

YOUNG DIGITAL LEADERS | KEY FINDINGS

OBJECTIVE AND PARTNERSHIPS

Young Digital Leaders is a Europe-wide pilot project that aims to empower young people through digital citizenship, critical thinking and media literacy skills, so they can grow up to be safe, responsible digital leaders. The project has pioneered a unique, collaborative partnership model between students, teachers, parents and local civil society organisations across Italy, Romania and Sweden. Young Digital Leaders is run in partnership with Google Brussels and ISD, with in-country delivery supported by Associazione Artistica Culturale (A Rocca) in Italy, Group of European Youth for Change (GEYC) in Romania, and Kommon Ground in Sweden.

“It was very useful - after this workshop I am aware of how much I don’t know about online topics and social networks, the things I am using every day.”
(Student, Italy)

CURRICULUM

The Young Digital Leaders curriculum consists of four fun, innovative and engaging sessions to help young people learn about digital citizenship.

Specific topics include:

- The causes and impact of **fake news**;
- How to distinguish between **fact and opinion**;
- The use and power of **imagery**
- How to **fact check** and assess information online;
- **Echo chambers**, their impact, and how to avoid being drawn into them;
- The use of divisive **‘us and them’** tactics by information manipulators;
- How to recognise **emotional manipulation** in online media;
- The **impact** of emotional manipulation on online behaviours;
- How to distinguish between **free speech** and **hate speech**, and **how to respond** to hate speech.

PILOTS

- Educational resources have been developed in **3 languages** and directly delivered to **260 students aged 13-16** in school workshops across Italy, Romania and Sweden.
- **3 local civil society organisations** have been directly trained to localise and deliver the curriculum with confidence.
- Parent engagement handbook has been developed in **3 languages**, and directly delivered to **40 parents** in sessions across Italy, Romania and Sweden.

“I think this programme should be extended nationally because, seeing our students and how excited and willing to learn they were, I realised we don’t have enough online education.”

(Teacher, Romania)

UNDERSTANDING IMPACT

The school workshops and parent sessions were subject to a high quality evaluation process, including pre- and post-surveys administered to participating classes and compared against a control group of classes within the same schools, as well as to participating parents. The evaluation also included six focus groups with participating young people and parents, and six interviews with teachers who participated in the school workshops.

“This should be introduced into the school curriculum.”
(Parent, Italy)

PARENTS

Following the delivery of Young Digital Leaders:

- **56% increase** in parent confidence that they know **how and why to ‘flag’ or report social media content**.
- **64%** of participant parents feel confident they can **support their children to express themselves positively** online.
- **72%** of participant parents would **fact check a story** they were unsure was true first before sharing it online.
- **72%** of participant parents feel confident that they understand the **differences between hate speech and free speech**.

STUDENTS

Following the delivery of Young Digital Leaders:

- **95% increase** in student confidence that they understand what **filter bubbles** are.
- **85% increase** in student confidence that they understand what **echo chambers** are.
- **75%** of participant students feel confident that they are able to **identify fake news**.
- **75%** of participant students would **fact check a story** they were unsure was true first before sharing it online.
- **60%** of participant students would recognise when a social media post, article or website is **designed to emotionally manipulate people**.
- **71%** of participant students feel confident that they understand the **differences between hate speech and free speech**.

“This is the best thing the school has done for me.”
(Student, Sweden)

For further information on Young Digital Leaders and to download the full impact report, please contact info@isdglobal.org and visit www.isdglobal.org.