

Youth Participation Working Group

Date: 30 April 2026 | **Time:** 11:00 – 12:00 CET | **Location:** online

Participants

Iris Strasser (SIC AT), Benedicte Chevalier (SIC BE), Signe Sandfeld Hansen (SIC DK), Kaisa Önlén (SIC FI), Jeremy Larrivoire (SIC FR), Ivan Caleta (SIC HR), Tracy Hogan (SIC IE), Liudas Mikalkevičius (SIC LT), Ilda Sukurica (SIC LU), Ieva Megne (SIC LV), Kristin Kjønneøy Slettvåg (SIC NO), Natalia Wójcicka (SIC PL), Marisa Lucas and Ruth Ferrony (SIC PT), Liv Agdalen (SIC SE), Carolina Fruscione (EUN), Chiara Antonelli (EUN), Irene Di Giorgio (EUN), Francesco Romano (EUN).

Recording of the meeting can be found [here](#).

Objectives

The objective of the meeting was to provide an overview of the upcoming second evaluation of the BIK+ strategy, exchange best practices, and gather feedback on the first evaluation from the youth coordinators.

Minutes – background information

The first evaluation of the BIK+ Strategy, delivered in April 2025 was a consultation-based review of progress and success since the strategy's adoption. In the context of the upcoming second evaluation, this session addressed the topic by inviting SICs to share their lessons learned from the first evaluation and exchange best practices.

Youth Coordinators were invited to respond to the following guiding questions:

- Were you involved in the first evaluation? What was your role?
- What worked well? What could have been improved?
- Regarding the focus groups conducted during the consultation, was 60 minutes sufficient to gather comprehensive answers?
- Was the number of participants - 10- appropriate, or were there too many?

- Are there any lessons learned that you would like to share?
- Which dissemination channels are used in your country? Which work best?
- Which channels work best when reaching children below the age of 12? And those
- What are the most effective techniques for reaching children in vulnerable or disadvantaged situations? Are there any good practices you could share?
- Are there any practical constraints related to survey dissemination you would like to share?

Were you involved in the first evaluation? What was your role?

SICs from IE, LT, NO, PL, and HR were involved in the first evaluation of the BIK+ strategy. SIC IE and LT participated directly in consultations with young people, supported by two colleagues who assisted with organising icebreakers, facilitating discussions, and reporting. SIC PL conducted consultations with primary school participants rather than using a youth panel. In Norway, the consultations were carried out by the awareness centre, while the youth coordinator was responsible for recruiting participants and providing incentives, such as compensation. Overall, SICs involved in the evaluation typically worked in teams of three facilitators, as the number of participants required additional support. It was also noted that collecting responses often took longer than expected, as participants needed time to reflect on their online experiences.

What worked well?

SICs agreed that participants generally felt empowered to take part in the consultation process. SIC LT and IE highlighted the usefulness of having structured notes for each of the three pillars of the BIK+ strategy. Additionally, the consultation process itself was considered valuable in refreshing participants' understanding of the strategy and encouraging reflection on its impact on young people's digital lives.

What could have been improved?

SIC PL indicated that conducting consultations with an established youth panel would likely have been more effective than working with school participants, who required

more time to engage, particularly girls, who were more hesitant to participate. SIC LT, NO, and IE suggested that more specific and focused questions would have facilitated deeper responses and reduced the overall duration of the sessions, which could extend to up to two hours. More targeted questions may also have helped participants reflect more efficiently on their experiences. Overall, SICs agreed that introducing a survey for the second evaluation could help streamline the process and collect more in-depth information.

Regarding the focus groups conducted during the consultation, was 60 minutes sufficient to gather comprehensive answers?

SICs generally agreed that 60 minutes was insufficient to gather comprehensive responses. In most cases, discussions required up to two hours to address all questions meaningfully. This extended duration proved tiring for both participants and facilitators. As a result, SICs confirmed that a survey format for the second evaluation could help reduce time constraints while still capturing detailed insights.

Was the number of participants - 10- appropriate, or were there too many?

Opinions varied regarding the optimal number of participants. Some SICs considered ten participants to be a balanced number that supported effective group dynamics. SIC IE reported successfully conducting a session with up to 25 participants. SIC NO emphasised the importance of balancing participants with prior knowledge of the topic and those encountering it for the first time. Conversely, SIC PL found smaller groups to be more effective in fostering open discussion and ensuring that all participants have the opportunity to contribute. It was also noted that group composition matters: participants who do not know each other may engage more openly, whereas pre-existing dynamics in school classes can influence participation (e.g. boys speaking more assertively while girls may be more reserved). Icebreakers were highlighted as essential for creating an engaged environment.

Are there any lessons learned that you would like to share?

Several lessons were identified regarding youth engagement. Icebreakers were considered crucial in helping young participants feel comfortable and open, particularly when they are unfamiliar with consultation settings. It was also

suggested that sessions should be shorter or include breaks; however, maintaining engagement after breaks is essential, as participants may otherwise disengage. Young people should also be informed that they can withdraw from the session at any time, especially if discussions become too demanding or sensitive. SIC DK emphasised the importance of creating engaging, participatory sessions that involve young people in co-creation and decision-making processes. Moving beyond traditional focus group formats and reducing reliance on direct questioning may also enhance engagement.

Which dissemination channels are used in your country? Which work best?

Most SICs rely on schools and teachers as their primary dissemination channels. SIC HR reported that direct institutional distribution through schools and teachers is particularly effective. Additional channels include the Croatian academic network (CARNET), television, and social media. SICs also noted that parental involvement in surveys is often limited due to privacy concerns, and parents who do engage tend to represent only a subset of the population.

Which channels work best when reaching children below the age of 12? And those above?

SIC LT engages younger children through consortium partners working in kindergartens, where smartphone use is increasingly common. However, surveys for this age group must be carefully adapted, using simple language, shorter formats, and engaging elements due to limited attention spans. SIC HR primarily reaches children under 12 through parents and teachers, using channels such as parent-teacher meetings and classroom-based materials.

What are the most effective techniques for reaching children in vulnerable or disadvantaged situations? Are there any good practices you could share?

To reach vulnerable groups, SIC LT identified schools, particularly in suburban and rural areas, as key access points, as they often have higher concentrations of such students. Teachers were considered more effective than parents for engagement, as parents may be reluctant to consent to participation or may not represent the broader population. Similarly, SIC NO relies primarily on schools rather than families to recruit

participants under 12, noting that family-based approaches may exclude more vulnerable children. It was also suggested that the presence of a trusted adult can support participation for some children. SIC HR reported using a train the trainer approach, providing offline toolkits to social workers, health professionals, and local NGOs already embedded within communities.

Are there any practical constraints related to survey dissemination you would like to share?

SIC HR identified several practical challenges, including survey fatigue in schools, difficulties in obtaining parental consent, and the need to comply with GDPR requirements. Ensuring that survey language is accessible and age-appropriate for younger children was also highlighted as a key concern. Additionally, it was noted that factors such as learning disabilities and limited attention spans are often underestimated, despite their significant impact on participation and data quality.

Additional Information

The next YPWG meeting will take place on Thursday, 21 May 2026 at 11.00 CEST.

 better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu

 [@Insafenetwork](https://twitter.com/Insafenetwork)
[@safeinternetday](https://twitter.com/safeinternetday)

 facebook.com/saferinternet
facebook.com/SaferInternetDay

 linkedin.com/company/better-internet-for-kids

 youtube.com/@betterinternetforkids

 info@betterinternetforkids.eu

Better Internet for Kids