Child Safety Online: Maximising opportunities, minimizing risks
Information Communication Technologies offer opportunities…

.... and some hazards
The scope of UNICEF Child Safety Online study

• Scale and nature of sexual abuse on line (who is at risk and who are perpetrators)
• ICT usage by children, their behaviour, risk factors, vulnerability and harm
• Sources of protection
• Child protection, law enforcement response and private sector response.

• Potential strategies.

www.unicef-irc.org (click here for link to report)
Children’s usage

• Children use internet in similar ways (learning, communication, social networking, gaming) – basic social medium where online and offline come together
• Few differences between boys and girls
• Parents in industrialized countries catching up
• Move from fixed to mobile communication
• Popular fear that the Internet endangers all children not supported by the evidence so far.
• The more children use internet the more risks they encounter (the key is to ensure that children know how to navigate these risks and that they are not harmed)
Risk factors: who is vulnerable

- Psychosocial experience/history
- Location of Internet access
- Socio-economic circumstances
- Level of family support and awareness
- Personal characteristics - age/sex/sexuality/disability
- Attitudes to violence
## Sources of protection

- **Parents who are online themselves**
- **Parents who spend time interested in and engaged with children’s online experience**
- **Accessible sources of age appropriate information**
- **Friends are usually the first port of call**
- **Relevant authorities – where children have been provided with appropriate information and mechanisms for reporting**
Challenges for effective child protection strategies

• Few countries have adequate legislation to address child abuse images
• Determining when a crime has been committed
• Barriers to effective reporting
• Borderless crime
• Perceived anonymity of Internet
• Multiagency collaboration
• Police and welfare professional capabilities
• Lack of appropriate recovery services
• Lack of public consultation with children, families, teachers – link to policymakers.
• Unclear role of industry players
Building protective environment

- Involve children as active participants in making informed choices, and in developing policy and legislation.

- Empower children and young people and enhance their resilience to harm.

- Remove impunity for abusers.

- Provide children and young people who have been abused with the necessary support and opportunities for recovery.

- Promote recovery and rehabilitation for children exposed to harm.

- Increase protection for children and reduce their exposure to harm.

- Introduce the necessary legislation and law enforcement environment to effectively prosecute those who abuse children and young people online.

- Ensure that the Internet environment, wherever children and young people access it, is as safe as possible.
Strategic UNICEF response

- Focusing on benefits and positive outcomes, access that promotes inclusion and equity but at the same time promoting safe access and digital citizenship through empowerment
- Integrate ICT work into broader strategies e.g. prevention and protection from abuse
- Intersectoral collaboration (education, protection, law enforcement, private sector), consensus building
Effective strategies
Prevention, response through schools

Croatia
Study: UNICEF-supported survey 2010 of 8,000 people: *Experiences and attitudes of children, parents and teachers toward the electronic media.*

• Cyberbullying experienced by 34% schoolchildren who are also exposed to other forms of peer violence.

• Facebook, other social networking websites were the most frequent medium, followed by SMS messages.

• Coping strategies: sharing with friends, parents, avoidance. Confiding in teachers is only 7th, after reporting to an administrator. Children do not see teachers as being interested in their life on the internet or as effective protectors in this area of their lives.

300 schools took part in a programme: 7 Steps for a Safe and Stimulating Environment in Schools which includes cyberbullying.

Evaluation: 50 percent reduction of violence, increased competencies students, teachers.

2012: The Ministry of Education stated their commitment to upscale the programme nationally.
Linking with industry players

The RuNet Generation

Click here for the exploratory study.

• Young people surveyed exchanges overwhelmingly on Russian-bred websites, spending nearly 7 hours online compared to the worldwide average of 3.7 hours per month, according to Comscore.

• Up to 40% of Russians surveyed aged 9-16 reported meeting someone from the online world in real life, reported the Foundation for Internet Development.

Opportunities:
Building coalition with key industry players, academics
Advocating for more public

The UA.net Generation

Click here for the exploratory study

• Large Russian, western influence while local Ukrainian sites lag behind.

• Major risk: meeting strangers offline without their friends or families knowledge, (Microsoft-UNESCO survey, 2011).

• Mostly home access

• Teenagers providing personal information such as home addresses when lured by promises of winning things. (Microsoft-UNESCO survey, 2011).

Opportunities:
• Key telecom operator Kyivstar launched safer internet campaign, a while list of
• children sites with "Parental Control"
Linking children with policy makers

Turkey

Click here for the exploratory study

National consultations with 160 children, academics, policymakers

Declarations to parliament
- All ICTs policies should respect diversity, empower children, particularly girls
- Filters must be debated in an open, transparent manner
- Support given to ensure safer access and resilience of children to harm