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I can say NO!
LOVE IS NOT VIOLENCE

AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS YOUTH INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE



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TRANSNATIONAL REPORT
for Hungary, Spain, Serbia and Croatia

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report is based on a survey implemented within the project “I can choose to say no. Empowering youth, especially girls, to stand up against cyber sexual and gender-based violence in intimate partner relationships”.

The project contributes to ending cyber sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in adolescents’ intimate partner relationships, by especially empowering girls and supporting them to stand up to violence.

Activities encompass data collection on attitudes of youth, but also teaching staff in secondary schools, as well as capacity building of partner organizations for effective response to cyber sexual and gender-based violence. Based on these resources, a youth peer education program will be developed and implemented, as well as awareness raising activities with secondary school teachers regarding this topic. At the same time, these resources will be used for the development and implementation of an awareness raising campaign aimed at youth, to inform them and raise their awareness about the unacceptability of digital violence.

The project is being delivered in four countries by a partnership of the following organizations: The Autonomous Women’s Centre (Serbia), Fundacion Privada Indera (Catalonia, Spain), Nők a Nőkért Együtt az Erőszak Ellen (Hungary) and CESI-Center for Education, Counselling and Research (Croatia). The lead partner is The Autonomous Women’s Centre.

National Contexts

Violence against women is a widespread phenomenon in all partner countries and the data available are similar. The Violence against women: an EU-wide survey of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights shows compared data for all EU member states. In Hungary 27% of women reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or a non-partner since the age of 15, while in Spain this percentage is 22%, and in Croatia 21%. In Serbia, according to the OSCE-led Survey on Violence against Women: Well-being and safety of women, 22% of women experienced intimate partner or non-partner physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15.

When it comes to **teen-dating violence**, there are no data that could be compared this way, as this is a poorly researched phenomenon. In Spain, there have been several investigations of the extent of intimate partner violence in youth relationships. A survey conducted by the Ministry of Equality in 2015 on teenage girls and boys across Spain, shows that roughly 1 in every 10 girls say they have experienced an abusive situation at the hands of the boy they are going out with. A little more, 1.3 in every 10 teenage boys, admit to behaving aggressively towards their girlfriends. A few existing Croatian studies show a high prevalence of teen-dating violence. CESI’s research from 2007 found that more than two-thirds of young people (70%) aged 16-19 had experienced violence in a relationship, with around half saying they had engaged in at least one form of violent behaviour towards a partner. Another Croatian study showed that over 80% of high-school students reported experiencing or perpetrating some form of violent behaviour in a relationship. The most prevalent form of violence perpetrated was psychological (93,2%), then physical (51,3%) and sexual (25%). Also, similar results regarding the experienced forms of violent behaviours were found in Serbia. Girls in comparison to boys are more aware on what constitutes a quality relationship, are better in setting boundaries in a relationship and are more likely to seek help when experiencing violence in a relationship. In Hungary and Serbia there is no relevant research that could provide us with data on teen-dating violence, although research on gender-based violence in high schools shows that this is a present and widespread phenomenon – the majority of surveyed elementary and secondary school students have experienced at least one form of this type of violence. In Serbia, boys more frequently commit gender-based violence both towards girls and boys and they more often justify violence in partner relationships.

When it comes to **cyber violence against women**, the only data that could be comparable for three EU member states is on cyber stalking from the FRA study. In Hungary and Croatia, 4% of women reported they have experienced this type of violence since the age of 15, while the percentage in Spain is 2%. Over half of women under 30 say they have experienced sexual harassment (including through use of technological devices) after the age of 15, while stalking (with or without the use of technological devices) was experienced by 11% of women surveyed (regardless of age group) at some point since they were 15 years old. The research team state that “the prevalence of sexual harassment, stalking and non-partner physical violence is highest among the youngest age group (18–29 years old)”, as well as that “overall, age is the most significant factor accounting for differences in experiences & attitudes among women”.

When it comes to **cyber violence among youth**, data comparable for all four countries is given in the Spotlight on adolescent health and well-being survey from 2017/2018, conducted by the World Health Organization. It shows that 20% of girls and 18% of boys aged 15 from Hungary have been cyberbullied at least once in the past couple of months. These percentages are lower in other countries where the data are as follows: 14% of girls and 13% of boys from Croatia, 12% of girls and 11% of boys from Serbia and 7% of girls and 3% of boys from Spain, all aged 15 have had the same experience. On the other hand, 14% of girls and 17% of boys aged 15 from Hungary have cyberbullied others in the past couple of months. Again, data are lower in other countries: 10% of girls and 18% of boys from Croatia, 7% of girls and 11% of boys from Serbia and 2% of girls and 4% of boys from Spain, all aged 15, have reported they have been doing the same, i.e. cyberbullying others.

Furthermore, in **Spain**, intimate partner violence mediated through technology appears to be especially a problem between young couples than in general, as 25,1% of girls between 16 and 19 have admitted being controlled through their phones by their partners vs. 9.6% of the total women sample.

In **Croatia**, in 2019, the Zagreb Child and Youth Protection Center conducted a national research project "Online Social Experiences and Mental Health of Youth" with first and third grade high school students (1772 in total). At least once: 58.6% of adolescents received messages of sexually explicit content; 52.4% of adolescents received sexually explicit photos or videos; 10.8% of adolescents received sexually explicit photos or videos of themselves; 19.7% of adolescents received sexually explicit photos or video of a partner; 50.5% of adolescents received sexually explicit photos or video of acquaintances.

In **Hungary**, the most recent data is from a 2020 study conducted by a research group at the University of Nyíregyháza. They asked 882 students between the ages 12-18 about online bullying, among other things. The main findings show that 66% of students participated in some form of online bullying. Male students significantly tend to send hostile, upsetting text messages; offensive images, memes; start false rumours; give out private contact number of others, while among female students the highest participation rate (36,3%) in the form of online bullying is online exclusion of another person (pretending they are not there in an online environment). Using other forms of online bullying is not significantly present between female students. 70,4% of students experienced some form of online bullying (66% of females, 74,7% of males) - male students experience significantly more (compared to girls) the following forms of online bullying: mailbox/social media hacking, online personalization; and female students experience more (compared to boys) the following forms of online bullying: harassment on phone/text, online exclusion, offensive text messages.

In **Serbia**, findings published in the publication "Internet and Digital Technology use among Children and Youth in Serbia: EU Kids Online Survey Results" show that almost one quarter of respondents aged 9-17 years (23%) experienced some type of bullying during the previous year, either on the Internet, i.e. via digital technology, or face-to-face. Girls experience cyberbullying victimization more frequently than boys: almost one-fifth of girls (18%) reported this vs. 15% of boys and young men. In addition to this, girls are more likely to report being very or rather upset than boys. More than a third of female respondents who have experienced cyberbullying (36%) say they were very upset the last time it

happened, while only 17% of boys reported being highly or very highly upset. A third of the students surveyed were victims and perpetrators at the same time. Consistently with previous findings on a nationally representative sample about face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying – it was found that the two tend to happen hand in hand. The percentage of students who report being upset by some content on the Internet increases with age but relatively mildly. In such situations, almost a quarter of students did not talk to anyone about their problem, ignored the problem thinking that it would go away by itself, or closed the window or application, and nearly a third blocked the harasser. It is encouraging that the vast majority of children are familiar with blocking and reporting tools.

When it comes to the **legal framework**, three countries (Spain, Croatia and Serbia) have signed and ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, known as the Istanbul Convention, while the government in Hungary rejected to ratify it, although the Convention was signed. Still, in countries like Serbia and Croatia, the laws for protection against violence are gender neutral, i.e. there are no criminal acts that are defined as gender-based violence.

All countries emphasize the significance of child protection and there are many criminal acts specifically protecting children (e.g. child pornography), but there are no criminal acts that define violence in intimate relationship, especially in youth relationships. The exception is Hungary where there is a criminal act "relationship violence" which is framed in a non-gendered way, so it defines violence in an intimate relationship, but not violence against women.

Different forms of cyber violence are usually not differentiated as such, but are part of other criminal acts, which could be conducted both via technology and without it – usually sexual harassment and stalking.

There is an exception in Spain, where cyber sexual harassment has specifically been included in the Criminal code since 2013 (but this is only considered as such when it involves adults contacting minors, what we know as grooming, and no other types of cyber sexual harassments between adults). The Criminal Code in Spain also criminalizes sexting, defined as the unauthorized disclosure of intimate images or recordings obtained without the consent of the affected person – similar criminal acts are present in the other three countries, but are not named sexting.

Some countries have specialized institutions for cybercrime, including cyber violence, such as police cybercrime prevention units in Spain, Special District Attorney for High Technology Crime in Serbia, but they usually are not gender or youth sensitive.

Education programs aimed at preventing violence against women vary from country to country. Spain prescribed the obligation for teachers to have a permanent training in equality matters, but up to today, although some formal school curricula exist, schools themselves can choose whether they follow it or not. Hungary has the basic document for schools to base their curricula on and it covers the fact that it is crucial for schools to ensure for students to have knowledge about sexuality and intimate relationships - but the document mainly highlights the biological factors in this context and not mentioning

ocial contexts, for example violence against women and girls or relationship violence. This document also fails to mention the importance of gender equality and does not give any guidance to teachers on the deconstruction of restrictive gender roles and stereotypes. In Croatia, all schools are required to implement prevention programs and report their activities to the Ministry of Science and Education, and send their curricula to their units of regional self-government. Although the Ministry in charge collects data, they are not adequately documented or available to the public. The information on prevention programs implemented in secondary schools, which include as a component or module the topic of violence in adolescent relationships/youth relationships, gender-based violence, violence in partner relationships, are mostly available on the website of the school. In reality, prevention of gender-based violence in school environment is based on a sporadic implementation of programs in (some) schools. The newly introduced national curriculum of Health Education does not mention gender-based violence or any other issue that is related to gender. In Serbia, teachers are obliged to have advance trainings, but there is no systematic education on topics related to gender equality and gender-based violence, including cyber violence, either through their formal education, or through professional development programs. The common thing for all countries is that most of the educational prevention tasks and programs, including their creation, for both youth and teachers, are carried out by NGOs.

Finally, when it comes to **support for girls exposed to teen-dating and/or cyber violence**, in all four countries there are NGOs that provide services either for cases of gender-based violence (dedicated mostly to adult women) or for cases of cyber violence (dedicated to youth in general). This means that there are no services oriented towards and specialized only for support for girls and young women, either founded by the state or by an NGO.

2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The goal of the survey research, as defined by the project, was to collect data on awareness of secondary school girls and boys and their attitudes/strategies to address cyber sexual and gender-based violence in youth intimate partner relationships. Besides gaining insight into the phenomenon, an additional goal of this survey was to inform future actions aimed at the prevention of digital intimate partner violence, both within the current project, as well as for other stakeholders dealing with this problem in the future.

The survey was conducted using a questionnaire, which was developed and designed by Foundation INDERA from Spain. Representatives of partner organizations actively participated in the development of the common questionnaire, while each organization was responsible for collecting data at national level, analysing them, and preparing a national report with findings. This Joint Report is based on four national reports, encompassing data from all four countries, **Hungary, Croatia, Spain and Serbia**.

2.1. Timeframe and Geographic scope

The total duration of activities was eight months. During October and November 2019, a common questionnaire was developed in English and then translated by project partners into national languages. Data in all four countries were collected from December 2019 to beginning of March 2020.

Based on the common questionnaire translated into national languages, the data were collected in all four countries where the project is implemented.

In Spain, the questionnaire was completed in two public high schools in Barcelona, in the El Clot and Poble Nou neighbourhoods; in Hungary, respondent were from 11 student groups from nine schools - six schools based in Budapest, one in South-East Hungary (Szentes), one in North-East Hungary (Salgótarján) and one in West part of Hungary (Székesfehérvár). In Serbia, respondents were from ten high schools in five cities (Prijepolje, Paraćin, Pančevo, Novi Sad and Belgrade), all from different regions of the country, and in Croatia young people who participated in the research were from different parts of the country.

2.2. The questionnaire

The questionnaire was anonymous and consisted of 22 questions, closed and open, including questions regarding general information about youth - sex, age,

residence, and most frequently used Internet platforms for communication. Besides general information, the questionnaire was developed so that it encompassed level of awareness of youth on gender roles and digital violence, experiences of digital violence and strategies against/reactions to digital violence, both for violence experienced personally, as well as that noticed in their environment.

To collect data on awareness of the phenomenon, the research team developed two types of questions: one addressing general awareness on gender stereotypes and gender-based violence, the other addressing specific awareness on digital intimate partner violence among youth and their reactions to it. Part of the questions was formulated as scales of acceptability of specific behaviour, while the other part was formulated through structures such as “what would you do if it happened to you?” or “what advice would you give to a friend experiencing this?”. With this, we wanted to detect individual capacities for responding in situations of violence, as well as gain insight into how often bystander behaviour occurs, which also affects the normalization and acceptance of digital intimate partner violence.

The research team of partner organizations paid special attention to the formulations and language used in the questionnaire, with the aim of adapting it to as much as possible to the communication habits of youth. Some questions were presented in the form of imaginary screenshots of WhatsApp conversations & the students were asked to react, comment as members of a group chat or as friends being asked for advice. However, we are aware that the questionnaire design and questions in the form of imaginary situations (i.e. WhatsApp conversations), has certain limitations in measuring the complex issue of cyber SGBV. Therefore, additional research on the gender dimension of this issue is needed.

2.3. Method and procedure of data collection

Data were collected in different ways. In Spain and Serbia, representatives of organizations made visits to schools and questionnaires were completed in paper during one-hour workshops. All students were provided general information about the project, as well as the questionnaire itself and after the completion they had the opportunity to discuss the issues that the questionnaire raised. This way, the information collection process was also used for awareness raising of youth. After that, all data were digitalized into the statistical program SPSS for analysis. On the other hand, in Hungary and Croatia, data were collected via online survey programs – Survio for collection of data and MS Excel for analysis in Hungary and Survey Monkey for collection of data and SPSS for analysis in Croatia.

2.4. Sample description

According to the project document, the envisaged sample was 200 young people of secondary school age in each country.

Nevertheless, the interest for this questionnaire was higher in most countries, especially in Croatia, so the total number of youth who completed the questionnaire was 1139.

Table 1.

SAMPLE	
Spain	204
Hungary	229
Serbia	248
Croatia	458
TOTAL	1139

More information about youth who participated in the research is available in the introductory part of the findings section of this report.

2.5. Challenges & Limitations

One of the greatest challenges during development of instruments and data collection, was the adjustment of the questionnaire to the communication styles of youth, especially creating a questionnaire that would, besides serving its basic purpose concerning data collection, communicate with youth, be interesting, encourage (critical) thinking, and have an educational function as well.

One limitation of the survey is that data were collected differently in different countries and that both types of collection had its own good and bad sides. During the in-live surveys, schools were organizing groups and organizations representatives had the opportunity to talk to youth and answer questions if there was anything unclear, but at the same time, this meant students sitting in pairs or groups in a classroom or other space in the school, which could affect the complete privacy and anonymity of answers. On the other hand, online surveys provided more youth the opportunity to complete the questionnaire, but it wasn't possible to motivate those less interested in the topic to complete it, which in some cases resulted in having more girls than boys in the sample.

An additional impression of the research teams that were collecting data in the school setting, was that after questionnaire completion, during informal

discussions on the questionnaire, youth were interested in sharing their own or experiences of their peers. Some of them, encouraged by examples from questions, said they themselves had similar experiences, but that they forgot during questionnaire completion. Regarding this, the research team believes that in future research on violence and youth it would be useful to combine quantitative and qualitative methods in the collection of evidences, from printed questionnaires to well-moderated focus groups, with the aim of maximizing the reliability and validity of collected information.

The situation with the coronavirus also affected the process of data collection, and some partner organizations were not able to collect as many questionnaires as they envisaged, since schools started to close, and state of emergency was declared.



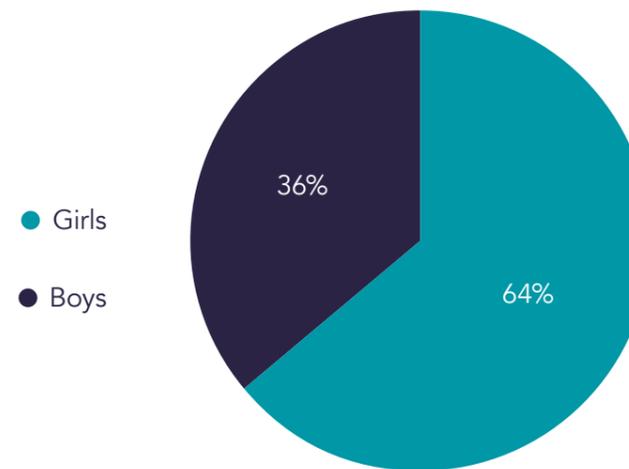
3. FINDINGS

3.1. General Information

As it was stated above, the total number of youth respondents (N) was 1139. The questionnaire was completed by 64% of girls and 36% of boys.

Respondents by Sex

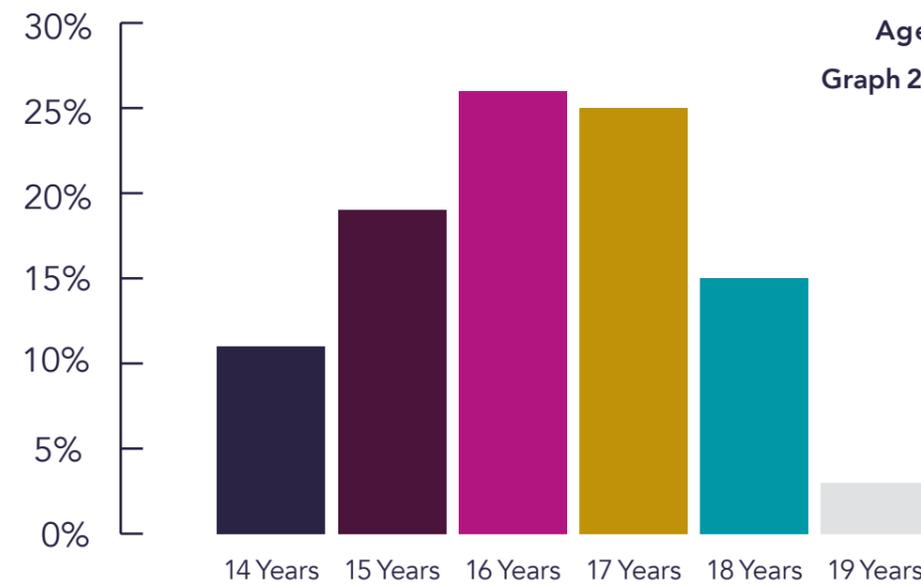
Graph 1.



When it comes to age, all respondents were in the age range from 14 to 19 years old. Most of them are 16 and 17 years old, followed by those 15 and 18 years old, and youth in the youngest and oldest age categories are least represented.

Age

Graph 2.





Most of the respondents live in a city - 69%, while 31% of youth live in a smaller town/village.

As part of general information, we were interested in which Internet platforms/applications youth most commonly used for communicating with their peers. These data vary from country to country, but Instagram and WhatsApp are both highly ranked in all countries. The greatest differences are regarding Facebook, as it is the most commonly used platform in Hungary (72% of youth using it), but in other countries these percentages are very low (14% of youth using it in Serbia, 10% in Croatia and only a few respondents in Spain). There were low percentages of those who reported using SnapChat (with the exception of Hungary where this platform is used by 41% of youth), TikTok and Viber, and just a few of them who reported using Twitter, Telegram or Discord.

3.2. Awareness and level of normalization of violent behaviour among youth

The general level of awareness and acceptance of gender-based and sexual violence was measured through five questions where a scale of answers was provided, and youth could state what they think about specific behaviours.

Table 2.

Types of Behaviour		Totally unacceptable %		Not OK %		Not Sure %		Kind of OK %		OK and Normal %	
		Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Commenting with friends about a girl that has a "reputation".	HU	6	10	38	36	32	24	22	24	1	6
	ES	41	14	36	44	14	17	3	15	6	9
	SER	27	19	46	56	17	12	3	7	7	6
	CRO	9	9	28	17	36	32	20	26	6	15
Saying things like "you look so gay on this picture" or "look at her she looks like a boy".	HU	20	20	45	30	17	15	16	27	1	8
	ES	63	31	32	48	5	11	0	9	0	1
	SER	42	22	42	51	42	51	4	9	3	8
	CRO	43	25	42	34	9	10	6	17	1	8
Mocking online someone because he/she is gay/lesbian/bisexual.	HU	72	52	25	30	1	9	2	3	0	6
	ES	94	84	5	12	1	4	0	0	0	0
	SER	63	35	33	30	4	11	0	7	0	16
	CRO	76	41	6	10	1	10	1	7	1	9
Mocking someone because they posted something that is saying no to abuse and violence.	HU	73	44	20	32	4	13	0	3	0	6
	ES	80	50	22	33	4	7	0	4	0	0
	SER	70	46	16	39	2	9	0	2	1	1
	CRO	66	43	27	41	6	11	1	2	4	5
Boys entering girls' changing rooms in schools and taking photos of them for fun.	HU	91	56	23	39	0	7	0	6	0	11
	ES	98	83	2	15	0	1	0	1	0	0
	SER	78	38	20	31	0	16	2	7	0	7
	CRO	88	55	10	28	1	4	1	5	0	7

What can be observed from the answers is that there are a lot of similarities when it comes to attitudes of youth in different countries. Most of youth in all four countries see all mentioned behaviours as totally unacceptable or not ok, with girls in most cases expressing stronger agreement concerning specific violent behaviours being unacceptable.

The level of complete awareness for most examples of violent behaviours is the highest among youth in Spain, and especially among girls. For example, 41% of girls and 14% of boys in Spain see commenting with friends about a girl that has "a reputation" as totally unacceptable, while these percentages are 6% (girls) and 10% (boys) in Hungary and 9% (girls and boys respectively) in Croatia.

Youth in Spain also have less homophobic attitudes when compared to other countries – there are no youth who think it is ok or totally normal to mock someone because he/she is gay/lesbian/bisexual, while in other countries these percentages are low, but present, especially among boys, with total of 23% of boys from Serbia thinking like this.

The greatest differences in answers between boys and girls are visible in the question regarding boys entering girls' changing rooms in schools and taking photos of them as a way of having fun. All girls from Hungary and Spain see this as totally unacceptable or not ok, as well as 98% of girls from Serbia and Croatia. When it comes to boys, 17% of them in Hungary, 14% of them in Serbia, 12% of them in Croatia and 1% of them in Spain think of it as kind of ok or totally ok.

At the same time, the lowest gender differences are visible in the question regarding commenting with friends about a girl that has "a reputation", which is also the behaviour that youth see as the least violent, and had the most doubts while answering. In Hungary, 44% of girls see this as totally unacceptable or not ok, compared to 46% of boys. These numbers in Spain are 77% of girls and 58% boys; in Serbia 73% of girls and 75% of boys; in Croatia 28% of girls and 26% of boys. Especially high number of boys in Croatia see this as kind of ok or completely ok – 41%.

On the other hand, more boys than girls in all countries stated that they are undecided, which indicates space for additional work with them to understand what violence is.

The level of normalization of violence was further measured by investigating the understanding of concrete behaviours, through examples of threats after a break-up (example of sextortion), control in a partner relationship in the form of the demand to always be available through technology (example of constant messaging), as well as by opinions on exchanging passwords of Internet accounts by partners in a relationship.

When it comes to sextortion, majority of youth in all countries consider it totally unacceptable or as behaviour which is wrong (90% in Hungary, 91% in Spain, 93% in Serbia and 92% in Croatia). In all countries, girls tend to express disagreement towards this behaviour, considering it totally unacceptable, compared to boys.

Control in an intimate relationship via demand for constant messaging is a behaviour which a lot of youth in all countries are not sure what to think of – approximately one third of them. In Spain and Serbia, it is almost an equal share (one third) between the answers "not sure", "yes, this is violent behaviour" and

"no, this isn't violent behaviour". In Croatia, 40% of young people do not consider it violent behaviour compared to 23% of them who think it is, and in Hungary 32% of youth said it is not violent, while half of them said it is. In some countries there are no gender differences, but in Spain the gender dimension is emphasized: While most of the female respondents are undecided between it being violent behaviour or being undecided and only 16.8% clearly denying it, 43.7% of male respondents (almost half of them) have clearly denied it, 34% of them are not sure about it and only 22.3% consider it violent behaviour.

When it comes to opinions on exchanging passwords of Internet accounts in the context of partner relationships, the majority of youth in all countries see this as "a big deal" and are taking it seriously – 71% of them in Hungary, 72% in Spain, 59% in Serbia and Croatia respectively. In Spain, a significant gender dimension was observed, as more boys than girls consider this as not serious (11.7% vs. 2%).

3.3. Experience of youth concerning digital violence

Victimization of youth by digital violence was measured using a set of closed questions regarding their exposure to different forms of digital violence.



Table 3.

Did it ever happen to you?		Never %		Once %		A few times %		Frequently %	
		Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Someone commented online/or through chat on you/your body in a sexual way (both positively and negatively).	HU	36	56	12	8	37	27	16	10
	ES	37	57	40	26	15	12	8	5
	SER	43	65	11	4	37	27	9	4
	CRO	28	50	12	6	43	29	17	15
Someone posted online hurtful picture/video/webpage of you or created a fake account under your name.	HU	79	82	16	13	5	2	0	2
	ES	84	87	14	8	2	4	0	1
	SER	71	71	14	12	11	14	4	2
	CRO	81	75	12	17	6	7	1	1
Someone blackmailed you that they will post private information/photo/video of you online if you don't do something sexual in return (e.g. send sexually explicit photos; have sex with them, etc.).	HU	86	94	7	1	0	1	7	3
	ES	92	96	6	2	2	2	0	0
	SER	92	98	6	1	1	1	1	0
	CRO	91	94	6	1	2	3	0	2
Someone posted intimate photo/video of you that you sent him/her privately without your consent (with or without visible body parts).	HU	82	87	12	6	6	8	1	0
	ES	87	94	6	5	7	1	0	0
	SER	91	96	4	2	4	2	1	0
	CRO	93	86	4	5	3	7	0	2
Someone threatened you online via e-mail, chat, comments sections (threats related to your physical safety).	HU	78	62	12	13	1	19	1	6
	ES	73	67	12	15	1	13	0	5
	SER	70	45	14	16	1	29	1	0
	CRO	75	56	15	18	9	18	1	7
Someone asked you to watch online porn or participate in acts inspired by online porn.	HU	92	82	5	7	1	7	2	4
	ES	82	82	9	4	9	9	0	5
	SER	91	85	4	4	5	10	0	1
	CRO	90	80	6	7	3	9	1	4

The key findings indicate that in all countries a significant majority of youth did not experience almost any of the individually listed forms of digital violence.

However, there is a clear difference between forms of violence that girls are more exposed to compared to boys.

In all countries, girls were exposed, to a greater extent, to sexualized comments online, to blackmail that their private information/photos/video will be published if they do not do something sexual in return, as well as non-consensual publishing of photos/videos they sent privately to someone (except in Croatia where it is the opposite situation for this last form of digital violence).

On the other hand, boys in all countries were more exposed to online threats via chat/e-mail/comments related to their physical safety, as well as pressure to watch online porn or participate in acts inspired by online porn (except in Spain where girls and boys were exposed to it equally). When it comes to threats, youth who have experienced it a few times or frequently, were asked to answer if it was a threat of sexual violence (rape) and although there were low percentages of them who reported it happening more than once, it was visible that they less frequently implied threat of rape in case of boys than in case of girls in Hungary, Spain and Serbia, while in Croatia it's the opposite situation. Additional questions about experiences in the digital sphere referred to practices of sending photos showing intimate parts of the body (nudes), exposure to receiving unwanted messages containing images of someone's intimate parts, exchange of passwords in a partner relationship, as well as pressure to change one's profile picture based on partner's demands.

Sending nudes to strangers

The majority of youth in all countries have never sent a photo showing intimate parts of the body to a person they never met live – 93% in Hungary, 92% in Spain and Croatia each and 93% in Serbia. Percentages are similar when it comes to those who have sent it because they wanted to and because they were asked to do it – 4% in Hungary, 6% in Spain, 4% in Serbia and Croatia each, did it because they wanted to and 3% in Hungary, 2% in Spain, 2% in Serbia and 3% in Croatia did it upon someone's request.

Sending nudes to their partners

The situation is similar with the question on sending nudes to intimate partners – 50% of youth in Hungary and Spain respectively, as well as 63% in Serbia and 65% in Croatia have never sent a photo showing intimate parts of the body to their intimate partner. Again, percentages are similar when it comes to those who have sent it because they wanted to and because they were asked to do it – 14% of youth in Hungary, 9% in Spain, 15% in Serbia and 12% in Croatia did it because they wanted to and 5% in Hungary, 2% in Spain, 6% in Serbia and 2% in Croatia did it because their partner asked them to do it. There were few cases (percentages lower than 5) of youth who admit they did it because of peer pressure. The rest of them have not been in an intimate relationship up to now.

Sexual harassment in the form of receiving unsolicited photo of someone's intimate body parts

One of the most common experiences of digital violence among youth in all countries is sexual harassment in the form of receiving an unsolicited photo of someone's intimate body parts in their inbox. This happened to 45% of young

someone's intimate body parts in their inbox. This happened to 45% of young people in Hungary (9% a few times or frequently), 35% in Spain (29% a few times or frequently), 48% in Serbia (39% a few times or frequently) and 53% in Croatia (36% a few times or frequently). In all countries, more girls than boys have experienced this, except in Serbia where they have equal experience of this. At the same time, in most countries, when it comes to girls, mostly different or same men were sending it to them, while when it comes to boys mostly different women or different people (both women and men) did it. The exception is Hungary where girls received it mostly from different men, while boys from mostly different women.

Sharing passwords with an intimate partner

Sharing passwords for social media accounts/emails etc. is not common in intimate relationship among youth in any of the four countries – 13% of youth respondents in Hungary, 6% in Spain, 20% in Serbia and 19% in Croatia have shared their passwords with their former or present boyfriend or girlfriend. In some cases, sharing the password led to its misuse, e.g. making changes on the profile, or posting things without the knowledge of the person. This varies from 1% in Spain to 11% in Croatia. Gender differences were prominent in the National Report for Serbia, as this happened in 15% of cases according to responses of girls and only in 4% of cases reported by boys, with girls being more frequently unsure whether or not this was abused (30%), while boys were unsure in 13% of cases.

Changing the profile picture

Sharing passwords for social media accounts/emails etc. is not common in When asked about the experience of changing the profile picture on the demand of an intimate partner, most youth in all countries stated that they don't have this experience – only 4% in Hungary have done it because their male partner demanded it, and 1% of them because their female partner demanded it; in Spain 5% of the girls answered affirmatively because their male partner suggested it and 8.7% and 1% of boys answered yes because their female partner and male partner respectively suggested it; in Serbia 10% of girls and 4% of boys experienced it, of which boys experienced this in a heterosexual relationship in 3% of cases and in homosexual relationship in 1% of cases; and in Croatia 5.5% of young people reported having done it because their male partner was asking it, while 2.8% reported that a female partner was asking it.

3.4. Youth reactions

Besides direct experiences, the questionnaire was used to investigate strategies youth think they could use if found in some situation of cyber sexual and gender-based violence. They were presented with imaginary situations in the form of WhatsApp conversations related to sexpredding i.e. disseminating photos containing sexual images of other people without their consent; sexual harassment in the form of „cyberflashing“ (sending unsolicited intimate photos); control in intimate partner relationships i.e. constant messaging and password exchange.

When given the scenario of a case of sexpredding or Revenge Porn, where a boy forwards naked photos of his girlfriend to his friends and those get more and more spread through social media, the participants were asked what they would do if they were the girl. Multiple answers were allowed in this question.

In all countries, the most common response of youth was that they would end the relationship, and this is something that more girls would do compared to boys.

In Hungary, 21% of youth would talk with their parents, 16% would turn to their friends for help, 9% would want revenge in a similar way and 12% would feel helpless and ashamed. In Spain, the second thing that youth would do, after breaking up, is to report the case to the police, as 58% of youth would do that. This is also the highest trust in the police of all four countries, as in others these percentages are not higher than between 20% and 30% (girls more than boys would decide to report it to the police). In addition to this, approximately 40% of youth in Spain would talk with their parents and friends, a little over 20% of them would want revenge and 14% of them would feel helpless and ashamed. In Serbia, an almost equal share of youth, around 30% of them, would talk to their parents, ask for advice from their friends or report the case to the police, respectively, while only a slightly lower share of them would wait for it to fade as they would be ashamed. In all cases, there are more girls' answers than boys'. An equal and certainly not insignificant share of both girls and boys would want revenge and would look for ways to shame their partner just as the partner shamed them – almost 20% of them. In Croatia, the second most common thing youth would do besides to break up is talking with friends (31%), feel helpless and ashamed and do nothing (24%), turn to their parents (23%), report it to the police (21%), try to have revenge (15%).

It is also important to emphasize that in all countries, the level of trust in teachers is very low. The highest is in Spain where 14% of youth would turn to a teacher they have trust in, but in the remaining three countries these percentages are lower than 10% – 9% of youth in Croatia, 6% in Hungary and 5% in Serbia. These numbers are indicative of a deep gap between youth and teachers, the feeling of distrust expressed by youth and lack of awareness as teachers are not recognized as someone they can turn to for help.

The next situation was based on an example of sexual harassment in a form of receiving an unsolicited picture of a penis in their inbox.

Again, similarities can be seen in all four countries, as most youth would react in the same way – block and report the person sending the picture – 78% of them

in Hungary, 73% in Spain, 79% in Serbia and 72% in Croatia. The gender dimension is particularly visible when it comes to the option of not doing anything, as they see no problem with this – although the overall percentage of youth responding like this is low (around 10% or lower), in all countries boys more than girls tend to see this situation as not problematic (this difference is especially prominent in Croatia where 16.5% of boys and 4.2% of girls assessed this situation as non-problematic).

From what could be seen in the open answers, some additional reactions would be: to tell an adult about the case and laugh at the person (Hungary); revenge including physical violence; ridicule the sender; show message to parents; publish it on Instastory with the name of the person (Croatia); inform the police, send a picture of their own penis, talk with parents, tell them to send it to their mom (Serbia). In Serbia, it was emphasized that, boys, to a greater extent than girls, state they would do “something else”, i.e. they give more answers to the open part of the question when compared to girls. Though few, these answers imply that boys lean towards using violence to solve the situation they found themselves in (“I would start writing to them, I would set up a meeting and when I meet them, I would beat them up, because I don’t support such a thing”; “I’d tell them to stop or there would be trouble”; “I would break their legs”).

When it comes to control in an intimate partner relationship, the first situation which they had to imagine being in, was that of a girl receiving five successive messages within only two minutes, which she is not immediately answering as she is helping someone with homework.

In all countries, most of the respondents see this situation as problematic and they would either ask themselves why can’t he just wait a second (annoyance and certain level of awareness) or think that they should talk about this as she/he has the right to time for her/himself (awareness) – 71% of youth in Hungary think like that, 74% in Spain, 65% in Serbia and 68% of youth in Croatia. At the same time, the figures that indicate no awareness of this behaviour being problematic should not be disregarded – 29% of youth in Hungary would respond immediately and apologize so the other person doesn’t think he/she doesn’t want to answer, 20.4% of the boys vs. 5.9% of the girls in Spain would do the same, as well as 32% of boys and 23% of girls in Serbia and 36% of boys and 23% of girls in Croatia. As it was pointed out in the National Report for Spain, but applies to all countries: “this, again, makes clear the importance of raising awareness against gender-based violence among boys. If they do not perceive it as a problem, how can it be expected of them to not be violent or at least toxic in their own relationships?”

The second situation regarding control in intimate partner relationship that was shown in the questionnaire was about the partner’s demand to exchange passwords (social media accounts, emails etc).

Most of youth in all countries look at their passwords as something private which shouldn’t be exchanged in a relationship where there is trust between the partners – 73% of youth in Hungary, 72% in Spain, 78% in Serbia and 73% in Croatia. Still, the number of those who think that exchanging passwords is a sign of trust and that you don’t have anything to hide, shouldn’t be neglected – 15% of youth in Hungary have this attitude, as well as 11% in Spain and 13% in Serbia and Croatia each. This opinion is usually more present among boys than girls (this is particularly visible in Serbia and Croatia where 7% (SER) and 9% (CRO) of girls and 23% (SER) and 22% (CRO) of boys are of this opinion. Finally, there are also

youth who would consent to exchanging passwords, but only if her/his partner does the same. This is the case with 12% of youth in Hungary, 7% in Spain, 8% in Serbia and 10% in Croatia.

3.5. Youth reactions as bystanders

Cyber sexual and gender-based violence often happens in online space where besides the perpetrator and survivors there are numerous other persons present as bystanders. At the same time, previously mentioned research indicates that youth would first turn to their peers if found in a situation of digital violence. Bearing this in mind, it is clear that youth themselves are, to each other, a significant link in the response to violence behaviour in the digital sphere. Therefore, we wanted to explore how they see themselves and how they would react in the role of bystanders of digital violence.

This set of questions included questions regarding the *sexualization of the female body* through sexualized commenting by a group of boys, posting intimate photos of a girl by her partner (“revenge porn”), example of a friend complaining about being blackmailed by her former boyfriend that he will send intimate photographs of her to her parents if she does not agree to have sex with him, and two examples of control in intimate relationship: *a partner’s request to erase contacts on social media, as well as an example of a girl telling her friend she changed her profile picture, which was her partner’s idea to show everyone she is taken.*

Sexualization of women’s bodies

These data present how youth would react to the imaginary situation of boys’ sexually commenting girls’ appearance in a chat group, from the perspective of a bystander.

The two most common attitudes among youth in all countries is an awareness in the form of rejecting the behaviour (24% in Hungary, 60% in Spain, 59% in Serbia and 36% in Croatia) and some form of tolerance (e.g. the “just boys being boys” attitude) (39% in Hungary, 38% in Serbia and 37% in Croatia). The difference is in Spain, where the second most common attitude was an active impulse to react (35% of youth), while this attitude was much less present in other countries - only 4% of youth in Hungary, 11% in Serbia and 7% in Croatia had it. On the other hand, the “just boys being boys” attitude is present among 19% of youth in Spain. All these answers are gendered – girls, more than boys, tend to reject this behaviour & have an impulse to react, while the opposite situation is true when it comes to tolerating it. There is also a certain percentage of youth who do not see this as a problem & admits these kinds of conversations occur among their friends as well – 16% in Hungary, 13% in Spain, 11% in Serbia and 10% in Croatia. In all countries boys are those who admit that this is not a problem much more than girls.

“Revenge porn”

With this question, we were interested to know how youth would react in the situation where a boy shared naked photos of his girlfriend to a friend and the photo is being shared in a chat group of their peers. They were asked to imagine that they are in that chat group and to answer how they would react.

Data on this question vary from country to country more than for other questions. Most youth are concerned about the girl whose photo is being shared – 29% of youth in Hungary would react by calling the girl & asking how she is, 63% in Spain, 47% in Serbia and 41% in Croatia. There is also a high number of those who would stand up against this behaviour – 34% in Hungary, 62% in Spain, 37% in Serbia and 32% in Croatia. In all countries girls expressed more concern than boys.

Still, a lot of youth have a victim blaming attitude, so they would reply to the chat with “should have known what’s going to happen”, especially in Serbia – 19% of them in Hungary, 9% in Spain, 35% in Serbia and 22% in Croatia. Also, there are those who see this behaviour as problematic, but would not react because nobody else is reacting and they do not want to argue with them – 14% in Hungary, 20% in Spain, 15% in Serbia and 15% in Croatia. Smaller percentages of youth (less than 10%) in all countries would just laugh at this situation – more boys than girls.

When asked if they would forward a leaked intimate photo to another friend, most of them in all countries said “no” – 85% of them in Hungary, 89% in Spain, 70% in Serbia and 79% in Croatia. In most countries the explicit answer “yes” was given by less than 5% of youth, except for Serbia where this percentage is 6%. Some of them also said they would “only share it with their best friend” – 12% in Hungary, 8% in Spain, 22% in Serbia and 14% in Croatia. Except for Serbia, this last option is more likely for boys than for girls. At the same time, some girls from Serbia explained in the open answer that they would resend it to a friend to seek for advice, as they alone would not be sure what to do.

Sexual blackmail

Within this question, the respondents were asked to imagine that they are receiving a message from a friend complaining about being blackmailed by her former boyfriend that he will send intimate photographs of her to her parents if she does not agree to have sex with him. They were supposed to answer how they would react to that kind of message.

Answers to this question show that the increase of the severity of the violence is proportionate with the increase of the need of youth to respond. The majority of youth in all countries see this behaviour as dangerous and as something that needs to be reported to an adult person (parent or school staff) or the police – 67% in Hungary, 70% in Spain, 80% in Serbia and 80% in Croatia. In all countries, girls chose this answer slightly more compared to boys. There is also a relatively high number of those who would advise to turn to an older friend or sibling – 19% in Hungary, 14% in Spain, 7% in Serbia and 9% in Croatia. In all countries the answers that included a victim blaming attitude, indifference towards the situation or the advice to sleep with the boy as he said this would be the last time, were represented with less than 10 percent. A gender difference is also visible in these answers, as boys are slightly more oriented towards victim blaming attitudes compared to girls. In national reports from Hungary and Serbia it was emphasized that some of the open answers from boys included threats and violence as a way of responding to this situation.

Control in partner relationship – erasing contacts

When asked for an advice from a friend regarding her/his partner’s request to unfollow someone, the majority of youth in all countries would see it as

problematic and would say that he/she does not have the right to do it or that this is about trust in a relationship which his/her partner does not have – 83% in Hungary, 89% in Spain, 88% in Serbia and 85% in Croatia. On the other hand, there are those who think this is something that needs to be done in a relationship as part of love and commitment – 17% in Hungary, 8% in Spain, 10% in Serbia and 12% in Croatia. In all countries, boys are those who are more likely to see this behaviour as a sign of love – for example 13% of boys compared to 3% of girls in Spain, or 21% of boys and 9% of girls in Croatia.

Control in partner relationship – changing the profile picture

At the end, when asked about the situation of a friend who changed her profile picture to a picture of herself and her boyfriend, because he wanted her to do it, in order for everyone to know that she is in a relationship, youth usually said that they see this as a bit problematic (they would not do it), but they would not react. This was the answer by 49% of youth in Hungary, 37% in Spain, 56% in Serbia and 27% in Croatia. On the other hand, there was a significant percentage of those who see this as jealousy and think she should not have done it – 35% in Hungary, 31% in Spain, 27% in Serbia and 43% in Croatia. Finally, the percentage of those who do not see this as problematic, but to the contrary, should not be neglected – 16% in Hungary, 23% in Spain, 14% in Serbia and 24% in Croatia. In all countries, boys are the ones who tend to see this as a romantic way of showing love.



4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having in mind all the results from this survey, it is visible that there are common things that should be done in all four countries when it comes to the issue of cyber sexual and gender-based violence in youth intimate relationships. While country-specific recommendations are provided in national reports, here we are providing a list of recommendations for all countries.

4.1. Education and awareness raising of youth

There should be different ways for youth to be informed on related issues, including:

- Self-esteem and self-confidence, personal and boundaries of others;
- Gender equality and gender stereotypes;
- Sexual and gender-based violence in general;
- Cyber sexual and gender-based violence;
- Teen-dating violence;
- Online risks and online protection.

Educational prevention programs should be put in place not only through informal education often implemented by NGOs, but also through formal primary and secondary education. These programs should be adapted to the communication needs of youth and how much time they spend online, as well as that most of the violent behaviours nowadays are happening both offline and online respectively, and that “virtual is real”. Further, programs should have an interactive, gender and age-sensitive approach that would be focused on:

- Changing attitudes (especially gender stereotypes and victim blaming attitudes);
- Informing about different types of (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence, especially on warning signs in intimate partner relationships and implicit violent behaviour that could be mistaken for love & care;
- Informing about consequences of (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence both psychological for the victim and legal for the perpetrator;
- Informing on ways of protection and support;
- Providing strategies for dealing with these issues, whether from a perspective of a victim, a perpetrator, or a bystander.

As it is visible that girls and boys are not equally exposed to the same forms of violence and that boys are more likely to have traditional masculine attitudes and/or violent ways of dealing with violence, we recommend to consider division of classes by sex for some of the topics. **Boys** should be provided with information and strategies on how to deconstruct their gender stereotypes and attitudes related to gender-based violence, resist the patriarchal norms and peer pressure and how to react in situations of cyber SGBV. On the other hand, **girls** should be empowered in their attitudes towards violent behaviour as unacceptable and encouraged to recognize it in their own relationships and seek help from either peers or adults (parents, school representatives).

Besides educational preventive programs, it is necessary to create and provide **gender and age-sensitive mechanisms of protection and support** to youth who have experienced any form of gender-based violence, including in the cyber sphere. **Adequate legal sanctions** for perpetrators are also necessary both from the perspective of a victim, and from the perspective of preventing further crimes from happening.

In addition, there is a need for **international, national and local awareness raising campaigns (including campaigns on social media designed for youth)** from different actors in society, in order to make the problem of cyber sexual and gender-based violence among youth visible as a social phenomenon with possible severe consequences that has to be dealt with.

4.2. Awareness raising of parents and teachers

To have good prevention programs for youth, it is crucial to have adults who are closest to them open and interested in this topic, as well as well-informed about it. In that sense, it is necessary to have systemic approach to educational programs for teachers, as well as different possibilities for parents to get involved and learn about all the issues stated above.

As we could see, youth do not have a lot of trust in parents, and especially in teachers, so besides building knowledge, it is necessary for them to work on being more proactive and building trust between youth and adults (i.e. parents and teachers).

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