CONCLUSIONS

When compared with the other countries in the region, children in Kenya score comparatively low across all dimensions of digital resilience. Moreover, the widest gap in comparison to the other countries in the Middle East Africa and Russia region can be observed with respect to instrumental resilience.

Kenya is part of the UNICEF Global Programme to protect children from online sexual exploitation. Multiple conferences and workshops have been held to raise the awareness of cyber crime and the need to protect children online. No laws currently, however, protect users yet.

Despite this lack of a legal framework, children in Kenya record some positive results in relation to the adoption of online resilience, with 42% of Kenyan children reporting to be very likely to use a child friendly search engine and 66% stating they avoid clicking on things that look suspicious. However, only 20% would delete the contact of a person who sent them an unwanted message.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the lower scores recorded in Kenya for both instrumental and cognitive actions, this report recommends to promote the inclusion of enhanced digital literacy and internet safety education in school curricula.

It also recommends fostering extra-curricular activities aimed at promoting responsible internet use for young people.

THE RESEARCH

This multinational research explores the role of digital resilience (the ability to prevent and respond to online risk) in providing children with the skills and characteristics needed to navigate the internet safely.

Analysing the findings from children aged 9-18 in Nigeria, Kenya, Israel, South Africa, Turkey, and Russia; it investigates the ways in which young people can be encouraged to be resilient users.

ABOUT THINKYOUNG

ThinkYoung is the first think tank dedicated to young people.

Founded in 2007, ThinkYoung has expanded to have offices in Brussels, Geneva and Hong Kong. It is a not for profit organisation with the aim of making the world a better place for young people, by involving them in the decision making process and by providing decision makers with high quality research on youth conditions. Think Young produces research papers, surveys, documentary movies and education programs.

As of today, ThinkYoung projects have reached over 600,000 young people.

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*Think*Young
We lobby for young people

DIGITAL RESILIENCE
EMPOWERING YOUTH ONLINE

Practices for a safer internet use in Nigeria, Kenya, Israel, South Africa, Turkey and Russia.

COUNTRY BRIEFING: KENYA

INTRO

The following overview presents the key findings from Kenyan children in response to a survey investigating the role of digital resilience in positively impacting children's online engagement. Shedding light on how a digitally resilient young person responds to potentially risky online content, the research investigates the ways in which young people can be encouraged to be resilient users when online by analysing data from Nigeria, Kenya, Israel, South Africa, Turkey, and Russia.

The survey targeted children and young people between the ages of 9-18 and was administered in two parts: the first directly to respondents above the age of 16, and the second with the consent of parents (9-16 years[1]).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In response to the growing policy debate between online risk and opportunity, the following research aimed to shed light on child attitudes in dealing with online risk. Moreover, a focus was placed on integrating safety concerns with the promotion of a positive uptake of online opportunities for children, through the concept of 'digital resilience'.

Based on the survey administered, this research has first measured levels of digital resilience by analysing the responses adopted by young people to varying online risks. From these results, it has then sought to investigate how children prevent and react to online risk, taking into account:
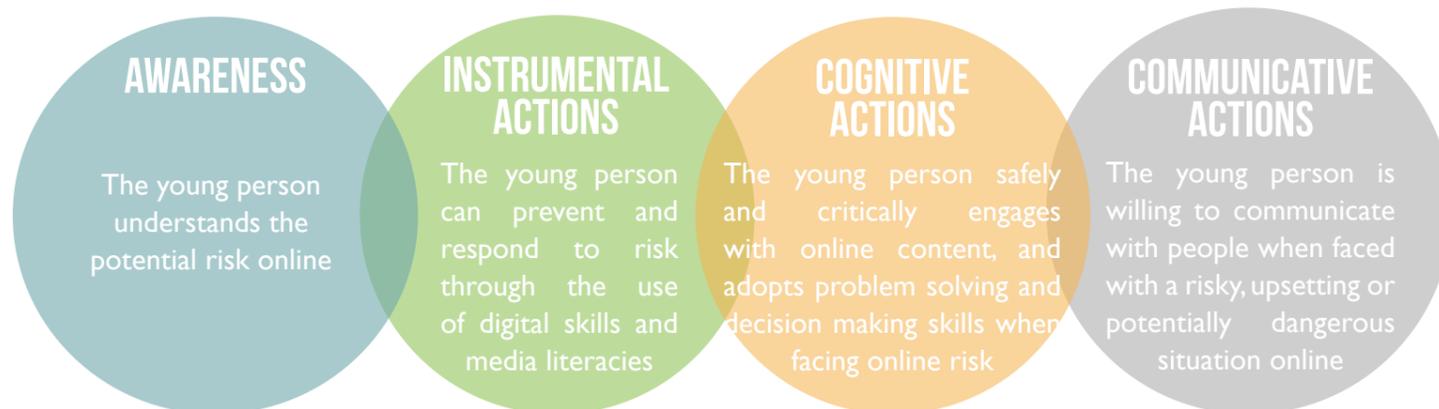
- The impact of awareness and self-regulation in understanding the potential for risk, and in engaging with online content in a resilient manner.

- How children and young people can enhance their levels of resilience through communication and from seeking advice.

- The role of media skills and digital literacies in improving resilience, and the types of responses used by technologically adept young people.

WHAT IS DIGITAL RESILIENCE?

Drawing on the most prevalent scientific literature on resilience, the report presents the fundamental characteristics of the ideal digitally resilient young person, encapsulated by:

AWARENESS
The young person understands the potential risk online

INSTRUMENTAL ACTIONS
The young person can prevent and respond to risk through the use of digital skills and media literacies

COGNITIVE ACTIONS
The young person safely and critically engages with online content, and adopts problem solving and decision making skills when facing online risk

COMMUNICATIVE ACTIONS
The young person is willing to communicate with people when faced with a risky, upsetting or potentially dangerous situation online

The concept of digital resilience includes both a preventive and reactive phase where at first young people are able to self-regulate and avoid online risk and, when faced with risk, are able to employ coping mechanisms in order to respond to the risk or harmful situation in a problem focused manner.

PREVENTIVE RESILIENCE
Resilience strategies employed to avoid risk including instrumental (using technical skills to avoid risk) and behavioural (avoiding risk through specific safety behaviours and online awareness).

REACTIVE RESILIENCE
Resilience strategies adopted after coming into contact with an online risk. These include:

1 Instrumental (using technical skills).
2 Confrontational (confronting the source of the risk).
3 Communicative (seeking advice).
4 Disengagement (ignoring the risk).

[1]In gaining parental permission for the 9-16 year olds a very clear statement of intent was given to parents/guardians in advance, outlining the exact purpose of the study, sharing the exact questions and giving assurances that the data would be treated anonymously.

KEY FINDINGS

Children in Kenya are relatively confident in preventing risk through instrumental actions, with 70% likely to modify privacy settings to avoid unwanted contacts, and 60% likely to have software to avoid unwanted content. Amongst all Kenyan children, 57% had been exposed to inappropriate content. Furthermore, 82% are likely to keep their password completely secret.

Moreover, when responding to risk Kenyan children are also confident using digital skills, with 37% who would change their password when personal information is misused and 41% who would review their privacy settings. 16% of the children surveyed had experienced this risk.

While 20% had experienced cyber-bullying, amongst the top reactions in responding to this risk, 56% of children in Kenya would block and report the person and 27% would ignore the person.

39% of children in Kenya stated they would immediately ignore a stranger who contacted them online, and 21% would reply to his/her request but only allow them to see a limited profile. Amongst all Kenyan children, 46% had experienced this risk.

Young people in Kenya show a critical awareness in their use of the internet, with 81% very careful about what they say or post online, and 62% likely to avoid suspicious material.

In response to a request from an online contact to meet in person 41% of children in Kenya would seek advice from a parent/guardian and 37% would refuse to meet.

Children in Kenya are likely to keep their password completely secret

82%

Children in Kenya would review their privacy settings when personal information is misused

41%

Children in Kenya would block and report a bully

56%

Children in Kenya would immediately ignore a stranger who contacted them online

39%

Children in Kenya are very careful about what they say or post online

81%

Children in Kenya would seek advice from a parent/guardian if an online contact requested to meet in person

41%

THE ONLINE RESILIENT YOUNG PERSON

The graphical representation below illustrates how well children in Kenya fare in comparison to the ideal digitally resilient young person, who would score 3 points in each area of resilience. Each child obtains a score from 0 to 3 depending on how many cognitive, instrumental and communicative strategies he or she is likely to adopt. It also compares the results in relation to the average resilience scores from the MEAR region.

- AVERAGE
- KENYA

COGNITIVE RESILIENCE
— 1.94/3
— 1.80/3

INSTRUMENTAL RESILIENCE
— 1.69/3
— 1.45/3

COMMUNICATIVE RESILIENCE
— 0.80/3
— 0.65/3