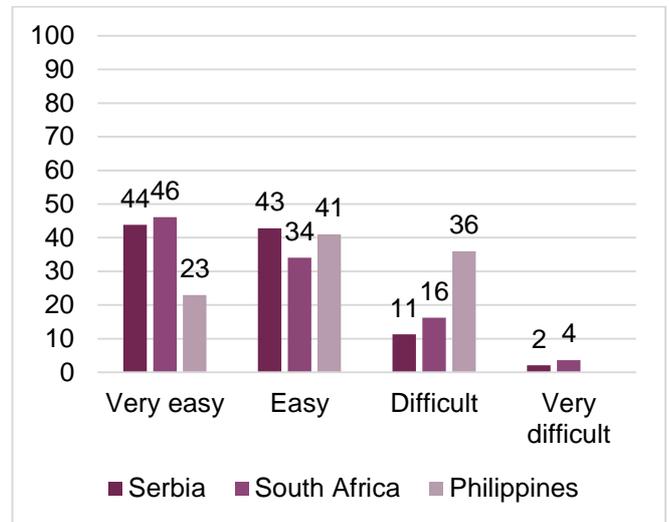
“Mom tells me to delete the post and to not use Facebook as much” (Boy aged 12-14, the Philippines).

It seems that children make a judgement about whether the parent needs to get involved or whether the problem can be handled by talking to peers. In a sense, children mediate their own negative experiences, figuring out the best coping mechanism based on the situation as they see it.

Talking to parents

We further pursued the question of parental support by asking children how easy they find talking to their parents about things that upset them, whether offline or online experiences (Figure 32).

Figure 32: How easy is it for you to talk to a parent(s)/carer(s) about things that upset you? (% , by country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (in South Africa, the base is all children including non-users). Note: Estimates are derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. This question was not asked in Argentina. Valid N: Serbia (N=194), South Africa (N= 909).

- An overwhelming majority of children think that talking to their parents or carers is easy or very easy – 87 per cent in Serbia, 80 per cent in South Africa, and 64 per cent in the Philippines, though a minority said this can be difficult.
- Over one in three children in the Philippines find it difficult to talk to their parents or carers. This is the highest proportion across the three countries, with the lowest being in Serbia (11 per cent).

Parental mediation

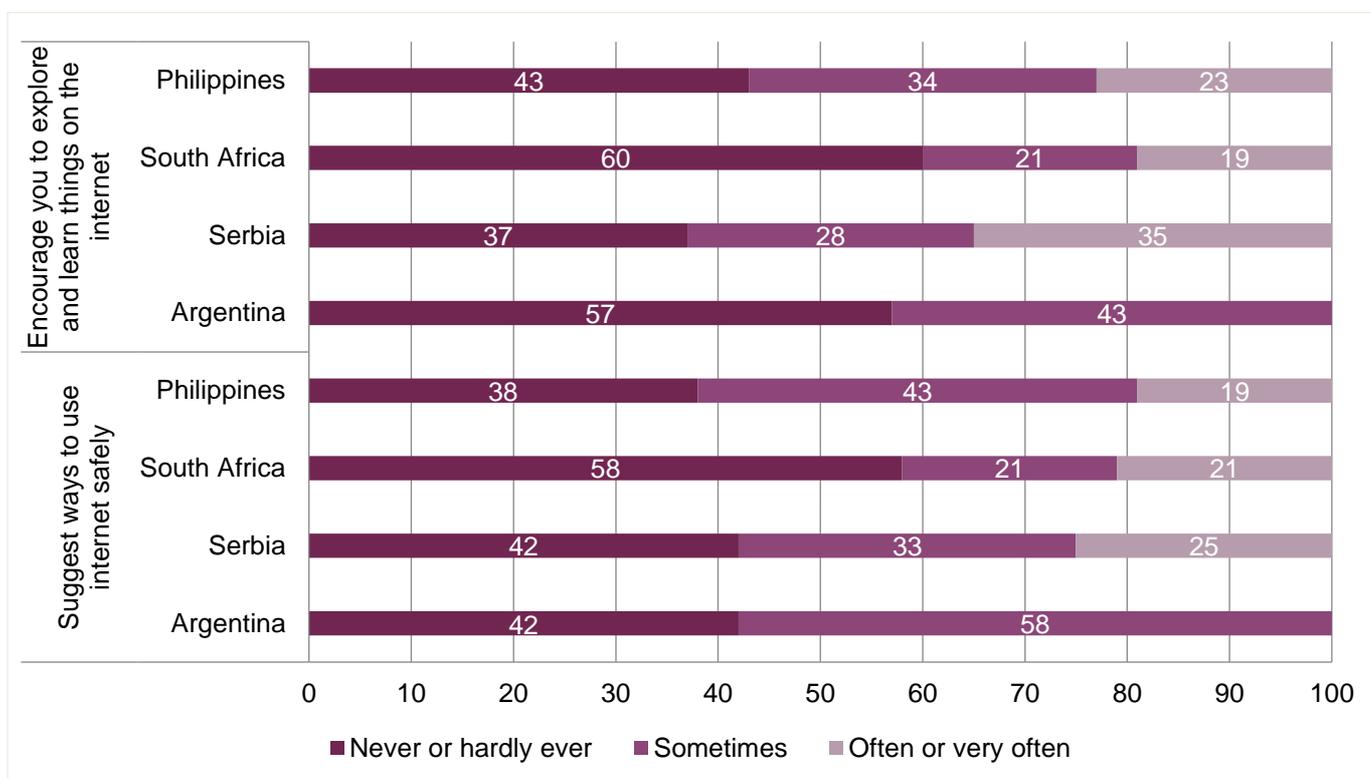
Prior research has shown that parents (and carers) vary in whether they take more restrictive or more enabling approaches to their children’s internet use. The former is linked to greater safety, but also fewer online opportunities as children’s internet use is generally restricted. The latter supports children’s online opportunities and digital skills, but is less effective at reducing risks. In some countries, or for some children, parents do relatively little of either strategy, and may welcome support themselves, so that they can more effectively support their children

online.⁹¹

mediation approaches from both parents and teachers, as we report on selectively below.

The Global Kids Online survey asked about a range of

Figure 33: When you use the internet does your parent/carer... (% by country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. In Argentina, the response options were 'Yes' (here used as 'Sometimes') and 'No' (here used as 'Never or hardly ever'). Valid N: Argentina (N=877), Serbia (N=197), South Africa (N=643), Philippines (N=110).

- According to children, fewer than a third of parents have frequent conversations with their children about staying safe online, while at least a third (but as high as nearly two-thirds in South Africa) never or hardly ever do this (Figure 33).
- Encouragement to explore the internet is equally low; while there are important variations between the countries, at least one in three parents have never or hardly ever done this.
- Younger children report more parental encouragement to explore the internet and to guide them in safe use. There are no obvious gender differences.

The qualitative research reveals a mix of parental strategies in mediation of their children's internet use, ranging from encouragement and light monitoring to punitive action. These also somewhat reflect a generational gap within families as parents seek to control and children to maintain independence:

"I asked my mom if I could have a profile on the Instagram and she said 'No', because starlets post their photos there." (Girl aged 10, Serbia)

"Ever since I got my internet profile in the fifth grade, my mom has had the password and checked it regularly. Now she trusts me and doesn't do that anymore. But I tell my mom everything, anyway." (Girl aged 16, Serbia)

⁹¹ See Garmendia, Garitaonandia, Martinez and Casado (2012).

“At the beginning they told me not to post too many of my photos, stuff like where I was and who I am with.” (Boy aged 15, Serbia)

“Focus group, Eastern Cape, South Africa, mixed group aged 14-17:

Interviewer: Okay, so your parents never check what you do online or anything like that?

Girl: No I’ll probably be murdered if they check. (Laughs.)”

“Focus group, Western Cape, South Africa, mixed group aged 14-16:

Interviewer: Do you think your parents know enough about Facebook? And about WhatsApp?

Girl 1: No. There are plenty things that I need to hide from them.

Boy 1: They mustn’t go on your phone.”

“Focus group with parents of children aged 13-14, Argentina:

The question is to be there, more than anything else. Being there, a bit on top of them. Checking what they are doing.

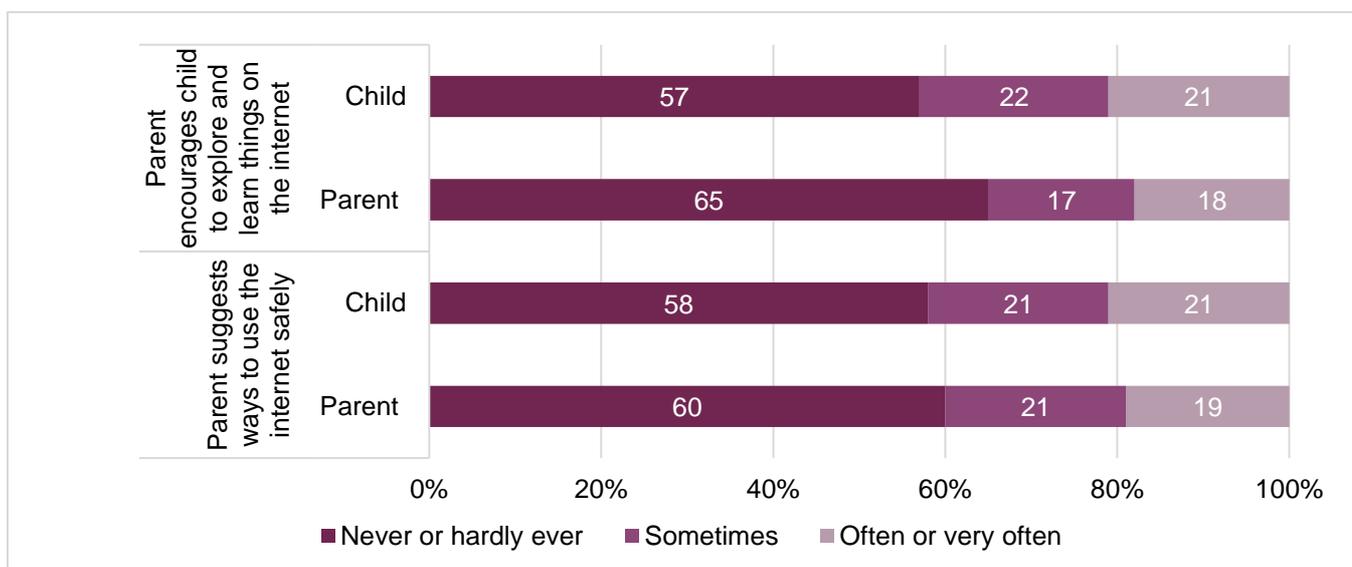
Of course, yes. My wife grabs his/her phone from time to time.”

“Focus group, the Philippines, boys aged 15-17:

I once had my cell phone confiscated and was banned from using the internet for one week because of playing too much Clash of Clans.”

Drawing on parent data from South Africa, we can also compare children’s reports of parental mediation practices with what their parents report.

Figure 34: South African parent’s and children’s accounts of parental mediation practices

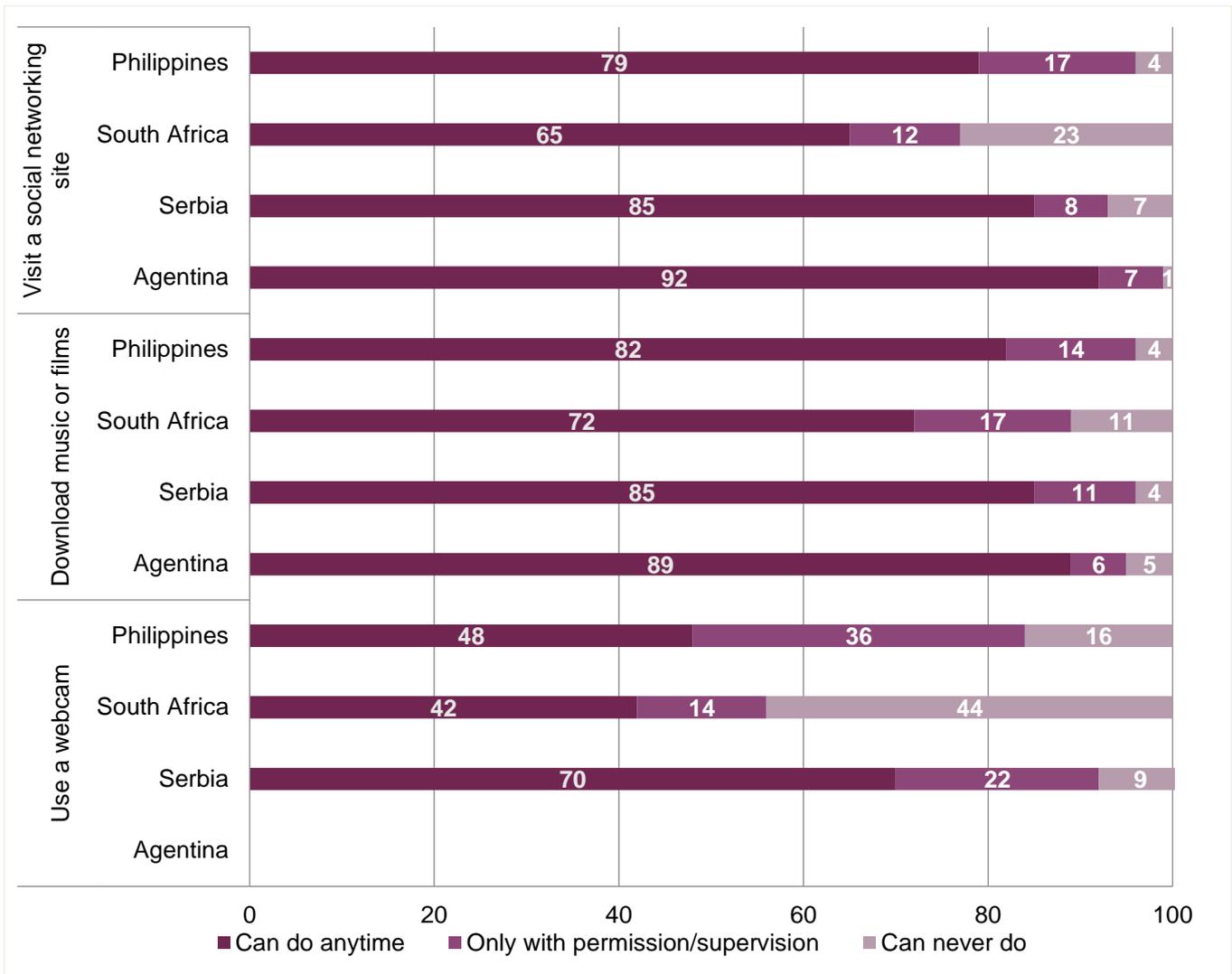


Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 in South Africa, and their parents. Note: Estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Children (N=641-643), Parents (N=350-351).

- In South Africa, parents and children appear to agree on the extent to which parents engage in active mediation practices. In fact, it seems as if parents slightly over-report that they ‘Never or

hardly ever’ suggest ways to use the internet safely or encourage their children to explore the internet.

Figure 35: For each of these things, please indicate if your parent(s)/carer(s) currently let you perform them whenever you want, or let you do them but only with your parent(s)/carer(s) permission or supervision, or never let you do them (% , by country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be interpreted with caution. Valid N: Argentina (N=866 for Q1 on SNS; N=823 for Q2 on downloading), Serbia (N=189 for Q1; N=180 for Q2; N=181 for Q3 on webcam), South Africa (N=643), Philippines (N=95 for Q1, N=100 for Q2, and N=80 for Q3).

- Most children in Argentina (92 per cent), Serbia (85 per cent), South Africa (65 per cent) and the Philippines (79 per cent) are able to visit social networking sites at any time, and only small minorities of parents supervise this, according to their children.
- The patterns for downloading music or films are similar. Between 89 per cent and 72 per cent of children in the four countries are able to do this any time.
- In the Philippines (48 per cent) and South Africa

(42 per cent) less than half of children can use a webcam at any time, but a majority of children can only do this with permission/supervision or not at all. This is not the case in Serbia where a majority of children can use a webcam at any time.

The qualitative research found that children often think they have better digital skills than their parents, and that they are the ones who introduce online activities to their families. Children speak of helping their parents out with the use of digital devices and sometimes even mediating the parental online behaviour – for example, by creating social media profiles for their parents.

While some parents are more competent and involved than others, they are still likely to see their children as relatively internet savvy:

“Focus group, Western Cape, South Africa, girls aged 11-12:

Girl 1: My mother doesn’t even know how to turn her phone. (Laughs.)

Girl 2: My grandmother just got an HTC phone, and constantly when she wants to make a call, then I have to show her how to make a call. She is always forgetting, and then I have to teach her again.”

“Focus group, Eastern Cape, South Africa, girls aged 16-18:

Interviewer: Okay so do you think your parents

know as much as you about the internet? Or do you know more?

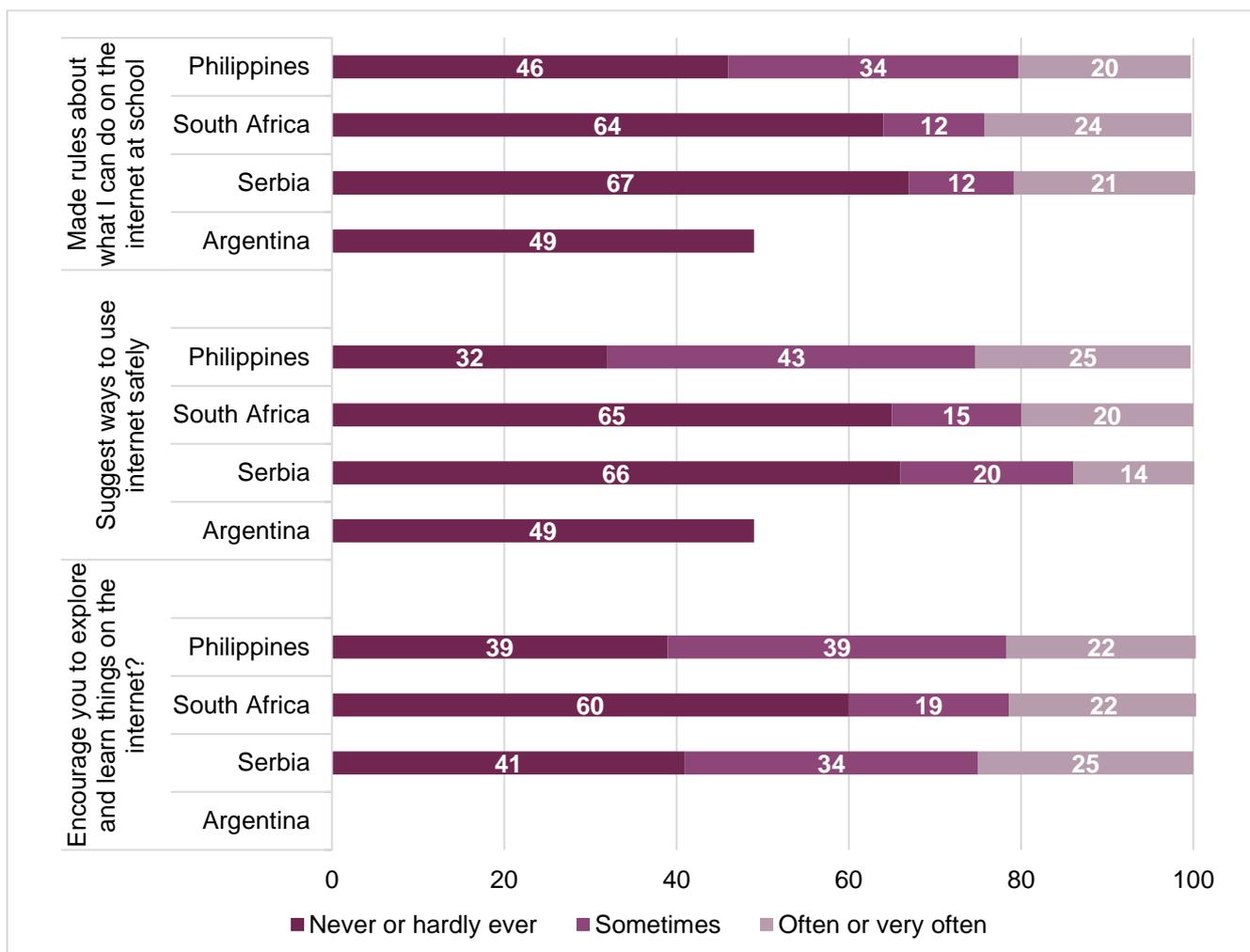
Girl 1: I know more.

Girl 2: I’d say the generation of today knows more than our parents. Like we’re much smarter than the previous generation.”

Teacher mediation

Teachers are another important resource for children as they can support their learning and maximize online opportunities. Even though few children report talking to their teacher about things that bother or upset them (less than 10 per cent in all countries, see Figure 31), teachers have a potentially important role to play in supporting children’s online activities (see Figure 36).

Figure 36: Have any teachers at your school done any of these things? (% by country)



Base: Children who use the internet aged 9-17 (except 13-17 in Argentina, and in South Africa, the base is all children including non-users). Note: Estimates for Argentina are nationally representative. Other estimates derived from pilot work and should be

interpreted with caution. In Argentina, the response options were 'Yes' and 'No'. Valid N: Argentina (N=878 for Q1 on rules, N=877 for Q2 on safety), Serbia (N=188 for Q1, N=194 for Q2, N=197 for Q3 on exploring the internet), South Africa (N= 903 for Q1, N=904 for Q2 and Q3), Philippines (N=104 for Q1, N=107 for Q2 and N=110 for Q3).

- Between half (Argentina, Philippines) and two-thirds (Serbia, South Africa) of teachers have not made any rules about how children can use the internet at school, according to children. Part of the explanation might be related to the availability of internet at schools – between one in five and two-thirds of children have access to the internet at school (see Figure 36).
- Similar numbers were reported when we asked children if their teachers suggested ways to use the internet safely, with again two-thirds in South Africa and Serbia saying never or hardly ever.
- In South Africa, too, most children say their teachers do little to encourage them to explore the internet, though in the Philippines and Serbia the majority say this occurs sometimes or more often.

The focus groups demonstrated that, as children see it, not only parents' skills but also teachers' skills and the content of the curriculum sometimes fall behind children's digital competence. These extracts from focus groups in Serbia and South Africa exemplify this well:

“Focus group, Serbia, girls aged 14-17:

Recently we had a lecture about internet safety at school. It was funny how many things they didn't mention, like some really scary things. Many

things were covered and also many were not the scary ones. They probably did not want to frighten us. (Girl aged 16, Serbia)”

“Focus group, Eastern Cape, South Africa, girls aged 14-17:

Interviewer: Do you ask your teachers for help?

Respondent 1: They ask me.

Respondent 2: They always ask us.”

Even though in all four countries both parents and teachers have an important role in offering advice, support and encouragement to explore online opportunities, such help is not available to many children. Further analysis can demonstrate what factors contribute to these gaps and which children are exposed to greater vulnerabilities as they face the double disadvantage of having fewer skills themselves and being offered less support and fewer opportunities to advance.

For example, the Serbian report discusses the correlation between parental skills and parent mediation styles, arguing that giving advice or suggestions about safe internet use increases with the digital competence of parents. The report points out that digitally competent parents are important in raising responsible and self-confident young internet users.⁹²

⁹² See Serbia's country report at www.globalkidsonline.net/serbia

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The toolkit

To support the production of evidence on children's online access and opportunities, risks and rights, we have developed an open-access multi-method research toolkit in collaboration with country partners, experts, and international advisors. The development of the Global Kids Online toolkit is an ongoing process which will involve periodic revision and updating of the research tools based on new uses, emerging findings, and changing digital contexts. There will be a permanent group of international advisors who will guide this process.

The Global Kids Online toolkit contains four main complementary elements:

Qualitative tools: research instruments enabling researchers to design and carry out qualitative studies on children's online risks and opportunities. They include the materials needed for conducting and analysing individual interviews and focus groups with children and parents/caregivers. These are designed to cover the key topics identified by Global Kids Online, while remaining flexible in following up issues that children raise.

Quantitative tools: instruments to enable the designing and carrying out of quantitative survey research with children and parents/caregivers on children's online risks and opportunities. This part of the toolkit contains materials needed for conducting and analysing a modular survey, including core, optional and adaptable questions. It also includes a data dictionary and guidelines for preparing a clean dataset ready for sharing and comparing.

Method guides:⁹³ these examine key issues related to researching children's online risks and opportunities. Taken together, they aim to guide researchers through the research process. Written by experts in the field, the method guides provide practical advice, demonstrate relevant case studies and examples of

best practice, and identify useful links and checklists.

Tool adaptation: this part of the toolkit is intended to assist researchers in deciding how best to adapt the tools provided to their unique environments and particular research agendas. It includes both guidance on the best approaches and practical examples of how the Global Kids Online toolkit has already been adapted by our research partners. It also highlights lessons learned and provides some resources in a range of languages.

The Global Kids Online toolkit is intended for researchers worldwide, including experienced and junior researchers, as well as those who contract and manage research, such as international agencies and non-governmental organizations. Anyone may use the resources under the Attributive Non-Commercial Creative Commons License (CC BY-NC), crediting Global Kids Online as the source. We encourage researchers to communicate to us their ideas of how they might use and adapt the existing toolkit and to share the lessons learned, thus contributing to the on-going development and improvement of the Global Kids Online toolkit.⁹⁴

Developing the research toolkit

How did we develop the toolkit? In order to produce meaningful comparisons on a global level, a major challenge for the Global Kids Online project was to develop a methodology that would be standardized enough to allow for cross-national comparison of data, yet flexible enough to account for local and contextual variations.⁹⁵ The Global Kids Online toolkit was designed through a partnership approach together with national research teams and what was learned in the process. Both qualitative and quantitative tools were initially based on the combination of international literature reviews and the work of the EU Kids Online network, which developed and fielded a cross-national survey and individual/focus group interviews on children's internet use in a European context from

⁹³ See www.globalkidsonline.net/guides

⁹⁴ Details on the process of using the toolkit and joining the network are on the website at www.globalkidsonline.net/tools and www.globalkidsonline.net/about

⁹⁵ See *Method Guide 4: Designing a standardised survey* at www.globalkidsonline.net/adapting-surveys

2010-2014.⁹⁶

Following Global Kids Online's pilot work in the four countries, and benefiting from sustained dialogue with and across research teams in the pilot countries before, during and after the research, the toolkit was thoroughly revised before launching publicly at www.globalkidsonline.net. Notably, since most prior research has been conducted in the global North,⁹⁷ more work was required in several respects to build a toolkit for the global South. These included:

- Sensitivity to and development of measures to reflect the considerable inequalities in children's lives. These relate to their living conditions in general (necessitating measures such as access to education, material deprivation, discrimination, family composition, community satisfaction, family relationships and teacher or peer support) and to internet and mobile access in particular (necessitating measures such as the nature and consistency of connectivity).⁹⁸ Each of these variables can be used to differentiate among children within and across countries and, thereby, to determine which variables matter in differentiating their online experiences and its subsequent outcomes.⁹⁹
- Recognition of the diversity of digital devices, sites and services used by children. Combined with the simple fact that children tend to name services by brand name (e.g. Facebook) rather than type (e.g. social network site), or to be unclear whether a service is online or not (especially for messaging and for gaming), identifying how children use the internet is a complex task requiring on-site interviewer explanation or translation as

appropriate.¹⁰⁰

- Adjustment to the cultural norms in different societies, especially regarding such practical and ethical matters as children's privacy to answer questions unobserved by parents and when asking children about sensitive or intimate matters such as sexual content, risky online activities, or experiences regarded as transgressive. Related challenges include a disconnection between adult assumptions and children's lived experiences, and navigating political sensitivities related to the issues under study (especially when risk-related) as well as when reporting the results.¹⁰¹

It is worth noting that the challenge of capturing contextual variation does not only concern decisions around which survey questions to ask, but also concerns deciding how to ask them and what terminology to use. We discovered through our pilot process that children and parents in different countries refer to what we know as 'the internet' in a variety of ways – if at all. Some children do not distinguish clearly between being online and offline, as they feel constantly connected through their cell phones. In several cases during pilot testing, parents did not at first understand what our study was about, when presented as a 'study of how children use the internet'. In some cases, interviewers had to explain that by 'the internet' they meant applications like Facebook and Whatsapp, and only then did it become clear to the participants what the survey was about. This adds another layer of complexity when designing survey questions, as what we might believe to be standard terminology ('the internet') is in some cases not used locally. To address this challenge we left the exact phrasing of survey questions up to the local research teams, taking the stance that as long as the essence

countries enjoy. On the other hand, we also believed that there was some value in drawing on existing expertise and earlier research to inform our work. Therefore, one of the main challenges for us when extending methodology initially developed and tested in the global North to the global level was how to properly walk the line between over-reliance on existing knowledge and re-inventing the wheel; doing the former would yield a toolkit unlikely to capture local experiences, while the latter risks wasting valuable resources and knowledge.

⁹⁹ See *Method Guide 10: Addressing diversities and inequalities* at www.globalkidsonline.net/inequalities

¹⁰⁰ See *Method Guide 5: Research with young children* at www.globalkidsonline.net/young-children

¹⁰¹ See *Method Guide 2: Ethical research with children* at www.globalkidsonline.net/ethics

⁹⁶ The methodology provided by EU Kids Online (see www.eukidsonline.net) constituted a good starting point for developing the Global Kids Online research toolkit, as it enabled us to build on existing resources and expertise. See Livingstone, Haddon and Görzig (2014) and *Method Guide 9: Comparative design* at www.globalkidsonline.net/comparative

⁹⁷ Livingstone and Bulger (2014).

⁹⁸ For example, when developing the Global Kids Online survey, we had good reason to believe that the primary mode of internet access for children in the global South might be through mobile phones rather than computers. As a consequence, only asking questions about internet as used on a computer might fail to capture common online practices, content and experiences that children in developing

of the question remains intact, the words can be changed to make sense in the given country context. In doing so we may reduce comparability across countries to some extent, but we are convinced that the advantages of having survey questions that are properly understood by children will outweigh the loss of standardization.

Qualitative methods can be relatively forgiving in relation to these challenges, permitting the researcher flexibility to judge the situation or the child's response in the interview situation. There is more pressure on the conduct of a survey questionnaire, as this both carries the main burden of delivering cross-nationally comparative and reliable data while also leaving little flexibility in the process of survey administration.

In terms of research topics, too, the tension between standardization and contextualization is difficult. In designing the Global Kids Online questionnaire, we created a modular survey with Core, Optional and Adaptable questions:

- **Core** questions are comparatively few and must be included in the survey in any country. They cover all the elements of the Global Kids Online research framework¹⁰² and they balance research on opportunities and risks.¹⁰³ While they may be modified as the research progresses and children's digital environments change, the core questions are expected to remain fairly stable to retain comparability over time as the project moves forward and the Global Kids Online research network grows.
- **Optional** questions are more numerous, covering the elements of the framework in more depth, or adding entirely new topics, and are available for use as appropriate to the research context or as determined by national researchers.¹⁰⁴ For example, we learned from our partners in

Argentina that recent education policies required the integration of more complex skills related to coding and programming in the school curriculum. Survey questions that could capture uptake of complex digital skills were therefore of particular interest to government and policymakers in Argentina, which incentivised us to include such questions as optional and make them available for national research teams with similar priorities. As an example of a fully optional topic, we developed a set of questions to measure forms of online sexual risks.¹⁰⁵

- **Adaptable** questions invite individual countries to add questions or response options of particular relevance to them. This was important for current partners but also for future – and unknown – partners, to provide a mechanism for future flexibility depending on specific national, cultural or digital contexts. Once piloted and evaluated, these questions could become optional questions in a future revision of the questionnaire.¹⁰⁶

Broadly, the design of the qualitative interview protocols followed the same model as the survey development process.¹⁰⁷ A set of topics are provided in the toolkit but the protocols are loosely structured, freeing the research teams to determine what will work optimally in their country and which topics might be of most interest. In the pilot research, focus group moderators were trained by national researchers and were invited to draft their own sets of questions based loosely on the topics provided. The purpose of the qualitative research was also left flexible. In countries where prior qualitative research already existed, it might best be used after the survey, to follow up on puzzles or deepen interpretation. In countries where little prior research existed, especially qualitative work that engages directly with children's own voices, experiences, and preferred forms of expression, it is

¹⁰² See *Method Guide 1: Research framework* at www.globalkidsonline.net/framework

¹⁰³ See *Method Guide 6: Researching opportunities* at www.globalkidsonline.net/opportunities

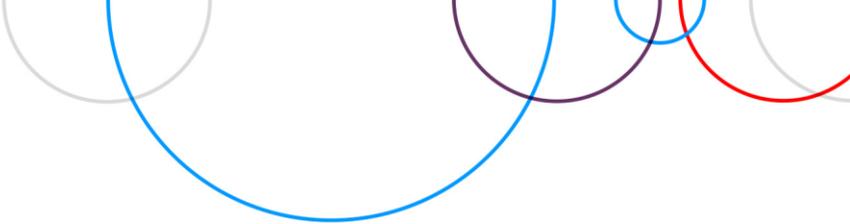
¹⁰⁴ The intention was to include as wide a selection of variables as possible and trust the research teams to include those that are important in their context, effectively relying on our partners to each develop a contextually relevant survey, a task that is otherwise difficult to accomplish from a centralized perspective with limited insight into the country contexts.

¹⁰⁵ See *Method Guide 7: Researching online child sexual*

abuse at www.globalkidsonline.net/sexual-exploitation

¹⁰⁶ In effect, the Global Kids Online survey allows all partners – current and future – to contribute to the questionnaire design with their own questions through an iterative approach to survey development. Over time, the number of questions will increase as a result and the questionnaire will remain up-to-date and able to provide a comprehensive range of questions of interest to stakeholders on a local, regional and global scale. Our method thus takes full advantage of a partnership approach to developing the questionnaire, making the process dynamic, inclusive and continuous.

¹⁰⁷ See www.globalkidsonline.net/tools



important that qualitative research precedes and informs the conduct of survey research.¹⁰⁸ In practice, in the Philippines, Serbia and South Africa, qualitative research was conducted before the survey; in Argentina this order was reversed.

While similar implementation across all countries would strengthen the comparative aspect, a key purpose of this pilot process was to assess different types of data collection and evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of each.¹⁰⁹ It would be unrealistic to assume that all countries can collect data through identical methods, and so an understanding of the relative advantages and disadvantages of data collection methods is invaluable. In some countries certain options will be more feasible or beneficial than others. For example, in Serbia the team preferred school-based survey administration because of ease

of access to respondents. The team in the Philippines wanted to pilot their survey administration process as well as the survey, and chose to use tablet-based administration in preparation for their nationally representative study, which will be conducted via tablets.

In piloting the research toolkit, the Global Kids Online project has drawn on a range of methodological expertise.¹¹⁰ This included taking note of how the toolkit performs when administered through different systems of administration and locations, and reflexive consideration of how the findings are useful to and used by policymakers and practitioners.¹¹¹ All of these insights will be drawn upon and developed further in future iterations of the toolkit.

¹⁰⁸ See *Method Guide 8: Participatory methods* at www.globalkidsonline.net/participatory-research

¹⁰⁹ See *Method Guide 3: Survey sampling and administration* at www.globalkidsonline.net/sampling

¹¹⁰ See *Method Guide 9: Comparative analysis* at www.globalkidsonline.net/comparative

¹¹¹ See *Method Guide 11: From research findings to policymaking* at www.globalkidsonline.net/policy

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions and policy implications from the findings

The value of making direct cross-national comparisons lies in the capacity to reveal patterns in findings that require concerted efforts of multiple stakeholders at both national and global level. The findings presented in section 3 are based on data from four pilot country studies and their national reports, each of which offer specific recommendations to policymakers in those countries.¹¹² Beyond this, while keeping in mind that the findings from Serbia, South Africa and the Philippines derive from pilot research, and that sample sizes in Serbia and the Philippines are small, it is possible to draw some tentative findings from the cross-national comparisons.

The Global Kids Online survey found that home access to the internet is the most common in all countries, although in other respects countries varied in the amount, ease, location and device of internet access and use enjoyed by children aged 9-17. Access through mobile devices is however the dominant mode. Older children generally gain access through schools and public spaces more easily than younger children. As all four countries prioritise equitable, affordable and easy access to the internet, and given that the child internet users account for one-third of the population of internet users, such policies need to pay due attention to the needs and rights of all children.

Access, skills, risks and opportunities are all part of the overall picture of children's well-being and rights in the digital age and should all, therefore, be kept in mind when developing policy interventions. For example, efforts to protect children should take note of the finding that children's internet access is, increasingly, occurring substantially via mobile devices, with the balance particularly tipped towards mobile over fixed

devices in lower-income countries (South Africa, the Philippines). The findings also show that children with less easy or frequent internet access (notably in South Africa and the Philippines), along with younger internet users, are generally less competent in terms of their digital skills for information, safety and mobile tasks. Relatedly, children's internet skills seemed to depend on whether they were able to practise these skills on the devices available to them. For example, the South African report showed that, as children access the internet predominantly via a mobile device, many had not developed more complex skills like using programming language or designing a website, as such practices are more commonly done on computers. Most obviously, **insofar as internet access is important for the realization of children's rights, efforts to improve access will be of increasing importance and, given present gaps, should include younger children as well as teenagers.**

Asking children whether they think 'there are lots of things on the internet that are good for children my age,' proved a simple and effective way of finding out how children themselves consider whether the internet serves their needs and interests well. Children are generally positive about the opportunities available for them online – they were most positive in Argentina and least so in South Africa. National variations may reflect the availability of age- and language-appropriate content, and so may indicate where further resources would be beneficial, although the reasons behind children's judgments merit further investigation. **Improving school access, supported by teacher training, could further link internet use with education and information benefits, specifically by developing children's digital skills, which have been shown in this report to include notable gaps in competence, especially among younger**

¹¹² Further details can be found in the four country reports at www.globalkidsonline.net

users.¹¹³

In relation to online practices, societal expectations of 'what counts' as good internet use are worth considering. It is notable that between two and four children in ten look for health information online each week. This suggests a fair degree of interest on children's part, but it is unknown whether all those who want health information have the chance to seek it online, whether they find the health information they seek, and whether this information is age-appropriate, accurate and beneficial. Similar questions arise regarding the finding that some children seek information about work and study opportunities on the internet. It may be anticipated that they will seek such information online more often as internet access becomes easier and more taken-for-granted, but it is less clear whether valuable information for children and young people will be available or who will provide it. **Future policy and practice should encompass the full range of children's rights including the rights to information, education, protection, privacy and participation; it needs to be holistic but also integrated and mainstreamed in other national policies that a) deal with children's rights in general and b) are aimed at the development of the ICT services and the information society.**

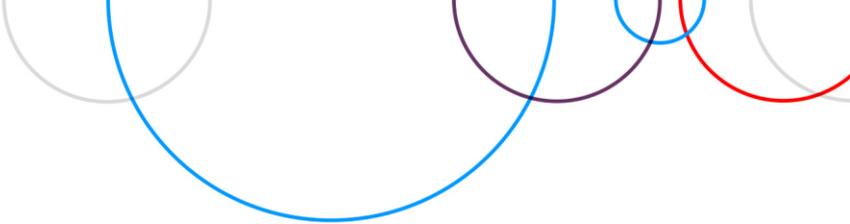
Children's rights include the right to express themselves and to participate in matters that affect them. The survey found that up to half of all children who use the internet look for the news online, but far fewer discuss political and social matters (although possibly all those who wish to do so take this opportunity). Interestingly, given the often hyperbolic claims popularly made that children are all 'digital natives,' it is noteworthy that while most children watch video content online, far fewer create and upload their own video content; indeed, substantial proportions of children in all countries said that they rarely create or post online videos or music that they have created. **If children are to participate fully in the digital age, greater efforts will be needed to ensure that they become the**

content-creators and engaged actors that many hope for. It is particularly crucial that efforts to keep them safe from risks do not, however unintentionally, also serve to constrain their opportunities.

Deciding what is a risk or an opportunity is not straightforward for policymakers seeking to provide a positive online experience for children. Knowing that forms of online communication are popular among many children, one might welcome the finding that over half of children aged 9-11 who use the internet in Serbia and the Philippines visit social network sites at least weekly; yet on the other hand, the findings indicate that social networking sites are one of the most common platforms where children send and receive hurtful messages, as well as encounter sexual images. Thus, it appears that social networking sites represent both an opportunity for the majority of children to communicate and express themselves, and also a risk of harm for a minority. **It should not be forgotten, however, that the offline world still poses risks to children – of bullying, pornography and other harms. The findings suggest that the internet is now contributing to the risks facing children, but policy and practice focused on the internet should not neglect offline risks, while that focused on offline risks should now take into account their online dimensions.**

These relations between online and offline may not only amplify risk but can also aid children's safety. For instance, the research shows that children's online and offline contacts are interconnected, with some overlaps between digital and face-to-face connections and transitions between the two. Still, children are mainly in contact online with people they already know and are less likely to communicate with people they have not met face-to-face. In addition, online friendships do not necessarily result in face-to-face meetings as some of the countries with a higher proportion of children communicating online with people they have not

¹¹³ In this report we have focused on information, safety and mobile skills, although the full Global Kids Online questionnaire asks also about some more advanced skills associated with content creation, copyright, and more (for further findings, see the country reports).



met before also have the lowest likelihood of meeting such people face-to-face (for example in Serbia). The opposite is also true, as in the Philippines, where the children are the most likely to meet their online acquaintances but also the least likely to communicate online with people they do not know.

Overall, the findings regarding the balance of risks and opportunities are important, showing large differences across countries. It is interesting that in Serbia, South Africa and the Philippines, most children considered the internet beneficial although around a third had experienced something upsetting online in the past year. However, in Argentina, most children reported experiencing a problem online, matching the proportion who found the internet beneficial. It could be that there are indeed more problems awaiting children online in Argentina than the other countries, but it may instead be that, with the internet more familiar already to Argentinian children, they are either more sensitised to online risks or they encounter more because they do more online and so explore it more widely. **Further research is needed to examine the outcomes of children's internet use in terms of their well-being and to investigate the circumstances under which the internet is beneficial for children, but also when and for whom it might enhance the risk of harm. It is particularly likely that the factors that support children's vulnerability or resilience may vary across contexts.**

All this reminds us that **children are not a homogenous group and that it is important to differentiate policy goals based on the age of the child and places of internet access, among other factors.** Thus it is helpful to observe that, overall, the findings for gender differences are not very strong, and they vary by country. Indeed, while we hesitate to draw strong conclusions here on the basis of limited sample sizes, it does appear that gender differences are neither as predictable nor as noteworthy as the clear age differences evident across most of the findings presented. This suggests that both girls and boys merit school and parental support and interventions to improve their online opportunities, and that educational and safety initiatives should ideally start young, certainly

by the age – during primary school – at which some children are already using the internet. In South Africa, for example, and especially the Philippines, younger children use the internet less, undertaking fewer online practices and developing fewer digital skills than children in Serbia or Argentina. Whether planning services for early childhood care, primary and secondary school, extracurricular clubs and centres, libraries and other places of public access, or a host of other policies, questions of gender and especially age are important. Our present sample sizes did not permit further breakdowns, **but it is likely that policy must also pay special attention to those who may be of greater vulnerability, such as indigenous or ethnic minority children, migrants, children in poor or rural settings or those who suffer from some form of disability.** Such sources of likely vulnerability are measured in the Global Kids Online toolkit and can be investigated in depth in the future.

All four country teams reported that the most effective strategies to promote digital citizenship and child safety online are those that involve a multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral approach, plus engagement from parents and children themselves. Promoting awareness among parents and caregivers to engage more positively and actively with their children's internet use is key: as children generally report having trusting and positive relationships with their parents, this trust that exists offline needs to translate into encouragement and positive mediation of their online activities (not restriction or punishment). The findings revealed notable gaps in the support that children receive from their parents, with many but not all able to turn to parents – or indeed teachers – when in need of guidance regarding online experiences. **In addition to policies that support parents and raise parental awareness and digital skills, schools and teachers have a significant role to play from making better use of the internet as an educational tool to developing digital literacy and promoting safe, responsible use of the internet.**

But policy makers need not only place demands on parents and teachers: **the strategies that promote empowered and safe online experiences should take into account children's agency, including**

their desire to experiment and sometimes to take risks, and also their desire to be responsible for themselves and their actions. As an extension of their offline environment, the internet is fast becoming a place where taking risks is perceived as a sign of growing up and becoming independent, including from adult monitoring and control – as our findings show, when in trouble, children first turn to their peers. However, this message could serve as an encouragement for those who design programmes and interventions to promote online safety: peer-to-peer education and mentoring may be the most effective way to reach young internet users worldwide. And respecting children as digital citizens may prove more empowering than prioritising safety over thoughtful exploration in the emerging online environment.

Conclusions and policy implications for the research toolkit

The Global Kids Online toolkit was developed and pilot tested through a partnership approach, with UNICEF Office of Research and the London School of Economics and Political Science as global coordinators. In each partner country a combination of national researchers, government agencies, the private sector, civil society and UN agencies worked together to guide the adaptation of the methodology on a country level, ensuring that the questions asked were relevant in every country and to facilitate research uptake and dissemination.

This decentralized approach to research was successful in that it enabled individual country teams to draw on and adapt the Global Kids Online toolkit to develop their own national research toolkit, ready to be used in the local context. By involving government agencies and civil society stakeholders from start to finish, the national research teams were able to contribute to relevant agendas by asking questions that matter to stakeholders in their own country. At the same time, national research teams benefited from the centralized coordination and sharing of knowledge, resources and data

within the Global Kids Online network.

It is important that the toolkit continues to evolve as it is adapted and used in new countries all over the world, with each research team being able to create their own questions and topics to test and include in the full toolkit as optional elements. Equally, it is important that the core of the toolkit remains constant to enable longitudinal and cross-national comparisons with the goal of contributing to a global knowledge base around children's use of the internet and its associated risks and opportunities.

The advantages of a cross-national comparative approach have long been demonstrated in various domains concerned with children's well-being. Often these are based on highly standardized, quantitative approaches – for example, the UNICEF Innocenti Report Card on child well-being, or the PISA survey on educational outcomes – generating country rankings that gain public and policy attention. Cross-national comparisons may also be more qualitative and interpretative – for example, the 'Why We Post' project's ethnographies of youth social networking around the world.¹¹⁴

As Kohn (1989) points, cross-national comparisons permit each country to understand itself better through comparison with others. It also allows for identification of meaningful cross-national similarities and differences, so that key influences can be recognised by policymakers, thereby guiding strategies for intervention.¹¹⁵ For Global Kids Online, two directions are recommended. One is that cross-national comparisons may be made on a regional basis (currently Europe and Latin America, with more regions as the research develops). The second is that a cross-national shared dataset can be constructed centrally, with comparative analyses to be conducted for or in collaboration with those who contribute data.

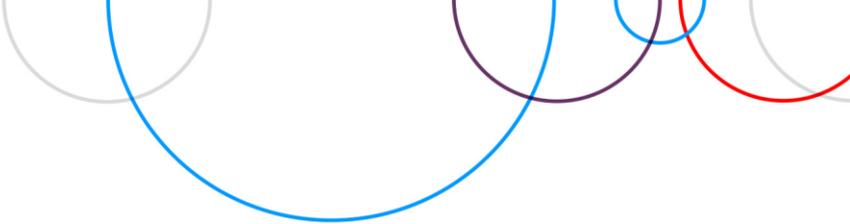
Of the many lessons learned, we observe that:

1. Qualitative data usefully informs the survey design and adaptation process. In the countries where interviews and focus groups with children and parents preceded the survey, the teams

¹¹⁴ See <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/series/16/> and <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/> and

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/why-we-post>

¹¹⁵ See Livingstone and Hasebrink (2010).



reported that they gained many useful insights into children's contemporary engagement with the internet that later helped them adapt the survey instrument further. If possible, we recommend that research teams utilizing the Global Kids Online toolkit start with the qualitative research and then proceed to conduct quantitative research.

2. In some countries, certain survey questions had comparatively low response rates. We recommend all new national research teams to conduct cognitive interviews with children before implementing the survey to assess how the questions work in practice. While we might expect low response rates to certain questions, particularly those of a sensitive nature, some of the missing data might also be explained by questions that are poorly phrased or worded in a language not appropriate for children, using terminology that is unfamiliar to them. Ideally, each team would, in addition to cognitive interviews, conduct a small-scale pilot study with the full questionnaire to assess both the quality of the data collected and the length of the survey interview. This approach was used by the team in the Philippines, who will implement a nationally representative study later this year, as well as our new Global Kids Online partners in Chile.

3. Measuring socio-economic status by asking children proved difficult in all countries. We adapted and used well-tested instruments for measuring material deprivation as a proxy indicator for socio-economic status, but in none of the countries was this approach successful. Instead, the countries tended to use parent data to approximate socio-economic status, but this is only viable if the Global Kids Online parent questionnaire is implemented. Even then it proved difficult to measure socio-economic status in a way that discriminates among households effectively across diverse contexts while making use of questions that can be asked of children directly (as is required in school-based research, for instance). The toolkit therefore invites country partners to adopt the method judged most valid and reliable in their country, so as to

categorise children as coming from high, medium, or low socio-economic status households. But it may be that a common measure can be found in the future.

4. A module introduced by South Africa on barriers to access to the internet was an important addition to the survey, as it helped to understand why certain children have unlimited access and some do not, and what socio-economic factors influence their ability to benefit from resources enabled by digital technologies. Given that the digital divide between certain regions and countries is still significant, this module can help policymakers identify entry points for provision of universal access.

Each new wave of data collection and analysis invites a review of the toolkit, to add clarifications, address problems, consider updates and make additions based on insights from new countries. In terms of process, the partner countries indicated that it would be useful in future to develop a training module and manual for survey interviewers (enumerators). It would be interesting to encompass new topics such as the value of the internet for adolescent and children's health information, and what kind of health information children of different age groups typically seek.

This is a fast-changing context of children's internet use, with policymakers and practitioners now seeking ways to anticipate upcoming developments in relation to the Internet of Things, robotics, big data, smart cities, artificial intelligence, augmented and virtual reality, and more. Such developments raise new questions and challenges which concern children as well as the general population, and they all remain to be researched.¹¹⁶

Future directions

Future country partners

It is hoped that new countries will wish to join the Global Kids Online project, in order to extend the evidence base especially in middle- and low-income

and <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/internet-things>

¹¹⁶ For European developments, see http://ictcoalition.eu/gallery/100/REPORT_WEB.pdf and <http://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC90851>

countries. There are also advantages in updating the evidence base in high-income countries and filling key gaps. For this reason, Global Kids Online implements a partnership approach in which the benefits of central coordination of resources, expertise and tools can be united with a distributed approach to evidence-gathering and policymaking.

As the Global Kids Online toolkit is released for wider use by new partner countries, we recommend that each national research team involves key national stakeholders from the start of the process, to ensure that the questions asked during the research are relevant, while continuing to share resources, expertise and data with the wider Global Kids Online network.

Further, all the resources developed by GKO are available at www.globalkidsonline.net for researchers to use and adapt, under a Creative Commons licence (CC BY-NC 2.0 UK) and we invite researchers to join the Global Kids Online network and contribute to our aim – to learn from children’s experiences and to help policymakers, educators and governments make the internet better for children everywhere.

The project website (www.globalkidsonline.net) includes guidance for future partners in terms of process and criteria for joining. Nationally representative research is already underway in Bulgaria, Chile, Ghana, the Philippines and Montenegro. Discussions are now in progress with partners in Malaysia, India and China, among others.

Developing the analysis

In Section 3, we focused on the main findings by child demographics and by country. There is clearly much more analysis that can be conducted, especially as the research moves from pilot to main studies and as the number of countries increases. Future analysis might take four main forms:

- **A deeper analysis of the qualitative findings** and their relation to the survey findings, to identify complexities, nuances of understanding

and possible contradictions.

- **An advanced statistical analysis**, to examine the predictive relations among the many variables measured, to understand whether and how internet use mediates children’s well-being and under which conditions.
- **Thematic analyses**, to pursue particular dimensions of the dataset in more depth, for example in terms of gender or specific vulnerabilities, or the role of parental (carer) mediation, or a comparison of internet use at home, school and elsewhere.
- **Country comparisons**, to relate the findings by country to external indicators so as to understand – and predict – why findings vary by country and what policy or practice interventions might be beneficial.

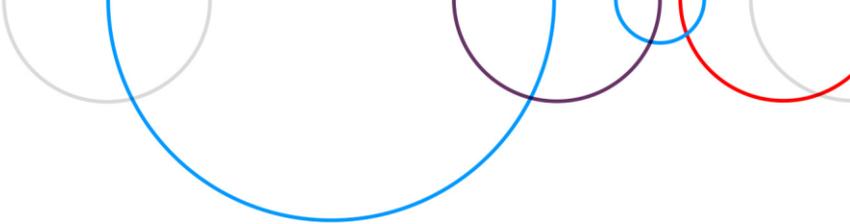
It will also be important to develop **indicators for inclusion** in other research. Many of the key surveys that track the conditions and outcomes in children’s lives have developed robust ways of assessing the main influences in terms of family, education, community, culture and so forth.¹¹⁷ Some, though not yet all, are beginning to include questions about children’s access to online and mobile technologies within their survey questionnaires (e.g. PISA now asks about computers as well as books in assessing children’s educational outcomes).¹¹⁸ Some also include specific technology-related risks (e.g. HBSC asked about cyberbullying in addition to bullying in its most recent survey in 2015).¹¹⁹ These are useful, and augur well for a future body of evidence regarding children’s rights in the digital age.

However, these changes are both slow to emerge and piecemeal in nature. For many countries where evidence is sorely lacking, an understanding of children’s internet use in the round – access, skills, opportunities, risks – is needed now. As Global Kids Online seeks to meet this need by designing a multidimensional research toolkit to capture the range of children’s digital experiences, it will also generate indicators that can be used in other major

¹¹⁷ See Richardson and Ali (2014).

¹¹⁸ See <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/>

¹¹⁹ See <http://www.hbsc.org/>



surveys. In this way, it is hoped that the overall evidence base will be expanded through the combined efforts of Global Kids Online and others.

Finally, in thinking of future analysis, the Global Kids Online project should place a particular emphasis on measuring the uptake of this research by policymakers, practitioners, the private sector, civil society and all those who are concerned with children's rights and well-being in the digital age. Whether research results will be used or not is a predictor of relevance and usability of the research questions and the findings: research can be used to explain a particular problem, to stimulate the debate and to alert the policy makers to a specific issue. It can also help us understand what other political and social factors are at play that may influence policy directions and how to (re)position and present/share our evidence for the best possible impact. Research needs to speak to the users in a compelling but neutral way.

The vision

Our over-arching vision is for a world in which children's rights are respected and enhanced in all environments, including the digital environment, and in which use of the internet by children and others serves to empower rather than harm children. To this end, our specific ambition is to enhance

evidence-based policy and practice. This includes ensuring that evidence is generated with and from children so as to inform any and all policy and practice relevant to children's rights in the digital age.

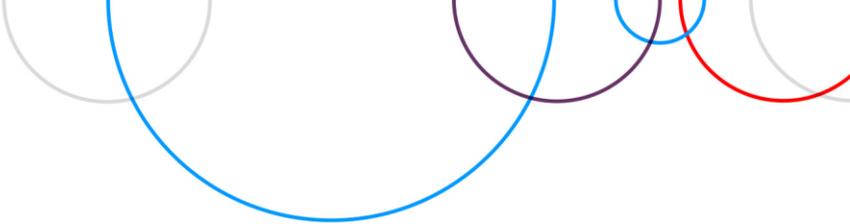
It is timely, indeed imperative, to support research that examines children's everyday lives in all their diversity, developing methods by which to assess the relevance and consequences of internet use, and by which to contextualize that use within the wider conditions of their everyday lives, especially in the global South where so much future internet use will occur. Also important, we urge that all research that examines the general population's internet access and use includes explicit consideration of children too, overcoming the temptation to survey only those aged 16+ or only the head of the household and thereby omit the experiences and voices of children.

Last, we urge that policy and practice that may affect children, intentionally or otherwise, is firmly evidence-based so that children's needs and rights are not overlooked, misunderstood or even directly undermined. Rather, we believe that a better understanding of children's lives – and their rights – in the digital age will surely serve to empower them and their communities.

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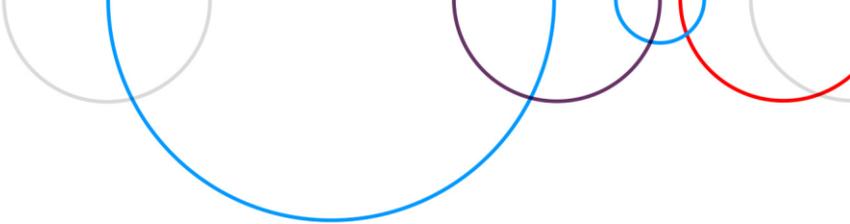
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APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY

Term	Description
<i>Child</i>	We follow the UNCRC in defining ‘a “child” as a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger’ (UN, 1989). Global Kids Online focuses on children aged 9–17, while also encouraging research on younger children and young people aged 18+. We recognise that teenagers often bear adult responsibilities and may not consider themselves children, and also that cultures and contexts matter in determining the significance of ‘child’ and ‘childhood’.
<i>Digital, Digital age</i>	Digital technologies are distinctively interactive, networked, remixable and ubiquitous media (boyd, 2014). Global Kids Online specifically focuses on the internet, whether accessed via computers, mobile phones or other digital devices, also including some other uses of computing and mobile technologies. When referring to ‘the digital’ or ‘the digital age’, we do not imply that society is radically transformed by digital media, nor that digital media represent the most important change in today’s society.
<i>Global North, Global South</i>	These terms refer in shorthand to the strong (but far from absolute) tendency for inequalities in income (and research) to map onto geography and cultures. The terms avoid the much-criticized language of ‘development’ (as in developing vs developed countries). Still, there are dangers in all such binaries of implying a singular, normative vision of development goals, and obscuring inequalities within countries as well as the commonalities that exist even across continents.
<i>Parent</i>	We use the term ‘parent’ synonymously with ‘carer’ or ‘guardian’ to refer to the adults most closely involved in or responsible for a child’s welfare and upbringing, recognising that this may include biological parents living separately from the child or step-parents or foster parents living with the child. We make no assumptions as to the number of parents or their sexuality, and we recognise that other family members (e.g. grandparents or aunts and uncles) may care for a child (including undertaking ‘parental mediation’ of their internet use). On the other hand, some children receive little or no parenting, whether or not they possess biological parents.
<i>Research</i>	Good quality research provides evidence that is robust, ethical, stands up to scrutiny and can be used to inform policymaking. It should adhere to principles of professionalism, transparency, independence, accountability and auditability. This is generally achieved through the development of theory, the specification of a clear research question, and the deployment of established methods of research designed to answer the question.



Rights

Included here are children's civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights, as specified in the UNCRC (UN, 1989). This conceives of children as rights-holders and has been ratified by most countries in the world.

Well-being

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2011a, p. 18) defines well-being as 'meeting various human needs, some of which are essential (e.g. being in good health), as well as the ability to pursue one's goals, to thrive and feel satisfied with their life' (see Bradshaw et al., 2011).

APPENDIX 2: BACKGROUND

Several lines of inquiry converged during recent years to generate the context and possibilities for Global Kids Online.

UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti undertook an exploration of children’s rights in the digital age, resulting in the following reports and initiatives, including:¹²⁰

- *Child safety online: Global challenges and strategies*. This comprised a literature review in 2011 and a technical report in 2012.
- *A global agenda for children’s rights in the digital age: Recommendations for developing UNICEF’s research strategy*. This report canvassed the views of international experts to synthesise recommendations for the Office of Research – Innocenti in 2013.
- *Children, ICT and development: Capturing the potential, meeting the challenges*. A report concerned with the relation between research and practice, focused on low-income countries in 2014.
- *One in three: Internet governance and children’s rights*. An evidence-based policy report concerned with the representation of children in internet governance, 2016.

In parallel, the EU Kids Online network was funded by the European Commission’s Better Internet for Kids (originally, the Safer Internet) Programme to pioneer a cross-national research strategy encompassing: (1) a comprehensive conceptual model; (2) a modular survey questionnaire; (3) accompanying qualitative research tools and instruments; and (4) a sustained dialogue with stakeholders that has ensured the successful exploitation of project results.¹²¹

Focused on Europe but extending into other countries including Latin America, Russia and Australia, key milestones included:

- EU Kids Online I (2006-09) mapped the evidence base for policymakers, developed a research toolkit and built a framework for integrating risks and opportunities.
- EU Kids Online II (2009-11) surveyed 25,000 children aged 9-16 and their parents in 25 countries to reveal the incidence of children’s internet use and its consequences.
- EU Kids Online III (2011-14) interviewed and conducted focus groups with children in nine countries to develop insights into their experiences in their own voices.
- EU Kids Online IV (2014-date) revised the research framework and toolkit, and continues to add short thematic reports.
- Net Children Go Mobile (2011-14) replicated parts of the EU Kids Online survey, adding a new focus on mobile technologies.
- Kids Online Brazil has replicated the EU Kids Online survey annually from 2012, and has since expanded into Latin America more widely.

In 2014, the WeProtect initiative – now the WeProtect Global Alliance – was formed as an international movement dedicated to national and global action to end the sexual exploitation of children online. Among other projects funded in its first year was Global Kids Online for 2015-16.¹²²

¹²⁰ See <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/270/>

¹²¹ See www.eukidsonline.net for all reports, links and

country reports.

¹²² See <http://www.weprotect.org/home>