



GAME CHANGER

#TakeTheLead:

A Game-Changing Blueprint to
Elevate Online-Wellbeing Among Nordic Youth

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Chapter 1.

About #TakeTheLead

#TakeTheLead is a report and blueprint for youth workers as well as changemakers who want to improve digital spaces and gaming environments for young people in the Nordic region and beyond. Created within the Game Changer project, it provides practical resources, examples of projects implemented in different countries and offers insights into how successful initiatives can be adapted across borders. The report also includes a detailed analysis of each country's resources when it comes to the online wellbeing of young people, mapped out in the so-called Nordic Navigator, and identifies areas for improvement. The analysis is done by a team of Digital Youth Ambassadors who were trained in digital rights and supported in formulating their own, unique perspectives on the subject.

About Game Changer

Children in the Nordic region have an unequivocal right to be protected from harm by peers as well as adults. Equally important is protecting them from adopting harmful behaviors towards others.

The Game Changer aims to do both.

Dating back to September 2023, the project is rooted in an international collaboration between partners Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Iceland with the aim of strengthening young people's digital rights and cyber citizenship by actively countering online harms, rooted in research conducted by project partners. Funded by the Erasmus+ program, the Game Changer combines the academic approach of research and the motivational nature of activism to create evidence-based tools, campaigns and initiatives aimed at youth and those who work with them, with a special focus on boys and young men who run a higher risk of perpetrating digital harm. Moreover, the Game Changer uses gaming as a vehicle that allows youth workers and pedagogues the opportunity to promote the participants' soft skills such as emotional regulation, teamwork, problem solving and communication skills – as well as digital soft skills such as media literacy, privacy awareness and digital civic responsibility.

The Nordic Navigator, the flagship tool created within the project, is built on the vision that much of the harmful behaviour that youth are likely to perpetrate online can be prevented using proven materials that increase their emotional resilience and wellbeing, as well as improve their social and communication skills. When it comes to online abuse of children by adults, that too can be detected and prevented by increasing the awareness among teachers, youth workers and other professionals about digital violence and how to make online spaces safer for youth.

What is the Nordic Navigator?

In short, the Nordic Navigator is an online collection of proven resources from the participating countries that focus on digital well-being. All materials were selected with one clear purpose: to support youth workers in their day-to-day operations with young people and their online lives. The main goal of the Nordic Navigator is to focus on digital abuse and strengthen youth rights online, with particular attention to gendered harassment, abuse and equality. To sharpen this focus, the Navigator includes materials that prioritize digital wellbeing, rather than more general youth wellbeing or social education in the offline realm.

Making of the Navigator

Representatives from each of the four participating countries collected resources on a national level when crafting the Nordic Navigator. Simultaneously, the partners worked together to create a shared system for sorting and coding materials, ensuring the final outcome would be useful across the Nordic region and somewhat comparable between countries.

Early discussions highlighted the need for flexibility: while the Nordic countries share many similarities, they differ in how educational materials are categorized, how topics are framed and the volume of available resources. These differences shaped each partner's approach and led to an evolving coding framework.

Inclusion Criteria

To ensure quality and comparability, all materials in the Nordic Navigator meet the following criteria:

1. Publications must be from 2017 or later.
2. Materials must be in a Nordic language and produced by a Nordic organization, institution or expert.
3. Resources must come from a trusted source (assessed individually).
4. The group targeted by the material must be above the age of 10.
5. Materials must be relevant to at least one of the defined categories.
6. Materials must belong to one of the defined content types, which are:
 - Gendered Abuse & Harassment
 - Doing Gender Online
 - Sexual Abuse & Harassment
 - Sexual Education
 - Cyberbullying

During coding, the need for two additional categories became apparent: Toxicity and Risk Behavior. Furthermore, each resource was classified according to whether it supports prevention, intervention or support in cases of online harm. In practice, this means every resource in the Nordic Navigator helps youth workers facilitate prevention, guide interventions or provide support to victims and/or perpetrators in cases of harmful online behavior.

Lastly, the materials were sorted into different content types, namely Law-Explainers, Reports & Publications, Teaching Materials and General Information. To ease accessibility and make it simpler for youth workers to search for specific formats, the resources were logged as text, video, audio, posters, games, chat services and take-down services.

Youth Involvement

The consortium behind the Game Changer project and #TakeTheLead recognizes the importance of including youth voices. Four Digital Youth Ambassadors from Sweden, Finland, Iceland and Denmark were recruited to the project, who analyzed, compared and approved the resources in the Nordic Navigator.

They also developed their own initiatives to promote digital wellbeing and encourage stakeholders to take action, as described in chapter 3.

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Chapter 2.

How to be a Successful Change-Maker

Creating meaningful and lasting change—particularly in complex areas such as young people’s online wellbeing—requires more than good intentions. It requires a clear understanding of how change happens, who is involved in that process and how different actors influence one another within broader social, technological and political systems.

Digital environments are not shaped by a single group but by a network of actors operating at different levels. Young people, families and frontline practitioners interact with platforms, developers and policymakers, all of whom contribute to the conditions that either enable or prevent harm. Effective change-making therefore depends on recognising these interdependencies and engaging the right stakeholders in the right way.

At the same time, change does not occur in a vacuum. Cultural norms, legal frameworks, technological developments and institutional structures all shape what is possible in a given context. Strategies that succeed in one setting may not translate directly to another, making it essential for change-makers to adapt their approach to the environment in which they operate.

This section provides a structured approach to change-making in the context of digital safety and youth wellbeing. It begins by identifying key stakeholders and their roles, and then introduces practical methods—such as theories of change—that help clarify how specific actions can lead to broader societal or organisational impact. Together, these tools support more strategic, realistic and effective efforts to create safer and more inclusive digital spaces.

Identifying Stakeholders

Coordinated engagement across both community-level and systemic stakeholders is necessary when creating safer digital environments for young people in the Nordic region and beyond. Both groups play a distinct role in shaping online experiences, and effective change depends on aligning their efforts through targeted strategies, accessible knowledge and sustained dialogue.

Community Stakeholders

Community stakeholders, including youth, parents and youth workers, are directly involved in young people's everyday digital lives.

Supporting them with accessible resources, practical tools and opportunities for engagement is essential to strengthening online safety and wellbeing.

Youth

Young people are both primary users of digital spaces and key agents of change within them. Supporting youth involves providing accessible tools and knowledge that help them navigate online environments safely, including understanding digital boundaries, recognising harmful behaviour and accessing support. Special attention should be given to marginalized groups, ensuring inclusive resources that reflect diverse experiences.

Peer-to-peer approaches are particularly effective. Youth-led workshops and initiatives can empower young people to share knowledge, build confidence and actively contribute to shaping safer digital communities. This approach strengthens both individual agency and collective responsibility.

Parents & Guardians

Parents and guardians play a central role in guiding young people through digital environments. While responsibility for online safety is shared across sectors, caregivers are often best positioned to prioritise children's wellbeing and respond to emerging challenges. Supporting parents requires providing clear, practical guidance on digital risks, rights and communication strategies.

This includes helping them recognise harmful behaviour, understand platform dynamics and foster open, trust-based conversations with young people.

Structured engagement formats, such as webinars or information sessions, can further strengthen parents' capacity to support their children effectively.

Youth Workers

Youth workers are key intermediaries in promoting digital safety, inclusion and wellbeing. However, their ability to respond to online challenges is often limited by gaps in training, resources and funding.

Strengthening this group involves improving access to high-quality, practical materials and facilitating knowledge-sharing across contexts. By making relevant tools and approaches more accessible, youth workers can more confidently address issues such as online harassment, exclusion and harmful behaviour, and support young people in navigating digital spaces.

Systemic Stakeholders

Systemic stakeholders—including platforms, developers and policymakers—shape the broader structures within which digital interactions take place. While their priorities may not always align with youth wellbeing, engaging them is essential to achieving sustainable, large-scale change.

Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms play a significant role in shaping online environments, yet many still lack effective systems and incentives for preventing and responding to harmful behaviour. Strengthening engagement with platforms involves advocating for improved moderation tools, clearer reporting mechanisms and meaningful consequences for abuse.

Building constructive relationships with platforms is often complex and requires sustained effort. However, collaboration can support the development of safer, more inclusive digital spaces, informed by research and user experiences. Emphasising accountability and user protection is key to driving change at this level.

Game Developers & Streaming Platforms

Gaming and streaming environments are central to many young people's digital lives, but they can also reproduce harmful behaviours and exclusion. Engaging developers and platform stakeholders involves advocating for design choices, moderation systems and community standards that prioritise safety and inclusivity.

Direct dialogue with industry actors, such as participation in events or consultations, can support the translation of research and user insights into practical improvements. This includes addressing issues such as harassment, discrimination and toxic behaviour, and promoting more inclusive digital cultures.

Policymakers

Last but not least, policymakers play a critical role in shaping the legal and regulatory frameworks that govern digital spaces. However, policy development often lags behind technological change, creating gaps in protection for young people.

Engagement with policymakers should focus on sustained dialogue, evidence-based recommendations and direct input from youth perspectives. Creating opportunities for young people to communicate their experiences and needs to decision-makers is essential.

At the same time, there is a broader responsibility to ensure that legal systems are accessible and actionable.

This includes strengthening awareness of digital rights, addressing regulatory gaps and promoting coherent approaches across jurisdictions. Strategic engagement can contribute to more effective and harmonised policies that better protect young people online.

Theories and Methods of Change

One way to strategize how to make the intended societal or organizational change is through the concept of theories of change. A theory of change explains how certain activities are expected to lead to meaningful and lasting change, outlining the causal pathway between actions, outcomes and impact. Writing this out evokes questions such as:

- Who needs to change for the goal to be reached? Who are the stakeholders?
- What about the activity (activism, coalition-building, training etc.) will influence the stakeholders?

- Which contextual factors (legislation, culture, media environment, political system, organisational norms) might support or block this pathway in a given society or institution?

This exercise encourages realistic project design, avoids vague hopes about impact and highlights how political and cultural differences shape what is possible. It pushes change-makers to adapt their strategies to the environment in which they operate.

Below, the project consortium outlines several theories of change from initiatives that achieved measurable societal or organisational impact. They are intended as inspiration rather than as strict templates for how change must be pursued.

Example 1: Denmark - Change at a national policy level



Long-term goal (impact):

Reduce deepfake/manipulated sexual material (MSM) abuse in Denmark by preventing creation of such material and limiting downstream harm.

Who must change:

Policy-makers (to criminalize production of MSM and enable enforcement) and potential offenders (to stop producing MSM without consent).

Activity:

Produce a position paper that

- (a) defines MSM and how it is produced,
- (b) explains why it is not “fantasy” but materialized, shareable abuse, and
- (c) argues it is technology-facilitated gender-based violence with “silencing effects” — therefore production without consent should be illegal.

Contextual factors:

Existing Danish law where sharing is illegal but production isn't; the rapid growth/industrialization of MSM; and the difficulty of removal once distributed, which strengthens the prevention-at-source logic. Even though the EU has adopted an EU-wide directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, Denmark's opt-out means Denmark does not take part and is not bound by it, so equivalent protection requires national legislation.

Mechanism (how change happens):

Position paper → lawmakers see a concrete, legitimate basis for criminalization → the law signals unacceptability and raises perceived risk → fewer people create MSM.

Example 2: Iceland - Shaping play & youth-led policy



Long-term goal (impact):

To increase bystander action in Iceland against digital violence targeting youth. Our approach combines direct, practical training for youth workers with focused advocacy for stronger protective policies at local and international levels.

Who must change:

The culture within gaming environments and e-sports associations, as well as the policy frameworks managed by institutions governing youth safety.

Activity:

We develop and deliver targeted seminars on toxic behaviour in gaming, built with an interdisciplinary team of violence prevention experts and e-sports coaches. In parallel, we engage directly with key institutions to advocate for necessary policy changes.

Contextual factors:

Gaming events in Iceland have exposed a critical need for education on digital conduct and gender-based violence, which establishes a clear responsibility for organizers of large events. Furthermore, Iceland's close-knit social and professional networks and culture of open dialogue allow for direct engagement with senior officials, with little bureaucracy in the way.

Mechanism (how change happens):

- a) Build a practical training seminar → produce authentic educational videos featuring young gamers → stream them for youth at major events to shift culture on the ground.
- b) Secure meetings with stakeholders → use research-based evidence → focus the conversation on actionable commitments to change policy.

Example 3: Finland - Blending *direct official with public communication*



Long-term goal (impact):

To achieve formal recognition and institutional integration of e-sports within Finnish society, including its acceptance as a legitimate sport across defence, governance, media and taxation systems.

Who must change:

Public institutions (e.g. Finnish Defence Forces, Ministry of Education and Culture, Finnish Olympic Committee), policymakers, and influential gatekeepers in sports governance and media, whose recognition determines the legitimacy of esports.

Activity:

Combine direct advocacy through formal submissions to authorities with strategic public communication, including opinion pieces, press engagement and policy briefs. This dual approach ensures both institutional decision-makers and the wider public are exposed to consistent, evidence-based arguments for recognising esports as a sport.

Contextual factors:

Finland's institutional culture is receptive to structured, written input and expert consultation, and decision-making processes often allow for stakeholder participation. The relatively high level of trust in public institutions, combined with openness to emerging fields such as esports, creates opportunities for influence through formal channels. At the same time, recognition within established sports structures requires navigating traditional definitions of sport and legitimacy.

Mechanism (how change happens):

Direct submissions and engagement with authorities → decision-makers receive concrete, credible proposals → public communication reinforces legitimacy and visibility → multiple institutions begin recognising esports → cumulative institutional acceptance builds momentum across sectors.

Outcome:

E-sports was accepted into the Finnish Defence Forces' Sports School (2017), brought under sports taxation and recognised by the Finnish Olympic Committee (2019), making Finland the first country where an e-sports federation became a full member of a national Olympic committee.

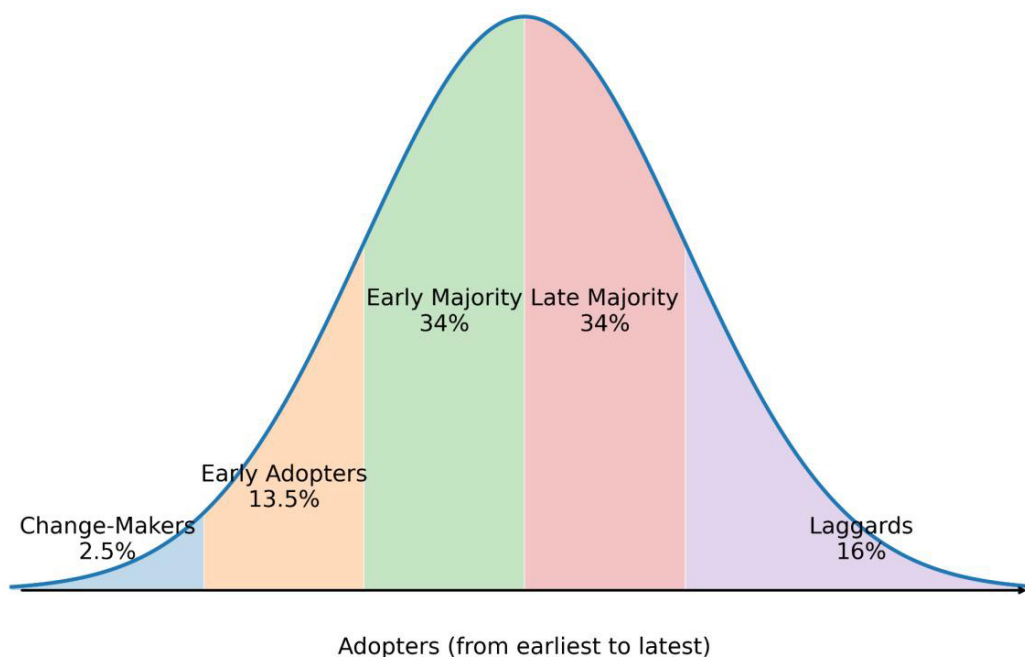
Further recognition followed through inclusion in national ceremonies, legislative processes and sports journalism structures.

Example 4: Sweden Cross-sector, International Change Through Early Adopters



NORDREF operates on the Diffusion of Innovation Model. It rests on the theory that when it comes to any type of societal change, whether it's a new technological innovation or a new social contract, a portion of the population – referred to as early adopters – is open to the change that is being introduced. Witnessing this in turn inspires the early majority to also adopt the change, which subsequently reaches the late majority. As a rule of thumb, there is also a portion of the population that is change resistant, referred to as laggards.

Diffusion of Innovation (Adopter Categories)



A common mistake in work for social change is to spend time and resources on trying to convince the laggards, who are fundamentally opposed to the idea. For example, if the idea is to set an age limit on social media platforms to protect children, it's a waste of time and resources to target people who don't think the internet should exist in the first place.

As a result, NORDREF has aligned itself with organisations that are in the same innovative space when it comes to creating change for a safer, more egalitarian and inclusive online world. By collaborating with fellow change-makers and/or early adopters, NORDREF aims to maximize efficiency and societal impact. To name an example, the organization has worked for years to strengthen support for victims of TFGBV (technologically facilitated gender-based violence) in the Nordic region. To do this, multiple changes had to occur.

Who must change:

Policy-makers, social media platforms, frontline workers and potential perpetrators.

Activity:

On a legislative basis, NORDREF commented on and supported the proposal about image-based sexual abuse that subsequently entered into law in Iceland in 2022. The legal expert who wrote the law also served on NORDREF's Board. Simultaneously, NORDREF had a representative on Meta's Expert Advisory Board for the StopNCII initiative, a tool that helps victims of image-based sexual abuse remove the harmful content from online spaces.

Furthermore, NORDREF researched and mapped out perpetrators of TFGBV in Sweden, Denmark and Iceland to better understand who is behind the problem. Based on those results, the organisation created evidence-based tools to counter it, including workshops for staff of women's shelters and a game for Swedish, Icelandic, Finnish and English-speaking youth that teaches them about consent in online spaces (as a part of the Game Changer project).

Contextual factors:

One of the problems in the field of digital rights is that there are multiple excellent initiatives that help combat image-based sexual abuse and other forms of TFGBV, but they are unknown to those who need them the most. NORDREF has positioned itself as a bridge that carries information across sectors and borders to facilitate and foster change.

Mechanism (how change happens):

Comments and support for legislative proposals, providing expert counseling to tech platforms, perpetrator research, creation of evidence-based tools and reports in multiple languages.

Outcome:

Police and frontline workers across the Nordic region use StopNCII, the frequency of image-based sexual abuse among Icelandic youth has dropped and the new legislation led to a 100% conviction rate of image-based sexual abuse offenders.

Using the Nordic Navigator as a Vehicle for Change

The Nordic Navigator functions as a map to the strengths and weaknesses of each of the participating countries in terms of existing resources to counter various online harms and increase the digital wellbeing of youth.

By comparing the gaps, it becomes apparent where one country suffers from a lack of materials to which another country might have a solution in the form of best practices that could be imported to meet the aforementioned need, thus increasing Nordic collaboration and elevating the field of online wellbeing as a whole. To further facilitate the effective transfer and adaptation of initiatives across countries, key mechanisms for sharing best practices can include:

- Meetings with stakeholders to encourage and coordinate the transfer of initiatives.
- Seminars for structured knowledge sharing and dissemination.
- Workshops for practical, hands-on learning and capacity building.
- Peer-to-peer exchanges and virtual meet-ups to foster direct dialogue and community.
- Support for project applications that formalize and fund the adaptation of best practices.
- Facilitation of international collaborations to co-create and scale effective solutions.

Example Case Study: Successful idea-transfer from Finland to Iceland

This example demonstrates how a Finnish resource addressing toxicity in gaming was transferred and adapted for Icelandic use, focusing particularly on issues such as racial disparities, gender discrimination, queer representation, and accessibility for neurodivergent gamers.

Initiative	Non-Toxic: Initiative for Non-Discriminatory Gaming Culture
Country of Origin	Finland
Target Country	Iceland
Gap Identification	As revealed in the Nordic Navigator, Icelandic guidelines that focus on countering toxicity in gaming tournaments are lacklustre and no certification system exists for organizers
Identification of Best Practices	The Nordic Navigator lists Finland's Non-Toxic initiative as a resource that can fill the gap in the Icelandic material
Relevant Stakeholders	The Esports Federation of Iceland (RÍSÍ) and the Esports Federation of Finland (SEUL)
Activity	Permission was sought from SEUL's developers of the Non-Toxic initiative to import the concept to RÍSÍ in Iceland and create a handbook for organizers of local tournaments and gaming events. Translation and adaptation of the handbook for use by Icelandic tournament organizers ensued, and the outcome can be seen here .

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Chapter 3.

Digital Youth Ambassadors as Changemakers

The four Digital Youth Ambassadors appointed to the Game Changer project work towards strengthening young people's wellbeing in digital environments through diverse but complementary approaches. Their efforts span policy engagement, public dialogue and education, each addressing different dimensions of online life. By connecting youth perspectives with decision-makers, research and public discourse, the Digital Youth Ambassadors help bridge gaps between those shaping digital systems and those most affected by them. The following presentations illustrate their personal contributions and are examples of how youth-led initiatives can contribute to safer, more inclusive and more equitable digital spaces.

Íris Þóra Birgisdóttir, Digital Youth Ambassador of Iceland: AI and Education in Iceland – A Critical Youth Lens

My personal project pertains to Iceland's AI Action Plan, the section Education in Accordance with the Times, subsections 13 and 14. These subsections outline how Iceland plans to integrate AI in the education system, and I intend to inspect these points with a critical lens. This includes a critical analysis of these points in the Action Plan and finding a better path.



To do this, I have been doing research on AI in the education system, what are the positives and what are the negatives, and I plan to then interview the minister that wrote the action plan, Logi Einarsson, to get further information and hopefully share my perspective on what could be done better. I also spoke with the Organisation for Humane Technology for further insights, and will speak with the Youth Council of Samfés to see what youths want from this development in their education and include that in my recommendations for improvement.

Hopefully, my interview with the minister will be public, in a newspaper or on a radio show, so the public will have access to my thoughts and his on the matter. I then plan to write an article about my findings.

The key impact this will make is sharing a youth perspective on how AI should look in our education system, and what can be done better in the existing plan. Beyond my own youth perspective, my conversation with the Youth Council will bring invaluable insight into the wants and needs of youths today, a perspective which is often overlooked and undervalued, and I will bring this into suggestion to improve our plan for AI integration in the Icelandic school system.

My discussion with other stakeholders such as the Organisation for Humane Technology will also further my understanding of the issue and give me more perspectives to share.

The main factor will of course be meeting with the minister, as by sharing this youth perspective, alongside the general concerns that came up during my research and discussions with stakeholders, I might influence a positive change. Especially by having the conversation public, I will be able to get clarification for myself and the public on the many points in the plan that are unclear, and I will be able to inform both the minister and the general public on what a positive AI integration in the education system should involve. After this conversation, my article will make the information that came up even more accessible to the public, so they may better inform themselves on the topic and hopefully take part in pushing AI integration in a positive direction. AI is changing the world, which might be daunting as we know so little about what that will mean for us, but my personal project will bridge the gap between politics and schools, between adults and youths, and provide much needed clarity on this pressing issue.

Ella Cancara, Digital Youth Ambassador of Finland: Influencing Policy through Public Dialogue

Gender-based online violence affects girls and women's opportunities to participate in modern society. It limits democratic participation, professional growth and participation in hobbies online; in other words, all parts of daily life. Because women and girls deserve to participate in online life without fear of violence, it is important to discuss the issue and look for solutions in global conversation forums such as The European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG) conference.



The EuroDIG is a yearly conference that takes place in rotating cities and online. According to its website it is “a platform for discussion and the exchange of ideas on emerging issues and challenges concerning the Internet”. It facilitates multistakeholder cooperation and dialogue and the European Commission has long been a partner for the event. The 2026 conference's theme is “European Voices for the Future of the Internet – Celebrating 20 Years of .eu and the Beginning of a New Internet Governance Era”.

In 2026 Gender-based online violence is on the agenda of the conference, most prominently in the “Advancing Gender Equality in the Digital Public Sphere: Tackling Online Violence and AI-Discrimination” workshop. As my personal project, I will participate in the organization of this workshop and participate in the session in person and speak publicly about the Game Changer project's themes and targets.

What is particularly meaningful about this opportunity is the main output of the conference. Each session will be summarized into a message that relates European Internet governance policy and proposes goals and activities that can be initiated after EuroDIG. These will be presented to the global Internet Governance Forum that is convened by the United Nations. This means that by participating in organizing the session, I will have the chance to directly affect what type of themes and topics the workshop will focus on, which will be reflected in the session message as well. By attending the event, I will also have a chance to contribute to the conversation in other sessions in the event.

Liv Blach Skov, Digital Youth Ambassador of Denmark: Digital structures are social structures: Educating for equality in a digital age

My personal project as the NDYA of Denmark is the development of a digital course programme focusing on the intersection of technology, democracy, and intersectional feminism. It is driven by both my professional experience teaching youth about norm critique and digital democratic citizenship, and my longstanding engagement in feminist activism.



We are at a critical moment. Women’s rights are being rolled back globally. Hate toward LGBTQIA+ communities is rising across the Nordic countries. In Denmark, one in five men under the age of 50 believes that equality has “gone too far.” At the same time, AI and digital media are not neutral tools, they are accelerating, amplifying, and reshaping these dynamics in ways we are only beginning to understand.

This project responds to that urgency. It seeks to equip Danish youth with the critical tools needed to navigate and challenge the digital systems that shape their realities. Through education, it brings feminist theory and critical thinking into the classroom as essential, practical tools for democratic participation.

The course programme is designed for social studies (A- and B-level) in Danish upper secondary schools (gymnasiums). It will be freely accessible online via Zonta Denmark’s feminist platform Goal5 (<https://goalfive.org/>) from this summer. Structured into five modules, the programme guides students through key democratic and societal challenges in the digital age, including algorithmic polarization, radicalization, echo chambers, and AI generated deepfakes, while highlighting how these dynamics disproportionately affect marginalized groups.

Combining influential social and political theorists such as Jürgen Habermas and Pierre Bourdieu with key feminist thinkers including Kimberlé Crenshaw, Simone de Beauvoir, Bell Hooks and Laura Bates, the programme bridges classical theory and contemporary realities.

Its purpose is not only to expose systems of oppression and structural inequality, but to empower students to question, resist, and transform them.

At its core, the project is built on a dual commitment. It creates space for minoritized students to see their experiences reflected and validated without positioning them as objects of study. This includes integrating diverse perspectives, addressing both Danish and international legal frameworks (such as Section 266b and the Human Rights Convention), and providing teachers with a digital handbook to support thoughtful, norm-critical facilitation of the course program. Simultaneously, the programme challenges majority students to engage with inequalities that may not directly affect them. It calls on them to take responsibility as active bystanders and democratic actors in confronting discrimination and hate, particularly in digital spaces.

Ultimately, this project is about agency. By uncovering the invisible structures that shape our digital and social worlds, it empowers young people not only to understand these systems, but to give them resources to call on action and change.

Arvid Isaksson, Digital Youth Ambassador of Sweden: Podcast

My personal project was to create a 4-episode podcast series in collaboration with my fellow Digital Youth Ambassadors where we explore the challenges of digital life through a variety of topics such as AI, social justice, and algorithms. While our primary audience is young people, the show is equally valuable for older generations who wish to understand the complexities of the online world. Our goal is to inspire open conversations about what happens online both the good and the bad.



By encouraging young people to share their experiences, we can help those in power gain a deeper understanding of the digital landscape. We want to normalize these discussions, as the internet is a space where young people are most active. Our aim is to learn how to navigate this world better and utilize its positive features including AI to their full potential.

To ensure our discussions are grounded, we will base our episodes on facts, recent studies, and insights from the Nordic Navigator. Because these subjects can be sensitive, it is vital to have reliable data to back up our perspectives.

Ultimately, this podcast is about transparency, encouraging responsibility, and empowering everyone to feel welcome and safe on the internet.

Insights from Nordic Navigator

One of the main goals of the Game Changer initiative was to task the Digital Youth Ambassadors with a critical, country-by-country review of the Nordic Navigator, aimed at identifying systemic gaps and spotlighting the most successful initiatives enabling the Nordic region to #TaketheLead globally in terms of young people's digital rights.

The Gaps in Individual Countries in the Nordic Navigator

Finland:

Analysis by Digital Youth Ambassador, Ella Cancara:

“Finland’s resources in the Nordic Navigator are lacking in some key aspects. While the angle of prevention and victim support are available, there is an utter lack of perpetrator support in Finland’s resources. This is concerning, because perpetrators require intervention and support as well to understand their actions and make a change. More materials on victim intervention are also needed, as many victims of violence online might not understand that what they have experienced, or are being subjected to, violates their rights and that support is available.

According to the quantitative analysis there are only three resources in Finland’s Nordic Navigator resources that are listed as intersectional. Similar to the offline world, people’s background and inherent characteristics have an effect on the scope and types of violence and harassment they face in online spaces. Thus, it is important to consider online abuse from a more intersectional perspective.

In the Finnish context, having more resources related to racism is important, as racism continues to be a problem in Finnish society.

For example, intervention materials that address micro-aggressions in online spaces could be useful for both victims and potential perpetrators. Another intersectional perspective that would be beneficial to consider is ableism and specifically neurodivergence, as neurodivergent individuals are more likely to be both perpetrators and victims of digital harms, and are less likely to recognize when they have been victimized.

Finland's resources do not have any law explainers. This is problematic, because in Finnish law, online violence is criminalized through penal codes like stalking and defamation.

However if an individual, especially a young person, looks at Finnish criminal law, it might seem to them like online violence isn't illegal.

Law explainers that illustrate how Finnish law frames online violence through other penal codes could help make this clear. Furthermore, Finland's resources are strongly text-based.

Though there are a few resources in the form of games, video, audio, chat- and takedown services, Finnish material could become more accessible and more appealing to youth if other formats were explored and taken advantage of in more innovative ways.

In Finland's material, the categories of gendered abuse and harassment as well as cyberbullying are covered most extensively. While sexual education is addressed in three resources, considering how an increasing amount of young people are having sexual encounters online, it would be useful to add to this category. More alarmingly, the categories doing gender online, sexual abuse and harassment and toxicity aren't covered at all in the material from Finland"

Sweden:

Analysis by Digital Youth Ambassador, Arvid Roos Isaksson:

"I would like to start by saying that there are many good articles and other tools for Swedish youth in the Nordic Navigator, but it can still be improved. Looking at the types of format the help is provided in (text/video/audio), there is an overwhelming amount of articles and text-based materials. Increasing the amount of videos and audio resources would be good from an accessibility standpoint. For example, only 11 of 141 resources are audio in the Swedish material of the Nordic Navigator.

There are also many resources that consist of adults talking about youth with regard to sex and consent. This is something I think should be reimaged, as young people would be more open to peer education about sex. It would be better if sexual education was made by young adults for youth.

With regard to intersectionality, there are big gaps in the Swedish resources. For example, only 6 out of 141 sources address being LGBTQ+ in online spaces.

Furthermore, there is too little perpetrator support when compared to other categories, especially considering the fact that some perpetrators are also victims.

There is only one article regarding classism. I know this is not as prevalent as the other categories of digital harms, but it still can and does affect people. Just because it is not the main form of online discrimination does not mean it should be neglected or heavily underrepresented.”

Iceland:

Analysis by Digital Youth Ambassador, Íris Þóra Birgisdóttir:

“Perpetrator support resources are lacking, especially as those who perpetrate online harms are likely to be themselves traumatized or were victims in the past. Risk-behavior materials could also be improved, as being able to spot risk-behavior is incredibly important in any kind of abuse prevention. More resources with a focus on gendered abuse and harassment are also needed, as that is one of the biggest issues surrounding online toxicity, sexual abuse and cyberbullying.

More intersectional resources are needed in Iceland, especially considering the fact that the country has an increasing number of immigrants from non-European backgrounds who are being subjected to racist abuse and discrimination online. Furthermore, discussions of sexual violence in relation to people of colour is extremely important due to the specific ways they are subjected to sexual violence and how it overlaps with racism.

A further inspection of ableism is also needed due to the general lack of education and resources on disability in Iceland. More video/audio resources are needed, they are often more accessible and engaging. Written resources should also have a read-aloud option which would make them more accessible for people with learning disabilities, and they should also have options to translate to other languages.

More resources are needed for young adults. Just because a person is 18+ does not mean they understand, or are able, to navigate online spaces and abuse. In general, making more reliable, fact-checked reports and publications more accessible to young people in Iceland is needed.”

Denmark:

Analysis by Digital Youth Ambassador, Liv Blach Skov:

“Denmark is generally missing resources that target a specific area of identity markers and intersections in one and the same person. Most resources target a ‘standard’ person, girl or boy as well as the problematic structures around them. We know that minoritized identity markers which intersect create different issues and therefore need different solutions and approaches than what might be considered universal. This lack of intersectionality applies to most of the Danish resources, even though we know that hate towards for example the LGBTQ+ community is rising in the Nordic region.

Furthermore, we have no digital resources on sexual education. Denmark has a lot of offline content related to sexual education, but free and accessible digital material that is not behind a paywall could secure a further reach. Because we know sexual education is a sensitive subject for youth, making digital versions could make it more accessible – especially for people falling out of the normative cis-gender, straight category, who might not be comfortable asking an adult or in class.

Concerning the strengthening of youth rights in the digital world, we don’t have a single digital resource. Denmark could put some effort into making digital law explainers understandable for youth and for the public (especially the Danish paragraph 266b). I believe the effort in strengthening youths rights is intertwined with informing youth about their rights. Optimally, these law explainers could focus on both the victim’s right to report an assault, but just as much on the possibility of reporting on behalf of others, if you witness hate or assault towards others in public online spaces. This focus would imply that it is everyone’s business to target hate and discrimination towards minority groups.

Most of my identified gaps concern the lack of focus and protection of vulnerable/minoritized youth. But perpetrators are a group of vulnerable youth too. Denmark has very few resources dealing with perpetrator intervention, support and prevention. This might be because it is still seen as a taboo.”

Country-Specific Comparison Gaps

Overall, our Digital Youth Ambassador's analyses conclude that all countries included in the Nordic Navigator have a gap in material concerning perpetrator support and Finland specifically doesn't address the perpetrator perspective at all. Finland also lacks victim intervention materials while Iceland's resources call for more victim support and materials targeted to young adults. All countries could also take intersectionality more into account.

Regarding subjects, Finland and Denmark could benefit from law-explainers similar to those found in Sweden and Iceland's materials. More format variety beyond text is also called for.

Increasing video and audio-based resources would make learning about non-toxic online culture more accessible, engaging and easy. Icelandic resources would benefit from more reports as well as more academic resources.

Sweden and Denmark's materials would ideally include more material about sexuality and sexual encounters online. Swedish materials already address this topic, but it could be handled in a way that makes it more relatable to a target audience of young adults. Icelandic resources have a clear gap in addressing risk behaviour online.

The Strengths of Individual Countries

Finland:

The Nordic Navigator showcases how Finland has developed numerous outstanding initiatives addressing digital harms in gaming, online safety, and gender-based violence, combining research, education, reporting mechanisms and support services.

A large-scale, multi-year project has focused on promoting non-discriminatory and harassment-free gaming cultures. Its outputs include a national study of young gamers, practical exercises for players, introductory guides to inclusive gaming, and materials for parents. The findings highlight the prevalence of hate speech and harassment in gaming environments, with a particularly concerning insight being that many young people perceive the responsibility for addressing abuse as lying with the target rather than the perpetrator.

In parallel, Finland has established accessible reporting mechanisms for online sexual exploitation and abuse, allowing individuals of all ages to submit tips, including anonymously. These reports are processed through international cooperation networks and forwarded to law enforcement when necessary.

Preventive education is also a key component. Youth-facing materials provide guidance on topics such as sharing intimate images, including both risk awareness and practical steps to take if boundaries are violated. These resources are often complemented by simplified-language versions to ensure accessibility.

Educational tools further address structural issues within digital culture, including racism, colonialism and discriminatory norms in gaming. These materials support educators through conversation prompts, background information and exercises designed to foster critical media literacy and anti-racist perspectives.

Support services for victims of digital violence are also well developed, offering comprehensive guidance on recognising abuse, collecting evidence, seeking legal protection, and building personal safety strategies, alongside access to professional and peer support. Finally, targeted outreach services provide low-threshold, anonymous support channels for young people—particularly boys and young men—through multiple communication platforms, offering guidance on everyday challenges, relationships and online experiences.

Sweden:

Sweden has developed a comprehensive ecosystem of initiatives aimed at improving online safety for young people, combining education, victim support, legal literacy, accessibility-focused interventions and rights-based advocacy.

A central component is a broad set of educational resources designed to promote safer online environments for youth. These include tools, workshops and guidance materials tailored to children, teachers, youth workers and parents, supporting digital wellbeing, responsible behaviour and prevention of online harm.

Support for victims of digital violations is also well developed. Accessible online platforms provide information on different forms of online abuse, practical guidance on how to respond, tools for reporting harmful content across major platforms, and step-by-step instructions for documenting evidence and reporting crimes to authorities. These resources are designed for users of all ages and aim to lower the threshold for seeking help.

Legal literacy initiatives play an important role in empowering young people. Interactive materials—such as case-based exercises, quizzes and multimedia content—help youth understand their rights in digital contexts, including harassment, threats, non-consensual image sharing and defamation.

These resources translate complex legal frameworks into accessible, real-life scenarios. Targeted interventions have also been developed to ensure inclusion and accessibility. This includes adapted materials for people with disabilities, such as audiovisual content with sign language and audio description, as well as interactive formats like web-based games that teach safe behaviour in online environments.

Within gaming culture, intersectional approaches are emphasised. Resources and campaigns address the experiences of diverse groups, including neurodivergent youth, girls and LGBTQI+ youth, aiming to create more inclusive and respectful digital communities.

In parallel, child protection efforts are supported through educational materials, reporting mechanisms and direct support services, including helplines and chat functions for young people. These initiatives are often connected to broader systems for identifying and removing illegal content, working in cooperation with authorities and international networks.

Denmark:

When Denmark's resources are at their best, they offer a strong range of digital resources that address young people's online lives in a nuanced, accessible, and preventive way. A key strength is the focus on making concerns manageable through concrete guidance that helps adults and youth workers tackle risk without panic or moral judgement, while also contributing to breaking taboos around discussing potential harmful behaviour.

Many resources emphasise dialogue over interrogation, encouraging curiosity, openness, and trust between youth and adults as a way to prevent secrecy and isolation online.

There is also a clear commitment to meeting young people where they already are, both digitally and socially, by recognising online spaces such as gaming communities as potential sources of positive relationships rather than inherent risks.

Victim support is handled in a highly accessible and validating manner, with youth-friendly language and low thresholds for seeking help, alongside an important inclusion of perpetrator reflection and intervention. Finally, several resources actively involve young people in shaping policies and preventive strategies, particularly around digital bullying, taking their lived experiences seriously. Overall, these approaches combine prevention, support, and education in a way that balances care, accountability, and respect for young people's agency.

Iceland:

Icelanders have developed various resources addressing online violence, with a particular emphasis on prevention, education and accessibility. A wide range of materials focus on issues such as gender-based and sexual violence, cyberbullying, toxic behaviour and identity formation in digital spaces.

A defining feature of the Icelandic approach is its emphasis on prevention as a primary strategy. Many resources are designed to provide general knowledge and early intervention tools, equipping users with the understanding needed to recognise and respond to harmful behaviour before it escalates.

Public authorities play a significant role in producing and supporting these materials, reflecting a high level of institutional engagement with online safety. At the same time, civil society organisations contribute extensively, creating a diverse landscape of resources that combine policy-driven perspectives with community-based knowledge and expertise.

Educational content forms a central pillar of the ecosystem. Many resources are designed to translate complex topics into accessible formats, making them understandable and relevant for a broad audience.

This includes a strong focus on children and young people, with materials that are tailored to be engaging, relatable and age-appropriate.

In terms of thematic focus, issues related to gender identity and sexual orientation are well represented, including homophobia, transphobia and broader questions of inclusion and acceptance. While intersectionality is not consistently embedded across all materials, the visibility of queer perspectives represents an important dimension of the overall approach.

Overall, Icelandic resources are characterised by their ability to address a wide range of online harms in a structured and accessible manner, combining depth of information with user-friendly presentation to support learning and awareness across different age groups.

Conclusion: What Needs to Change for the Nordic Region to #TakeTheLead?

Across the Nordic region, a strong and coherent foundation has been established for addressing young people's online wellbeing. The countries demonstrate a shared commitment to preventive education, accessible support systems and cross-sector collaboration, with well-developed resources that help young people, caregivers and professionals navigate digital environments and respond to harm.

Low-threshold reporting mechanisms, guidance platforms and educational tools collectively contribute to a system that prioritises both awareness and action.

At the same time, the analysis highlights systemic gaps that cut across all four countries, pointing to areas where further development is needed to achieve a more comprehensive and effective approach.

A key gap is the limited focus on perpetrator intervention and support. While victim support and prevention are well represented, there is comparatively little emphasis on addressing harmful behaviour at its source. This represents a critical missing component, as sustainable prevention requires engaging those who perpetrate harm, many of whom may themselves be vulnerable or lack the tools to understand and change their behaviour.

Another cross-cutting challenge is the lack of consistent intersectional approaches. Although some countries address specific groups and forms of discrimination, resources often fail to reflect how multiple identity factors—such as gender, race, disability and sexuality—interact to shape experiences of online harm. This limits the relevance and effectiveness of interventions for those most at risk.

The analysis also points to gaps in legal literacy and rights awareness, particularly in making existing legislation understandable and actionable for young people. Without accessible explanations of how laws apply to digital harms, there is a risk that rights remain theoretical rather than practically usable.

In terms of accessibility and engagement, there is a clear need to diversify formats. Many resources remain heavily text-based, which can limit reach and usability. Expanding the use of audio, video and interactive formats would strengthen accessibility and better align with how young people engage with information.

Finally, several thematic areas remain underdeveloped, including sexual education in digital contexts, risk behaviour awareness and emerging forms of online harm. There is also a need to extend resources beyond younger audiences to include young adults, who continue to navigate digital risks without sufficient support.

Taken together, the Nordic region demonstrates a strong and forward-looking model, but one that would benefit from a more holistic and inclusive approach. Strengthening perpetrator-focused interventions, embedding intersectionality, improving legal accessibility and diversifying formats are key priorities for future development.

Addressing these gaps will be essential to ensure that existing strengths translate into more equitable, effective and sustainable outcomes for all young people in digital spaces – and can literally change the game.

NORDREF

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