

S³ — STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL WELLBEING

STUDY GUIDE

AGENDA

Deliberating upon the Influence of Digital Platforms, Public Figures and Social Movements on Mental Wellbeing, Identity Formation and Societal Values among Youth

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01 — UNDERSTANDING THE AGENDA

The digital environment has become an important part of how young people:

- communicate;
- learn;
- socialise;
- form communities;
- express identity;
- encounter information;
- participate in social movements;
- and understand social norms.

This makes digital platforms fundamentally different from conventional media.

Young people are not merely **audiences**.

They are simultaneously:

consumers + creators + participants + communities + political actors.

The agenda therefore asks how digital environments influence three interconnected dimensions of youth development:

MENTAL WELLBEING

How digital experiences influence emotional and psychological wellbeing.

IDENTITY FORMATION

How young people understand themselves and their place within society.

SOCIETAL VALUES

How repeated exposure to ideas, behaviours and communities influences collective norms and attitudes.

02 — THE EVIDENCE IS NOT SIMPLY “SOCIAL MEDIA = BAD”

A central principle of this agenda is that the relationship between digital technology and youth wellbeing is **complex**.

WHO's 2025 policy brief states that evidence concerning technology use and young people's wellbeing is mixed, with some online activities producing both positive and negative effects. It also identifies a **bidirectional relationship**: digital behaviour can influence mental health, while existing mental-health difficulties can also influence patterns of technology use.

Therefore, the committee should distinguish between:

technology itself

and

how technology is designed, accessed and experienced.

The relevant questions include:

- What content is being consumed?
- Why is it being recommended?
- How frequently is it encountered?
- What social environment surrounds it?
- Who is particularly vulnerable?
- What protective factors exist?

03 — ADOLESCENCE AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Adolescence is a particularly important developmental period.

WHO describes adolescence as a formative stage involving significant physical, emotional and social changes. It identifies social relationships, supportive environments and socio-emotional development as important components of adolescent wellbeing.

During this period, young people may explore:

- personal values;
- cultural identity;
- friendships;
- interests;
- beliefs;

- aspirations;
- social roles;
- and belonging.

Digital platforms increasingly form part of that exploration.

04 — DIGITAL SOCIALISATION

Traditionally, socialisation occurred primarily through:

- family;
- school;
- friends;
- religious and cultural institutions;
- community;
- and traditional media.

Digital platforms have added another major social environment.

A young person may now encounter:

friends

→ **creators**

→ **online communities**

→ **algorithmically recommended content**

→ **social movements**

→ **public figures**

→ **global cultural influences**

within the same digital environment.

This creates unprecedented opportunities for connection while also increasing exposure to information and social pressures.

05 — ONLINE AND OFFLINE IDENTITY

Young people can maintain multiple dimensions of identity online and offline.

Digital spaces allow individuals to:

- experiment with self-expression;
- discover communities;
- communicate interests;
- participate in cultural conversations;
- and connect with people beyond geographic boundaries.

However, online self-presentation can also create pressure to construct a particular version of oneself.

This raises an important question:

Does the digital environment merely reflect identity, or does it actively shape it?

The answer is likely to involve both.

06 — DIGITAL PLATFORMS AS SYSTEMS

A digital platform is not simply a neutral space where users upload content.

Modern platforms may incorporate:

- recommendation algorithms;
- personalised feeds;
- automated ranking;
- notifications;
- engagement metrics;
- targeted advertising;
- content moderation systems;
- and data-driven personalisation.

These systems influence **what users encounter and how frequently they encounter it.**

WHO identifies digital platform design, persuasive strategies, algorithmic personalisation and the use of personal data as important components of the digital determinants of young people's mental health.

07 — ALGORITHMIC RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation systems are designed to predict what content a user may find relevant or engaging.

They can increase:

- discovery;
- personalisation;
- community formation;
- access to educational material;
- and exposure to diverse perspectives.

However, recommendation systems can also repeatedly expose users to particular themes.

This creates the possibility of:

CONTENT AMPLIFICATION

Content receiving strong engagement may be distributed to larger audiences.

REPETITIVE EXPOSURE

Users may repeatedly encounter similar content.

FILTERING

Some information may become less visible because it does not align with predicted interests.

REINFORCEMENT

Existing interests or attitudes may become increasingly prominent.

08 — ENGAGEMENT-DRIVEN DESIGN

Many platforms compete for users' attention.

Features may include:

- personalised feeds;
- notifications;
- continuous content streams;
- recommendations;
- social feedback;
- and engagement indicators.

The policy question is not whether engagement is inherently harmful.

It is:

When does a design optimised for engagement become incompatible with the wellbeing of younger users?

WHO's current work on digital environments specifically includes promoting safer and more responsible digital platform design.

09 — MENTAL WELLBEING

Mental wellbeing encompasses more than the absence of mental illness.

It includes dimensions such as:

- emotional wellbeing;
- social connection;
- resilience;
- sense of belonging;
- psychological safety;
- and the ability to function effectively.

WHO estimates that **one in seven adolescents aged 10–19 globally experiences a mental disorder**, demonstrating the importance of creating supportive environments during adolescence.

Digital environments therefore need to be considered as **one determinant among many**, rather than treated as the sole cause of youth mental-health outcomes.

10 — POSITIVE DIGITAL EFFECTS

Digital platforms can provide meaningful benefits.

SOCIAL CONNECTION

Young people can maintain relationships across distance.

COMMUNITY

Individuals can find communities around:

- culture;
- interests;
- education;
- disability;
- language;
- hobbies;
- and social causes.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Digital platforms can provide educational and health information.

CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Young people can produce:

- art;
- music;
- writing;
- video;
- journalism;
- and educational content.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Digital spaces can facilitate awareness campaigns and social mobilisation.

WHO's evidence review recognises that digital technologies can have both positive and negative consequences for young people's wellbeing.

11 — POTENTIAL RISKS TO WELLBEING

Potential risks include:

- problematic patterns of use;
- cyberbullying;
- social comparison;
- exposure to harmful content;
- online harassment;
- misinformation;
- discrimination;
- social exclusion;
- sleep disruption;
- and pressure surrounding online identity.

These risks are not experienced equally.

WHO's 2025 policy brief notes that more vulnerable young people can experience negative digital effects disproportionately.

12 — PROBLEMATIC SOCIAL MEDIA USE

WHO Europe's Health Behaviour in School-aged Children data found that the proportion of adolescents showing signs of problematic social-media behaviour increased from **7% in 2018 to 11% in 2022** across the surveyed countries and regions. The study included almost 280,000 young people aged 11, 13 and 15.

Problematic use is different from simply:

“using social media frequently.”

The concern is whether patterns of use involve:

- difficulty controlling use;
 - interference with daily activities;
 - negative consequences;
 - or displacement of important offline activities.
-

13 — DIGITAL CONNECTION VS DIGITAL DEPENDENCE

The committee should distinguish:

HEALTHY CONNECTION

Digital interaction complements offline relationships.

PROBLEMATIC USE

Digital engagement begins interfering with wellbeing or daily functioning.

Therefore, policy should not automatically pursue:

“less screen time.”

It should consider:

“healthier digital environments and healthier patterns of engagement.”

14 — SLEEP AND DIGITAL WELLBEING

Digital habits can influence sleep through:

- late-night engagement;
- notifications;
- extended content consumption;
- and disruption of regular routines.

WHO Europe's 2024 reporting identified associations between problematic social-media use and sleep-related outcomes among adolescents.

The policy challenge is determining how:

- platform design;
- education;
- family environments;
- school policy;
- and individual behaviour

can interact to support healthier digital routines.

15 — PUBLIC FIGURES

Public figures can include:

- entertainers;
- athletes;
- actors;
- musicians;
- creators;
- entrepreneurs;
- activists;
- political figures;
- and other highly visible personalities.

Their influence can extend beyond entertainment.

Young audiences may encounter public figures as:

role models

sources of information

aspirational figures

cultural symbols

activists

and

commercial endorsers.

16 — ROLE MODELLING

Public figures can influence social norms through repeated representation of:

- behaviours;

- values;
- lifestyles;
- political positions;
- cultural practices;
- and social causes.

This does not mean young people simply copy public figures.

Instead, public figures can contribute to the broader environment from which young people form perceptions about:

what is normal, desirable, successful or socially acceptable.

17 — PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Digital media can create one-sided relationships in which audiences develop a sense of familiarity with public figures.

These are commonly described as **parasocial relationships**.

They can have positive dimensions:

- inspiration;
- companionship;
- community;
- motivation;
- and emotional connection.

But they can also create challenges when audiences:

- overestimate their personal relationship with a public figure;
 - treat the figure's statements as authoritative;
 - or attach significant elements of identity to the figure.
-

18 — AUTHENTICITY AND RELATABILITY

Influencer culture frequently relies on perceived authenticity.

Public figures may communicate through:

- informal videos;
- personal stories;
- behind-the-scenes content;
- direct audience interaction;
- livestreams;
- and personal disclosures.

This can make communication more relatable.

However, audiences may not always distinguish between:

personal expression

and

strategic content production.

This becomes especially significant when commercial interests are involved.

19 — COMMERCIAL INFLUENCE

Digital creators may simultaneously function as:

- entertainers;
- advertisers;
- entrepreneurs;
- commentators;
- and community leaders.

Sponsored content can therefore blur the boundary between:

personal recommendation

and

commercial communication.

This raises questions concerning:

- disclosure;
- advertising standards;
- transparency;
- youth-targeted marketing;

- and platform responsibility.
-

20 — PUBLIC FIGURES AND MENTAL-HEALTH COMMUNICATION

Public figures can also play a constructive role in communicating about mental wellbeing.

They can:

- reduce stigma;
- encourage help-seeking;
- share evidence-based information;
- promote supportive communities;
- and direct audiences towards appropriate services.

WHO has specifically explored principles for developing developmentally appropriate online mental-health content for young people, emphasising content that is emotionally relevant, inclusive and evidence-based.

The challenge is ensuring that **visibility does not substitute for professional expertise**.

21 — SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Digital platforms have transformed how social movements:

- organise;
- communicate;
- recruit participants;
- document events;
- distribute information;
- and construct collective identities.

Young people can participate in social movements without being physically present in the same location.

This has expanded the possibilities for:

DIGITAL ACTIVISM

PEER-TO-PEER MOBILISATION

GLOBAL CAMPAIGNS

YOUTH ADVOCACY

COMMUNITY BUILDING

22 — DIGITAL ACTIVISM

Digital activism can:

- amplify underrepresented voices;
- connect local movements with international audiences;
- facilitate rapid information sharing;
- mobilise volunteers;
- and increase visibility of social issues.

UNESCO's youth-focused Media and Information Literacy programmes explicitly support youth participation in addressing disinformation, hate speech and emerging challenges in digital information environments.

23 — COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Social movements can provide young people with a sense of:

- belonging;
- purpose;
- solidarity;
- community;
- and collective action.

A movement can transform:

“I care about this issue”

into

“We are working together to change this issue.”

This can strengthen civic engagement.

However, strong group identities can also produce **in-group/out-group dynamics**, particularly where online discussions become highly polarised.

24 — POLARISATION

Digital platforms can expose users to highly conflicting political and social viewpoints.

Polarisation can be intensified by:

- emotionally charged content;
- repeated exposure to one-sided narratives;
- hostile interactions;
- misinformation;
- disinformation;
- and social incentives rewarding outrage.

The challenge is not to eliminate disagreement.

Democratic societies require disagreement.

The challenge is to ensure that disagreement does not become:

dehumanisation + harassment + misinformation + social fragmentation.

25 — MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

MISINFORMATION

False or inaccurate information shared without necessarily intending to deceive.

DISINFORMATION

False or manipulated information deliberately created or distributed to deceive.

Both can affect:

- political participation;
- public health;
- social trust;
- identity;
- and perceptions of reality.

UNESCO reports that **two-thirds of digital content creators surveyed did not systematically fact-check information before sharing it**, highlighting the importance of media and information literacy for creators as well as audiences.

26 — HATE SPEECH AND SOCIAL VALUES

Digital environments can facilitate exposure to:

- hate speech;
- discrimination;
- stereotypes;
- extremist narratives;
- harassment;
- and exclusion.

Repeated exposure may influence perceptions of what constitutes acceptable speech or behaviour.

This creates a tension between:

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

and

PROTECTION FROM HARM

The objective should not be to suppress legitimate disagreement.

Instead, policy should distinguish legitimate expression from unlawful or harmful conduct while preserving fundamental rights.

27 — MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

One of the most important policy tools in this agenda is:

MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY — MIL

MIL enables young people to critically evaluate:

- sources;
- claims;
- images;
- videos;
- algorithms;
- advertisements;
- influencers;
- and online narratives.

UNESCO describes MIL as requiring more than technical digital skills: it involves critical thinking, ethical awareness and the ability to navigate misinformation and evolving digital technologies.

28 — DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Digital citizenship involves understanding how to:

- participate responsibly online;
- respect others;
- protect privacy;
- evaluate information;
- understand digital rights;
- recognise manipulation;
- and contribute constructively to online communities.

UNESCO has increasingly connected youth participation with media and information literacy, including peer education and youth-led initiatives.

29 — CONTENT CREATORS AS INFORMATION ACTORS

Creators increasingly occupy a space between:

media

and

individual communication.

UNESCO's 2024 global study of **500 influencers across 45 countries** found significant challenges around assessing information credibility and reported strong demand among creators for Media and Information Literacy training.

This creates a potential policy model:

CREATOR LITERACY

Training creators to:

- verify information;
 - identify credible sources;
 - understand platform dynamics;
 - disclose commercial relationships;
 - and communicate responsibly.
-

30 — ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND YOUTH

AI is becoming integrated into young people's digital environments.

Potential applications include:

- education;
- content creation;
- entertainment;
- communication;
- recommendation;
- search;
- and personalised digital experiences.

UNESCO reports that **80% of young people aged 10–24 surveyed in its cited data use AI tools and services multiple times a day.**

This creates new concerns around:

- synthetic media;
 - misinformation;
 - algorithmic bias;
 - identity;
 - privacy;
 - and authenticity.
-

31 — SYNTHETIC MEDIA AND IDENTITY

AI-generated or manipulated media can complicate the distinction between:

real

and

artificial.

Young people may increasingly encounter:

- synthetic images;
- AI-generated video;
- manipulated audio;
- automated accounts;
- and algorithmically generated content.

The policy challenge is therefore expanding from:

“Can young people identify misinformation?”

to:

“Can young people understand how digital content itself is produced?”

32 — PRIVACY AND PERSONAL DATA

Digital platforms collect and process significant quantities of user data.

Relevant information can include:

- behavioural patterns;
- interests;
- interactions;
- location-related information;
- device information;
- and engagement patterns.

The UN human-rights framework for the digital environment recognises children's rights to privacy, access to information, freedom of expression and protection from violence and other digital risks.

The policy challenge is balancing:

personalisation

with

privacy and autonomy.

33 — THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Young people have legitimate interests in accessing information online.

Digital regulation should therefore avoid creating systems where:

protecting young people = restricting their access to legitimate information.

A rights-based approach requires consideration of:

- age appropriateness;
- privacy;

- freedom of expression;
 - access to information;
 - safety;
 - and proportionality.
-

34 — FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Digital platforms have become important spaces for:

- political discussion;
- cultural expression;
- activism;
- journalism;
- artistic expression;
- and community organising.

Restrictions must therefore be carefully designed.

The objective should be:

safer participation, not the elimination of participation.

The UN human-rights framework specifically recognises freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly alongside protections for privacy and mental health in digital environments.

35 — NON-DISCRIMINATION AND DIGITAL INCLUSION

Not every young person experiences the digital environment in the same way.

Differences may arise from:

- gender;
- disability;
- socioeconomic status;
- geography;
- language;
- cultural background;

- access to technology;
- and quality of connectivity.

Digital inequality therefore includes more than:

“Who has internet access?”

It also concerns:

Who can participate safely, meaningfully and equally?

36 — VULNERABLE GROUPS

Digital policy should account for young people who may face increased risks due to:

- social isolation;
- discrimination;
- disability;
- socioeconomic disadvantage;
- marginalisation;
- exposure to violence;
- or limited access to offline support.

WHO's 2025 evidence review emphasises that vulnerability can shape how young people experience digital environments and their potential harms.

37 — THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENTS

Governments can contribute through:

REGULATION

Establishing appropriate protections for young users.

EDUCATION

Integrating digital and media literacy.

HEALTH SERVICES

Providing accessible youth mental-health services.

RESEARCH

Funding independent research into digital determinants of wellbeing.

CHILD PROTECTION

Preventing exploitation, harassment and abuse.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Supporting evidence-based digital wellbeing campaigns.

38 — THE ROLE OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Platforms possess unique control over:

- recommendation systems;
- interface design;
- content moderation;
- advertising;
- data processing;
- age-assurance mechanisms;
- and transparency systems.

Therefore, platform responsibility cannot be reduced to:

“Users should simply use social media responsibly.”

Platform design itself can influence user behaviour.

WHO's digital mental-health work specifically calls for safer and more responsible platform design and greater international collaboration.

39 — THE ROLE OF PUBLIC FIGURES

Public figures should be considered within a framework of:

TRANSPARENCY

Clearly distinguishing commercial content from personal communication.

ACCURACY

Avoiding unsupported claims, particularly concerning health.

RESPONSIBILITY

Recognising the influence they hold over younger audiences.

DIGITAL LITERACY

Understanding how content can be amplified or misinterpreted.

SAFE COMMUNICATION

Avoiding content that unnecessarily exposes young audiences to harm.

40 — THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS

Schools can contribute by developing:

- media literacy;
- critical thinking;
- digital citizenship;
- emotional literacy;
- online safety;
- source evaluation;
- and respectful digital communication.

UNESCO's current MIL work emphasises educators as central actors in strengthening young people's capacity to navigate misinformation, hate speech and rapidly evolving digital technologies.

41 — THE ROLE OF FAMILIES

Families can provide:

- communication;
- guidance;
- digital literacy;
- support;
- and healthy boundaries.

However, family responsibility should not substitute for platform or government accountability.

A comprehensive model requires:

- **family support**
 - **education**
 - **platform responsibility**
 - **public policy**
 - **youth participation.**
-

42 — THE ROLE OF YOUTH

Young people should not be treated exclusively as:

subjects of regulation.

They are also:

- users;
- creators;
- researchers;
- activists;
- peer educators;
- community leaders;
- and stakeholders.

UNESCO's youth programmes explicitly support young people as **co-leaders and co-creators** of media and information literacy initiatives.

43 — MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE

The agenda cannot be addressed by one institution.

A functioning model requires cooperation among:

GOVERNMENTS

Policy and regulation.

DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Design and implementation.

PUBLIC FIGURES

Communication and influence.

EDUCATORS

Digital literacy.

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Evidence-based wellbeing support.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Advocacy and community engagement.

YOUTH

Lived experience and participation.

RESEARCHERS

Evidence and evaluation.

44 — REGULATION VS SELF-REGULATION

A major policy debate concerns the appropriate degree of government intervention.

SELF-REGULATION

Platforms establish voluntary standards.

Potential advantage: flexibility and innovation.

Potential concern: enforcement may be inconsistent.

CO-REGULATION

Governments establish broad requirements while platforms implement operational standards.

Potential advantage: combines legal accountability with technical flexibility.

STATUTORY REGULATION

Governments establish legally binding obligations.

Potential advantage: enforceability.

Potential concern: poorly designed rules can restrict legitimate expression or innovation.

45 — AGE-APPROPRIATE DIGITAL DESIGN

Digital environments should recognise that children and adolescents have different developmental needs from adults.

Potential policy considerations include:

- age-appropriate design;
- privacy-by-default;

- safer recommendation systems;
- transparent reporting mechanisms;
- accessible parental or guardian tools;
- and child-friendly information.

However, age-related protections must also consider:

- privacy;
 - autonomy;
 - access to information;
 - and the risk of excluding young people from beneficial online communities.
-

46 — CONTENT MODERATION

Content moderation can address:

- harassment;
- hate speech;
- exploitation;
- dangerous misinformation;
- and other harmful content.

But moderation systems also face problems involving:

- false positives;
- inconsistent enforcement;
- cultural differences;
- language gaps;
- automated decision-making;
- and appeals.

A credible governance system therefore requires:

clear standards

-

transparent enforcement

-

accessible appeals

-

independent oversight where appropriate.

47 — ALGORITHMIC TRANSPARENCY

A central question is:

How much should users and regulators know about recommendation systems?

Full disclosure of proprietary algorithms may not always be practical.

However, transparency could involve information concerning:

- major ranking factors;
- risk assessments;
- recommendation-system impacts;
- moderation systems;
- data practices;
- and independent auditing.

The objective is not necessarily to reveal every technical detail.

It is to establish:

meaningful accountability for systems that affect millions of young users.

48 — RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE

Digital policy must keep pace with rapidly changing technology.

Research should examine:

- platform design;
- adolescent development;
- digital behaviour;
- mental wellbeing;
- identity formation;

- social movements;
- misinformation;
- AI;
- and long-term outcomes.

WHO's 2025 policy work stresses the need for evidence-informed responses because the relationship between digital environments and youth wellbeing is complex and evolving.

49 — MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Policies should establish measurable indicators.

Possible areas include:

WELLBEING

Changes in self-reported digital wellbeing.

DIGITAL LITERACY

Ability to identify unreliable information.

SAFETY

Exposure and response to online harms.

PLATFORM ACCOUNTABILITY

Compliance with safety and transparency requirements.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Meaningful involvement in policy development.

EQUITY

Whether interventions reach vulnerable groups.

50 — INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Digital platforms operate across national borders.

A platform may:

- be headquartered in one country;
- process data in another;
- provide services globally;
- and affect young users everywhere.

This creates challenges for:

- jurisdiction;
- enforcement;
- privacy;
- content regulation;
- child protection;
- and cross-border research.

International cooperation can facilitate:

- common principles;
 - information exchange;
 - research;
 - technical standards;
 - and capacity building.
-

51 — THE KEY POLICY DILEMMAS

DILEMMA I — SAFETY VS FREEDOM

How can young people be protected without unnecessarily restricting freedom of expression?

DILEMMA II — PRIVACY VS SAFEGUARDING

How can platforms verify age and protect young users without collecting excessive personal data?

DILEMMA III — PLATFORM ACCOUNTABILITY VS INNOVATION

How can governments regulate harmful design without unnecessarily preventing technological development?

DILEMMA IV — PUBLIC FIGURE INFLUENCE VS EXPRESSION

How far should public figures be held responsible for the consequences of their communication?

DILEMMA V — YOUTH PROTECTION VS YOUTH AGENCY

Should young people primarily be protected from digital environments, or empowered to navigate them?

DILEMMA VI — GLOBAL STANDARDS VS CULTURAL CONTEXT

Can international digital-wellbeing standards be universal while respecting different cultural and social environments?

52 — DRAFTING FRAMEWORK

A comprehensive outcome document could address:

I. YOUTH MENTAL WELLBEING

↓

II. DIGITAL PLATFORM DESIGN



III. ALGORITHMIC ACCOUNTABILITY



IV. PUBLIC FIGURE RESPONSIBILITY



V. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION



VI. MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY



VII. PRIVACY AND DIGITAL RIGHTS



VIII. CHILD AND YOUTH SAFEGUARDING



IX. AI AND SYNTHETIC MEDIA



X. DIGITAL INCLUSION



XI. RESEARCH AND DATA



XII. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



XIII. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

53 — QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

DIGITAL PLATFORMS

1. How should recommendation systems account for youth wellbeing?
2. What level of algorithmic transparency should be required?
3. How should platforms assess risks to younger users?

PUBLIC FIGURES

4. What responsibilities accompany significant influence over youth?
5. How should sponsored content be disclosed?
6. How should health-related claims be handled?

GOVERNMENTS

7. What constitutes proportionate digital regulation?
8. How can youth privacy be protected?
9. How can international cooperation address cross-border platforms?

EDUCATORS

10. Should media and information literacy become a core educational competency?
11. How should schools address AI-generated content?

CIVIL SOCIETY

12. How can digital rights and youth wellbeing be protected simultaneously?
13. How can marginalised communities participate meaningfully?

YOUTH

14. How should young people participate in platform-governance decisions?
15. What does a genuinely youth-centred digital environment look like?

54 — STAKEHOLDER RESEARCH

GOVERNMENT / REGULATOR

Research:

- national digital policy;
- child-protection legislation;
- privacy legislation;
- platform regulation;
- mental-health policy;
- education policy.

DIGITAL PLATFORM

Research:

- community standards;
- recommendation systems;
- youth-safety policies;
- privacy practices;
- content moderation;
- transparency mechanisms.

PUBLIC FIGURE / CREATOR

Research:

- audience demographics;
- areas of influence;
- advocacy;
- commercial partnerships;
- public communication practices.

SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Research:

- objectives;
- youth participation;
- digital mobilisation;
- communication methods;
- societal impact;
- controversies and challenges.

CIVIL SOCIETY / NGO

Research:

- programmes;
- research;
- advocacy;
- youth engagement;
- digital-rights positions.

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

Research:

- youth priorities;
 - digital experiences;
 - community perspectives;
 - barriers to participation;
 - proposed solutions.
-

55 — OFFICIAL RESOURCE BANK

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

[WHO — Adolescent Mental Health](#)

WHO — DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS AND MENTAL HEALTH

[WHO — Digital Environments and Mental Health](#)

WHO EUROPE — DIGITAL DETERMINANTS OF YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

[WHO — Addressing the Digital Determinants of Youth Mental Health](#)

WHO — ADOLESCENT SOCIAL MEDIA USE

[WHO Europe — Teens, Screens and Mental Health](#)

UNESCO — MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

[UNESCO — Media and Information Literacy](#)

UNESCO — YOUTH AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

[UNESCO — Communication, Information and Youth](#)

UNESCO — DIGITAL CONTENT CREATORS

[UNESCO — Empowering Digital Content Creators as Trusted Information Relays](#)

UNESCO — YOUTH MIL TOOLKIT

[UNESCO — Journey through the MILtiverse](#)

UN HUMAN RIGHTS

OHCHR — Human Rights in the Digital Environment

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

[OHCHR — Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

UNICEF — CHILDREN AND DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS

[UNICEF — Children in a Digital World](#)

58 — CONCLUSION

The digital environment has become a significant part of how young people **communicate, learn, construct identity, develop communities and participate in society**.

Its influence is neither inherently positive nor inherently negative.

Digital platforms can provide:

connection

→ **community**

→ **creativity**

→ **information**

→ **civic participation**

while also creating potential risks involving:

problematic use

→ **harmful content**

→ **misinformation**

→ **social pressure**

→ **privacy**

→ **polarisation**

→ **inequality.**

Public figures and social movements add another dimension because they can influence not only what young people **see**, but how they understand:

themselves

their communities

their values

their society

and **their role within it.**

The central challenge for S³ is therefore not to determine whether digital platforms, public figures or social movements are “good” or “bad.”