WYRED

netWorked Youth Research for Empowerment in the Digital society

Quality and Evaluation Plan

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1. INTRODUCTION – THE WYRED PROJECT

The WYRED project (netWorked Youth Research for Empowerment in the Digital society) is a 3 year project funded by the European Commission Horizon 2020 INEQUAL programme. It runs from November 2016 to October 2019, with 9 partners from 7 European countries (listed below).

The grant received is 993,662.50 euros.

1.1 OVERVIEW OF WYRED

1.1.1 Project summary

The emergence of the young as a distinct social group, and their slowly increasing empowerment through the availability of digital technology, has brought with it an understanding that they have a key role to play in the digital society, as drivers of new behaviours and understandings. However, their active participation in society is not reflected sufficiently in policy and decision-making, especially in relation to digital issues. Because of this, they are not well represented and unheard, and this makes it hard for research and policy to identify and understand their needs. These issues are further complicated by the fact that the group is a swiftly moving target, it is as heterogeneous as the wider society, and young people can be unwilling to be subjects of research.

The WYRED project aims to provide a framework for research in which children and young people can express and explore their perspectives and interests in relation to digital society, but also a platform from which they can communicate their perspectives to other stakeholders effectively through innovative engagement processes. It will do this by implementing a generative research cycle involving networking, dialogue, participatory research and interpretation phases centred around and driven by children and young people, out of which a diverse range of outputs, critical perspectives and other insights will emerge to inform policy and decision-making in relation to children and young people's needs in relation to digital society.

The project is informed by the recognition that young people of all ages have the right to participation and engagement. It has a strong focus on inclusion, diversity and the empowerment of the marginalised. The aim is to replace the disempowering scrutiny of conventional research processes with the empowerment of self-scrutiny and self-organisation through the social dialogue and participatory research.

1.1.2 Partners

1	UNIVERSIDAD DE SALAMANCA (USAL)	Spain
2	OXFAM ITALIA ONLUS (OXFAM)	Italy
3	PYE GLOBAL (PYE)	UK
4	ASIST OGRETIM KURUMLARI A.S. (DOGA SCHOOLS)	Turkey
5	EARLY YEARS – THE ORGANISATION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN LBG (EARLY YEARS)	UK
6	YOUTH FOR EXCHANGE AND UNDERSTANDING INTERNATIONAL AISBL (YEU)	Belgium
7	MOVES (MOVES)	Austria
8	THE BOUNDARIES OBSERVATORY C.I.C (BOUNDARIES)	UK
9	TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY (TAU)	Israel

1.1.3 The work plan

The project work plan involves 10 work packages. The first of these involves the definition of the different processes involved in the research cycle, and the second is dedicated to the preparation

and implementation throughout the project of the inclusion strategy, the third focuses on the development of the WYRED platform, which will be used throughout the project as the space in which the activities and interaction take place, After these first three preparatory WPs. The next 5 cover the full cycle of research activity in WYRED. This starts with network building in WP4, in which the children and young people who will participate in the research cycle are attracted and engaged and the principal themes that represent their concerns are identified. The next work package (5) focuses on social dialogue around these themes which will explore the themes to identify key research questions relating to the digital society that concern children and young people. In the subsequent work package (6) these children and young people, supported by the partners, will focus on designing and implementing research activities to explore these questions and issues in a range of different ways. WP7 focuses on the interpretation and evaluation of the process and its results in the production types by the young research participants and the partners, of different formats and artefact that will be used to present the results, principally insights and recommendations to different target groups at policy level and in the wider society. The final phase of the cycle in WP8 focuses on the dissemination and exploitation of these results, though this work package runs throughout the project engaging in the valorisation of the WYRED activity through workshops, event participation, online activity and an association.

These 5 work packages form a cycle that is aimed to generate insights relating to the perspectives and concerns of children and young people in relation to digital society. The cycle repeats twice during the funding period of the project and will continue after the funding period indefinitely under the aegis of the WYRED Association. The WYRED cycle is supported by 2 other work packages focusing on management (WP9) and quality (WP10).

WP1	WYRED PROCESSES DEFINITION	BOUNDARIES
WP2	INCLUSION	MOVES
WP3	WYRED PLATFORM DEVELOPMENT	USAL
WP4	BUILDING THE WYRED NETWORK	YEU
WP5	SOCIAL DIALOGUE PHASE	EARLY YEARS
WP6	PARTICIPANT RESEARCH PHASE	DOGA SCHOOLS

WP7	EVALUATION AND INTERPRETATION PHASE	PYE GLOBAL
WP8	VALORISATION	OXFAM
WP9	PROJECT MANAGEMENT	USAL
WP10	QUALITY MANAGEMENT	BOUNDARIES

1.2 QUALITY AND EVALUATION IN THE RESEARCH CYCLE

The activity that will take place within WYRED, specifically the WYRED research cycle, involves its own specific evaluation and interpretation process in which the outputs of the cycle will be subject to scrutiny and assessment. It is there, in WP7, that we will ascertain whether the research cycle developed is producing useful and valuable results for society.

The focus of the work in WP10, though related to that work, is distinctive in that it centres on evaluating the project as an EU financed project which has a set of outputs (deliverables) and processes that have been previously defined in the funding proposal. Though both sets of work share the ultimate objective of evaluating the quality of WYRED the perspectives are different.

The purpose of this document is to define the approach to quality control and process evaluation in WYRED, describing policies, procedures and criteria, as well as roles and responsibilities. This document is closely related to the project management handbook (D9.1).

2 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE IN WYRE

2.1 Quality management approach

2.1.1 Objectives

The purpose of the internal quality processes in WYRED is to ensure that the project deliverables are completed with an acceptable level of quality. This involves attention both to the quality of the deliverables themselves and the quality of the processes used to manage and create them. While project outputs, the deliverables, will be subject to an internal quality control process using predefined criteria, the processes of the project, including internal aspects such as management, communication and collaboration, participation and reporting as well as the research cycle

activities, will be evaluated independently from several perspectives, that of the External Ethical Reviewer, that of the Advisory Board and that of independent personnel not involved in the project. The ethical perspective will be subject to a separate reporting process, while the other two perspectives, including relevant outputs of Advisory Board meetings, and the observations of the independent personnel will be incorporated into the three Quality and Evaluation reports planned during the project.

2.1.2 Responsibilities

Effective collaboration requires project coordination and clear rules for communication and decision-making. While all project partners have a responsibility to deliver high quality deliverables and results the key roles in this area are as follows:

2.1.2.1 Project coordinator

The main task of the PC will be to ensure coordination between all partners as well as having no responsibility for the organization, planning and control of the project. This work involves ultimate responsibility for the quality of the work as set out in the project handbook. The coordinator will also serve as the representative of the project to the European commission to communicate and report technical, financial and other information related to the project work

2.1.2.2 Steering committee

The steering committee is the supervisory body for the project execution and is the ultimate decision-making body of the consortium. In particular, it is responsible for monitoring the achievement of the objectives of the project, taking decisions regarding significant modifications of the project workplan and lastly any unforeseen matters that may come up that affect the project or the consortium. In this sense, it is largely a consumer of the outputs of the quality and evaluation processes.

2.1.2.3 Work package leaders

Each work package leader is responsible for the technical and scientific aspects and specific work related to the particular work package. The work package leader is responsible for achieving all the plan deliverables within the schedule, and using the financial and human resources planned in the proposal. The work package leader works in close collaboration with all participants in the work package and with other related work packages. Apart from the evident quality issues in relation to processes and deliverables, an important part of the work is to identify risks as early

as possible, identify and implement solutions to emergent problems and carry out follow-up to make sure the remedies proposed are effective. The work package leader reports to the project coordinator and the steering committee using electronic means or in face-to-face meetings.

2.2 Critical Path analysis

Though quality control is an ongoing process throughout the project, in order to identify the points in the project cycle when quality review particularly needs to take place, a critical path analysis has been undertaken. need to take place. The points identified are at M6 when the first version of the platform will be ready, M12 during the preparation of the first project report, 19 on the production of the second version of the platform, M24 during the production of the second report, M32 with the production of the second cycle artefacts collection and in M36 with the production of the final report.

3 PROJECT QUALITY CONTROL

3.1 Quality methods

The focus of quality control is on the deliverables of the project. Quality control monitors project deliverables to establish that the deliverables are of acceptable quality and are complete and correct. The deliverables will be assessed for completeness and fitness organise quality content inspection that will be conducted both during the development of deliverables and at the end to mark the completion and approval of the deliverables. The list of deliverables that are to be tested for satisfactory quality level is provided in Annex 1 of the grant agreement. The responsibility for the review of each deliverable will be assigned by the Steering Committee at the start of each WP.

3.2 Quality assurance

As mentioned previously, quality assurance, which focuses on the processes adopted in the project will be carried out through the processes of project evaluation, described in Section 4 of this document.

3.3 Deliverable development

Deliverables will be developed according to the following process. The work package leader or partner responsible for the deliverable presents, with adequate timing, the proposed structure

of the deliverable as well as the task allocations between partners, for approval by the participants and the project coordinator. Once this has been approved by the project coordinator, all partners work to provide appropriate input to ensure the appropriate completion of the deliverable. During the process, draft versions of the deliverable was shared between all the partners for comment and further input.

On completion, the deliverable is reviewed by the work package leader, and then by the project coordinator to assess that it is consistent with project objectives. It will also be passed for independent review to another partner assigned by the Steering Committee. After this review the deliverable is either approved or refused, and the final responsibility for this lies with the project coordinator, who is responsible for the final formal approval for submission to the EC. If the deliverable is refused it is modified taking into account the remarks made during the review process and then the new review is carried out. Completed deliverables are uploaded to the dedicated EC project space.

3.4 Deliverable quality indicators

it is important to note that at the start of the deliverable production process, the proposed structure of the deliverable will be evaluated according to the following indicators:

- the contents are in accordance with the objective stated in the project description
- the allocation of the tasks is realistic and consistent with the roles of the partners as defined in the proposal, unless modifications have been made
- the timetable reposed is realistic and matches the deadline set out in the project proposal, unless modifications have been made

During the production of the deliverable, there may be intermediate phases where partial drafts are reviewed, but this is not obligatory all partners are however responsible for playing their part in checking the quality of the deliverable as it progresses and making appropriate comments and suggestions for modification.

The key quality criteria used for the final review of each deliverable are as follows:

- compliance with the objectives as stated in the project description in the Grant Agreement
- the completeness of the documentation describing the work done in the corresponding work package

- compliance with templates and editing guidelines as described in the project handbook
- clarity and legibility
- the degree to which the deliverable constitutes a complete response to the task usefulness to the target reader and audience
- complete version history

3.5 Work package progress

Each work package leader will be in charge of ensuring that the work in the work package is carried out to schedule and that the expected deliverables are produced. The work package leader will responsible for technical research aspects as well as for the day-to-day management of specific work package-related work and implementation of work package activities as defined in the work plan. The progress of the work will be tracked in order to ensure that the activity corresponds to the project description in the grant agreement and that all steps of the development activity are appropriately documented.

3.6 Document management

Document management will be undertaken as per the provisos in the project management handbook using the internal Redmine workspace that has been set up for the purpose.

4 PROJECT EVALUATION IN WYRED

4.1 THE PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

The project evaluation framework in the WYRED project is intended to support the project activities, and provide opportunities for continuous improvement both of project processes and the products created, especially the network itself. This will be done by observing and interpreting the different actions carried out by the consortium and providing feedback at appropriate moments within the project cycle. These may include recommendations for refinement and/or adaptation of the work. Inputs, as mentioned previously will come from 3 main sources, the ethical review process, the Advisory Board, and the independent internal review process, which is the responsibility of P8 (Boundaries).

The overall objective is to support the consortium both in the achievement of the specific project objectives and in its compliance with the funding requirements. This involves attention both to the <u>management</u> perspective - the extent to which the administration, communication, collaboration and other aspects (such as, for example, compliance with deadlines) are appropriate – and to the <u>development</u> perspective – the extent to which the different activities are successful in achieving the objectives, with respect as much to the design and development of the products and services as to their valorisation.

It is important to note that, given the existence of evaluation processes in WP7 as part of the WYRED research cycle, project evaluation in WYRED will aim to avoid any duplication of the work being carried out in this regard. The objective will be to complement this work, without prejudice to the need to provide an independent perspective on the work being carried out. The watchword will be flexibility and the project evaluation work will be informed by the need to adapt to the emerging needs of the project. For this reason, this document should be considered an initial roadmap and declaration of intentions, rather than an itinerary carved in stone.

4.2 THE DIMENSIONS OF EVALUATION

The project evaluation process will contemplate both formative and summative dimensions.

- Formative evaluation refers to a continuous monitoring of the quality of the processes involved, providing ongoing feedback that facilitates the improvement of both the working processes and the different products and services created. Formative evaluation is particularly relevant for projects focusing on educational innovation. It assumes continuous cycles of consultation and feedback that are embedded within project processes and are considered part of the normal activity of the project work, thus fostering collaboration and reflection among the participants, which is key to the effective functioning of a network.

- Summative evaluation refers to the more traditional approach to evaluation, i.e. to judge and assess the match between the expected results, the resources used, and the goals achieved. It focuses on overall final results as well as with the final results of each of the phases of the project. This dimension of evaluation affects both internal players (i.e. the project partners) and external stakeholders, whose attention mainly focuses on pedagogic/methodological effectiveness, or the usefulness of the network and its products and/or services and so on.

- Lessons learned - in addition to summative and formative aspects, the project evaluation will also focus on identifying lessons that can be learned from the project, both in terms of operational and management aspects, and in development terms with respect to issues relating to the area of early childhood education. The idea is that these lessons can be identified and described and serve as examples of good or inappropriate practice for future work in the direct project context, or other later valorisation contexts.

4.3 THE SCOPE OF EVALUATION

The evaluation outcomes should serve the whole consortium. They should respond to the needs and perspectives of each of the actors involved in the project. Since each partner's knowledge and experience of the learning methodologies and approaches and the technological issues involved is different, and the range of perspectives involved is varied, it is of major importance to directly assess the particular needs and expectations of each partner, in order to cover as many aspects as possible.

The aim is also for the evaluation to cover the full project life cycle, covering the whole range of project activity across the different work packages, and lasting throughout the project lifetime. For this reason, though there will be a series of specific moments when evaluation activity will be particularly intense, there will be continuous monitoring of the project activity throughout the project, and more informal oral feedback as well as written reports will be provided according to the emerging needs of the consortium.

4.4 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The principal evaluation criteria that will be used to define the scope of the monitoring and interaction during the project evaluation process, and to guide feedback and reporting, are similar to what could be termed the 'standard' evaluation criteria used in a wide range of EU project management and evaluation processes. They can be summarized as follows:

4.4.1 Correspondence with the proposal

This refers to the match of the activities, products and services developed, and the overall results, to the aims and objectives of the project (as expressed in the original project proposal which was approved by the European Commission, and constitutes the basis on which the funding has been awarded).

4.4.2 Appropriate activity

This refers to the efficient management of the activities, appropriate communication and collaboration, the completion of work by agreed deadlines and to a sufficient degree of quality, and the fulfilment by all partners of the tasks assigned to them. This corresponds to the individual and collective objectives of the partners, and their motivations for participating in the project.

4.4.3 Impact and sustainability

This refers to the impact of the project work in the short medium and long term, and the sustainability potential of the project outcomes. In this last respect, particular attention will be paid to the appropriateness and success of the dissemination and exploitation activities. This corresponds to the wider objectives of the Commission in financing this kind of activity.

4.5 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Against this background, the following specific project evaluation objectives are proposed:

- To carry out ongoing monitoring of the project design and development activities, providing feedback and recommendations for corrective action whenever needed.
- To carry out ongoing monitoring of the project management activities, from the point of view of the coordinators, the leaders of each work package, and the individual partners, with special attention to communication and collaboration.
- To facilitate reflection and critical thinking among the partners on different aspects of the project, in order to generate and collect partner feedback and ensure an integrated approach to the project, in which all are participants.
- To carry out specific evaluation activities at various points in the life of the project corresponding to the points identified in the critical path analysis mentioned earlier in this document.

5 METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach will use a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, though the focus, given the need for flexibility in the project evaluation process, will be on a qualitative approach.

5.1 QUANTITATIVE METHODS

5.1.1   Analysis of project data

Throughout the project a range of data (numerical and other) will be generated by the activity, particularly when the pilot and valorisation phases are under way. All of this data will be used to provide an overall impression of the degree of activity generated, and the interest in the project. Though it requires interpretation, and triangulation with other types of information is vital to ensure appropriate use of the data, this data is a useful starting point for evaluation and has the advantage that it can provide objective indicators for reporting purposes. Attention will also be paid to the types of data being collected by the consortium, since this will affect the accuracy and detail of the reporting undertaken as part of EU requirements.

5.1.2   Collection of overall impressions using questionnaires

Although the statistical validity of quantitative approaches within small groups such as the WYRED consortium is always questionable, the use of quantitative techniques has a two-fold purpose. The first of these is to provoke initial reflection on the areas to be covered by the more qualitative aspects of the evaluation process; the process of responding to a questionnaire facilitates reflection by raising issues through the kinds of question that are asked. The responses also provide initial indications of areas that require particular focus. The function of the questionnaires that will be used then is to provide a "bird's eye view" of the current situation. Other instruments then focus more closely but this initial overview is useful.

5.2 QUALITATIVE METHODS

5.2.1   Exploratory interviews

Two types of interviews will be used. The first is the exploratory interview, which is used when it is appropriate to explore the issues different participants may have in relation to the project activity that have not been anticipated. They allow the interviewee to set the agenda and to discuss the issues that they consider to be important. This ensures that all the perspectives of the different participants are represented and taken into account in the evaluation process.

5.2.2   Semi-structured interviews

This kind of interview is especially useful when applied in tandem with a questionnaire. While the questionnaire helps to define areas that need discussion, the semi structured interview allows

the interviewer to build on the questionnaire answers and delve deeper into the reasons and issues involved in the responses in order to reveal underlying issues. As such they are a useful tool for "getting to the bottom" of specific issues arising in this kind of project, where the lack of direct contact often makes it hard to identify the true reasons for problems that may arise. They also permit confidential discussion of sensitive issues. Naturally, the confidentiality of responses will be respected (insofar as it is possible in a small group of respondents) at all times.

5.2.3 Focus groups

Interviews, while providing in-depth information about the perceptions and concerns of the participants in a project, sometimes run the risk of giving disproportionate emphasis to certain issues at the expense of others. A useful check to this tendency is the focus group where the results of a series of interviews or questionnaire are reflected back to the group and impressions of the different results are requested. These impressions give rise to a structured group debate in which a balanced view of the issues, and often prospective solutions, can emerge. It is proposed that this technique be used at some consortium meetings

5.2.4 Group reflection activities

Like the exploratory interview at the individual level, the objective of these group processes is to allow issues to emerge that might otherwise remain unidentified. These activities may be, for example, brainstorming, ranking or selection activities, which require group discussion for their successful completion. The discussion that emerges provides insights about individual participants' perceptions, attitudes and concerns. The activity therefore makes these visible and they can then be identified and reflected upon. A range of different options is available and the specific type of activity in each case will be selected depending on the needs of the moment.

5.2.5 Participant observation

Throughout the project the project evaluation will observe the work, and periodic discussion of the progress of the activities will take place. Contributions and suggestions will be made in a timely way, if and when the need arises. This observation will form part of the continuous monitoring of the project.

6 EVALUATION SCHEDULE

Evaluation, though an ongoing process throughout the project, will intensify at different points within the project, just before the yearly quality and evaluation reports. It is at this point that questionnaires and interviews will take place, in order to generate a picture of the progress of the project to feed into the yearly Quality and Evaluation reports. Exact dates and personnel involved will be defined closer to those points.

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