REACT
Raising awareness and Empowerment
Against Child Trafficking
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SURVEY RESULTS
Italy

REACT

Save the Children Italia ONLUS

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Introduction

The REACT project is innovative both in its subject and in its method, given that links between new technologies and trafficking and exploitation have been little explored, particularly with regards to child trafficking, and due to the involvement of children both in a survey and then in workshops where they are consulted about the awareness raising campaigns to be developed and run in each partner country.

The survey which is the subject of this report was preceded by a desk review which gathered the most up-to-date and relevant material on the project topic. The desk review revealed that overall the main links between trafficking and the use of new technologies was for sexual exploitation of women in the recruitment phase. Through online marriage or modelling agencies, women were lured into believing that agents could procure them safe passage to Western European countries by way of a false marriage or job offer. However there is not enough information to come to the conclusion that marriage agencies are directly involved in trafficking but there are strong indications that at least some marriage agencies and introduction services are. While adolescent girls could also be enticed into false job offers through modelling agencies, they are not the main target. Furthermore, it is a mere form of advertising, and not the key component of the recruitment process which most

often occurs in such circumstances during face-to-face meetings between the victim and the trafficker. For profiles of children at risk, the desk review found the Council of Europe report from 2003 still relevant, particularly with regards to the kinds of child victims of sexual exploitation by way of the use of new technologies. In fact, according to the COE report (2003)[1] victims can be totally innocent victims or they may contribute to their victimisation.

Totally innocent victims are:
- victims seeking "innocuous" sites, who stray onto others which are far from innocuous, e.g. young people (children) lured onto pornographic sites posing as cartoon sites; job-seekers decoyed by fraudulent employment agencies (using Web sites as they might use press advertisements); and
- victims using potentially risky sites, e.g. "chat-rooms", dating sites, marriage agency sites, without being aware of the dangers (perhaps as a result of youth and/or innocence).

Victims who contribute to their victimisation include people who, knowing the risks, continue to use potentially dangerous sites, such as marriage agency sites, either because:
- they believe that nothing "bad" will happen to them (they overestimate their own intelligence or underestimate the traffickers' cunning), or
- their situation is desperate, and they knowingly accept the traffickers' exploitative tactics in the hope of escaping it.

The use of new information technologies for trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation *creates different kinds of victims*.

The COE report (2003) cites Ms Monika Gerstendörfer[2], a psychologist and member of the group of specialists of the Council of Europe, who describes the various kind of victims as:
- women and children who are directly abused through the production of videos;
- children and women abused/tortured for the purpose of pornographic productions (pictures, videos, interactive CD-ROMs);
- children and women from poor countries and/or countries in war;
- surfing children who get into contact with interactive porn or videos;
- surfing children who get into contact with and/or are being "groomed" by pedocriminals in the Internet Relay Chat;
- children "made" perpetrators by pedocriminals or others by abusive use of interactive "games" on CD-ROM;
- children whose behaviour is strongly influenced by the content on the Internet, they are forming their opinions and attitudes about sexuality, about norms and acceptable practices;
- persons who survived porn productions retraumatised because of the new possibilities of the IRC, the WWW and other IT tools;
- re-traumatised young adults and adults who survived such "productions" in their childhood or youth, but have knowledge about the possibilities via IT to prolong their suffering (distribution of their pictures etc.);
- some victims of porn productions who dare to speak in public about their torture and are threatened by perpetrators.

On the other hand, information regarding other forms of exploitation and the use of new technologies was so scarce as to be insufficient for the purposes of our research.

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[1] Donna M. Hughes, *The Impact of the Use of New Communications and Information Technologies on Trafficking in Human Beings for Sexual Exploitation. A Study of the Users*, COE 2001

[2] Monika Gerstendörfer, psychologist, Lobby für Menschenrechte (lobby for human rights, NGO) Metzingen, Germany

The desk review found that the above list to be a good starting point for identifying relevant child subjects amongst all potential new information technology users and those known vulnerable groups in each partner country for the purposes of our survey. The only consideration to add was that of new forms of technology not contemplated at the time of the COE report (2003) such as social networks.

Summary of legal framework

Trafficking, exploitation and protection of separated children
There are two main legislative instruments in Italy which dealing with trafficking and exploitation of human beings:

1. Law Decree 286/98[3] on Provisions concerning Immigration and Norms on the Foreigner's Condition and its implementation Presidential Rules Decree 394/1999: under this law, at article 18, a person who has suffered violence or exploitation and a person whose life is in danger can receive special protection, entering the assistance and social integration programme.

Any victim has the right to receive protection and assistance, this including psychological support, health assistance, vocational training, and social integration. Any victim has the right to receive interim care in a first reception centre and then be transferred to a protected shelter where long-term protection is provided. Under this programme, any victim, be they adult or child, shall be given a permit to stay in Italy on humanitarian grounds for an initial period of 6 months that can be further extended for 1 year. The permit can be eventually converted into a study

[3] As modified by Law 189/2002.

or work permit. There are two ways to access the programme: where the victim is detected by law enforcement agents in the course of an investigative operation, the victim must declare his/her exploitation; otherwise, the victim may simply express the will to enter the programme, with the support of an NGO, without being obliged to denounce his/her situation to law enforcement agents. Furthermore, under Art.18(6), people who have been punished for having committed a crime while they were minors (even if, in the meantime, they have turned 18), can be placed in a reintegration/rehabilitation programme which, for foreigners, allows them to receive the abovementioned permit of stay on humanitarian grounds.

Finally, Article 18 provides for a toll-free number which victims of trafficking or exploitation can call for information and assistance by way of referral to the nearest service for victim protection. Furthermore, this number assists those services to locate secure shelters for victims, both for emergency and longer-term protection.

> **2.** Law 228/2003 on Measures against trafficking in persons. This law, introduced in August 2003, has modified articles 600, 601, 602 and 416 of the Penal code. Article 600 is about slavery and servitude, 601 on trafficking in human beings, 602 on the slave trade and article 416 on the punishment of those involved in the crimes mentioned in the previous articles. Reference is made to the forms of exploitation punishable by the law, such as "Placing or holding a person in conditions of slavery or servitude", as well as the means considered unlawful, such as the use of deception in recruitment of the victim, or the threat or use of violence. Furthermore, both cross-border trafficking and trafficking within Italy are covered. There is no explicit mention of the irrelevance of deception or coercion in the case of children, however there are harsher penalties in terms of imprisonment for the trafficking of children, rather than adults.

Prosecution of traffickers does occur; perhaps not as much as one would expect given the extension of the phenomenon, but more so than other countries: "Even before 2003, Italy had been more active than other EU countries in prosecuting child traffickers. Article 600 of the Penal Code had been used to punish traffickers who brought Roma children to Italy especially to beg."[4]

Articles 12 and 13 of the law set up a special fund to support assistance programmes and for the creation of a special programme of assistance. Victims can receive assistance in a protected shelter for 3 months that can be extended to 6 months.

It is important to note that separated children (EU and non-EU nationals) detected in Italy, have the right to receive protection first and foremost because they are children, thus independently
from their status as victims of trafficking or exploitation. Upon detection, they should be accommodated in a secure shelter and relevant authorities informed of his/her presence (the Public Prosecutor in the Juvenile Court). In any case, children cannot be expelled, save to preserve the right to family unity.
Since 1998[5], children have had the right to a permit of stay linked to their "under-age" status, convertible on their 18th birthday for study, work (if they have a contract) or job search (if they are unemployed at the time of conversion).
In 2009, however, a new law[6] was introduced which introduces more restrictive criteria to convert the permit of stay upon 18. As a consequence, only children who arrived in Italy at least three years before their 18th birthday, and took part in an NGO programme for 2 years will have the possibility to apply for conversion: otherwise they will be expelled on reaching 18. So far, children turning 18 who arrived in Italy prior to

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[4] Dottridge, *"Kids as commodities? Child trafficking and what to do about it"* International Federation Terre des Hommes, 2004, pg. 56, http://www.childtrafficking.org/pdf/user/kids_as_commodities_child_trafficking_and_what_to_do_about_it.pdf (accessed 18.2.2010)
[5] See article 31 of the Law Decree 286/1998 and its implementing regulation, Presidential Decree 394/1999, particularly at article 28.
[6] Law 94/2009

the law coming into effect have been recognised the right to remain in Italy by courts. The effects of this change in law for other children is under close scrutiny.

Sexual exploitation of children online
Law no.269 of 1998, entitled "Laws against exploitation of children for prostitution, pornography, and sexual tourism, being new forms of slavery", introduced important changes to Italy's penal code and penal procedures allowing law enforcement agencies and the Judiciary to more effectively combat child sexual exploitation particularly online. This law was followed in 2006 by Law no. 38 "Measures to combat the sexual exploitation of children and paedopornography, also using the internet" which introduced further criminal acts and more severe penalties for existing crimes involving child exploitation.

In addition to Article 600 bis of the penal code regarding the crime of exploitation of children in prostitution, anyone who pays to have sexual relations with a child from 14 to 18 years of age (instead of the maximum of 16 years) is punishable. In Article 600 ter of the penal code, not only the making, selling and distribution of child pornography is prohibited, but the important act of "spreading" (*diffusione*), child pornography, even for free, was included to catch all those persons exchanging files with images of child sexual abuse online, for which there is rarely an economic gain.

Virtual child pornography is also prohibited through the introduction of Article 600 quater, which punishes anyone who possesses child pornography, even where images are electronic and modified (eg. using Photoshop) so that a child appears to be involved in abusive acts when in fact they were not.

The Postal and Communications Police derive their investigative powers from the above laws, which permit them to undertake certain acts undercover, such as exchanging child sexual abuse images, in order to identify criminals who are involved in the above crimes. A specific "National Centre for monitoring child pornography online" was set up to analyse all relevant information and reports received both from international and national sources.

Survey Description

The Italian survey for the REACT project sought to shed more light on the existing links between the trafficking phenomenon and the use of new technologies. Through the identification of a wide variety of key informants for both trafficking and new technologies, and vulnerable groups of children in Italy, the survey sought to gather all relevant information and understand any possible connections between child trafficking and exploitation and new technologies.
This survey will serve as the basis for the development of the awareness raising campaign, to assist in defining the target group/s for the campaign and the key message or messages to be delivered.

A general Survey Methodology was developed together with all project partners, with each partner adapting this methodology to their individual needs. In Italy, this methodology was adapted for key informants and children as described below. Given the novelty of the topic, the methodologies were adapted as far as possible to obtain the most information possible from those approached.

KEY INFORMANTS

Given the scarcity of specific information on our research topic resulting from the desk review, the methodology chosen to engage with key informants was that of exploratory/semi-structured interviews. A Survey Methodology paper was developed, with lines of questioning formulated according to the type and background of the informant to be contacted.

The following types of key informants were explored:

- law enforcement agents and national institutions;
- relevant international agencies such as Interpol, Europol, UNODC;
- hotlines (for children who suffer any kind of violence, not just trafficking);
- moderators of online discussion forums or chat rooms;
- social workers and other welfare workers, particularly from NGOs working with children;
- lawyers and the judiciary;
- researchers.

Initial Survey Results

The main key informant identified was the Communications Police who, in Italy, combat cybercrime and in particular the spread of child sexual abuse images online, with a particular mandate to identify victims portrayed in the images found. As their focus is mainly on sexual exploitation, the Central Operational Service's (Servizio Centrale Operativo) Anti-Trafficking Unit was also contacted as a complementary source of information on the trafficking phenomenon as it involves also adults and other types of exploitation in Italy.

Unfortunately no correlation was found between these two Police divisions, hence the Communications Police have no evidence of trafficking, and the Anti-Trafficking Unit do not systematically collect data on the use of new technologies in trafficking cases.

Furthermore, the Communications Police noted that trafficking and the production and publication of child sexual abuse images online are two distinct phenomena as the latter does not require the child to be moved, but rather, using computers and the internet, a paedophile is more likely to move themselves to a place where they can more easily find children to be exploited (sex tourism). It is also economically more viable if the exploiter moves to where the child is, rather than the opposite occurring.

At an international level, this view is shared by Europol, Child Sexual Exploitation Unit, who added that the production of child sexual abuse images is a crime that occurs most frequently within the family unit, and the increase in controls by cybercrime units on online payments has meant that the selling of child abuse images online is no longer safe nor profitable, therefore the abuse does not become exploitation. This does not exclude the possibility that in some parts of the world, such as South-East Asia, children may still be trafficked for sexual exploitation, including for the production of child pornography, but currently Europol has no evidence of this.

What emerges from our interviews with the above key informants from their law enforcement point of view, is that the main connections between the use of new technologies and trafficking occurs when traffickers attempt to recruit children (but also adults) for example, through online modelling or marriage agencies or exploit them by advertising their sexual services on the internet, or sexual abuse images. A major case discovered by the Hellenic Police, for example, involved Russian models whose sexual services were advertised in Greece, and they were then transported for that purpose.

In these cases, however, while children are vulnerable due to their age, they are not specifically targeted because of their age since traffickers are interested in quantity and not necessarily the specific qualities of the person they find. In that sense, in Italy, one of the most well-known cases is that of Polish men (not children) recruited via online job advertisements for exploitation in farm work.

Among other key informants with experience in child exploitation and trafficking, including NGO workers, lawyers, and judiciary, a few single cases of children who had used mobile phones to assist in their clandestine travel to Italy were recounted. They were not trafficked but smuggled, and there is little or no evidence of their exploitation being facilitated in Italy due to the use of new technologies.

Contacting researchers was a positive experience, resulting in a fortuitous snowball effect. Several interesting research areas were touched, including New Technologies and Migrants in Europe particularly Second Generation Immigrants in Italy, child sexual abuse images online, and the use of new media for the spread of anti-trafficking messages to youth in Ukraine. However, the link to trafficking was found to be tenuous, and as yet unexplored.

Feedback from those interviewed is that our research is innovative and certainly very interesting for all categories. Unfortunately, website and social network Moderators were not willing to be interviewed and are possibly not as relevant as previously thought since there are few websites/chats/forums that youth use where moderators are called on to directly intervene. Website administrators may be a better source of information where their website is monitored automatically by way of reports of inappropriate or offensive behaviour.

The use of new technologies is a marginal issue for those who work in contact with child victims of trafficking or exploitation, and researchers have yet to embrace this issue in their work, leaving little possibility for further information to be found at this point in time from any further sources.

CHILDREN

Key informants thought to be even more important for the survey are the children at risk themselves. Our approach to the survey was dictated by the need to identify a group of children who would be willing and available to be involved in the research, and then to identify the most acceptable method to gather information from those children, being mindful of their age and experience.

The group of children chosen were those attending Save the Children Italy's day centre CivicoZero, who use the free internet access, being for the most part foreign, unaccompanied minors, and thus a group previously identified by Save the Children as a group at risk if not of trafficking, at least of exploitation in Italy.

Upon consultation with Save the Children staff expert in child participation and new technologies, a questionnaire tailored to potential adolescent respondents was chosen for the survey's format. The questionnaire aimed not only to discover how young migrants use new technologies in Italy but also how they used it in their countries of origin, and what role they may have had in the planning and undertaking of the migratory journey, and therefore any possible links to child trafficking.

The survey aims which we hoped to achieve through this youth participation were extracted from the project's Survey Methodology Paper and considered together with the overall aim above. Three of the five survey aims were found to be relevant to this activity, with their achievement to be obtained through the exploration of relevant thematic areas:

1. Use of new technologies by children at risk: their ability to access new technologies and their familiarity with them (how they use them and how aware they are of the potential risks)

Thematic areas to explore:
- where and how they access the internet;
- how much time they spend on the internet, and how much time they dedicate to social networks, YouTube, or other activities/websites;
- how they use mobile phones to contact or be contacted by friends/acquaintances or strangers;
- if/how they use other tools considered new technologies;
- their familiarity with new technologies;
- what programmes and websites they use to contact others on the internet;

- what opportunities and risks they see in connection with the use of new technologies;
- what do they think of the Internet – is it just a means of communication or something which can be a substitute for reality?
- how much does Internet affect their lives?

2. User profiles: children at risk or victims of trafficking, traffickers/exploiters, clients, other users

Thematic areas to explore:
- personal details of the participant: age, nationality, education, and any other useful information regarding a potential victim that can be obtained without infringing their anonymity;
- what kinds of people they search for online and why;
- what kinds of people seek them out online and why;
- how do they search for people and/or how do people find them?
- What kinds of people can be found on the internet.

3. Role that awareness raising campaigns could play in preventing new technologies' potentially harmful effects.

Thematic area to explore:
- invite reflection on a few awareness raising campaigns presented which use different communicative styles and ask children which one they prefer.

The questionnaire was then drafted with as many closed questions as possible in order to guarantee comparable data and consistency. Due to the length of the questionnaire, there was no space for investigation of the final aim regarding the role of awareness raising campaigns, and it was decided to postpone this line of inquiry until the campaign design workshops involving children.

The contents of the questionnaire were divided in two parts: in the first part, our interest was focused on the way interviewees use mobile phones and connect to the internet. Regarding the use of internet, details were sought about where and by what means they connect (internet points/cafés, at home, or with their mobile phones etc) and what kind of use they make of the internet (email, social networks etc), both in Italy and other countries.

In the second part, researchers went further into depth regarding the specific activities children engage in and content they view when using new technologies, such as which specific websites they usually visit, which chat rooms and/or social networks etc. Furthermore, there was a particular focus on the way teenagers interact with people they meet in chat rooms and social networks and what kind of people they search for (family and friends and/or new people). To that end, a series of questions were specifically asked about the way interviewees react to certain situations or, if they had never faced such, how they would react (chatting with unknown adults, sharing personal information, talking about sex with strangers etc).

Survey Conduction

The survey was conducted with an average seventeen year old age-group of which most of the interviewees were males (47 boys and 3 girls). For 38 participants, the survey was set in a specific context, the day-centre CivicoZero which receives children at risk and offers them services such as internet access, legal support, help to find a job etc. The interviewees who attend CivicoZero already knew the youth workers who were, at the beginning, the mediators between the minors and researchers. The remaining 12 participants were interviewed within their residential care facility by a Cultural-Linguistic mediator from Save the Children.

The research team used a questionnaire, administered to 41 teenagers during face-to-face encounters. In some cases, other adolescents at the Centre, cultural mediators or peer educators assisted in interpretation. On one occasion a focus group of 7 Romanian boys of Roma origin and Moldovan boys was formed, and

with the assistance of a Cultural-linguistic mediator, questions were raised and discussed based on the thematic areas of the questionnaire. The Romanian boys had much more experience with internet use than the Moldovan boys, and dominated the exercise. Their schooling, family connections in Italy and length of stay (since they were very young children) makes their profile perhaps closer to Italian teenagers than unaccompanied foreign children.

Overall, the interviewees were a heterogeneous group where some of the teenagers had quite good familiarization with the opportunities offered from New Technologies and others no. It appeared that this difference depended, in part, on the length of their stay in Italy but also on their use of New Technologies (or lack thereof) before they arrived in Italy.

It was apparent from the first interviews that the most recent arrivals in the country, if they didn't have experience in surfing on the Internet, had little capability in this regard. For these reasons answers obtained from the interviews were very different when the questions concerned specific ways of using new technologies (NTs) and/or attitudes and behaviours regarding social relations on the internet. Each questionnaire was conducted with a view to maintaining a relaxed atmosphere and tailored, where necessary, to the needs and background of the youth involved.

Survey Results

Overview

From the survey it emerged that few children interviewed had access to computers and internet prior to arriving in Italy (19/50). Little more than a half had mobile phones in their countries of origin (27/50), and very few used mobile phones or internet to arrange their travel to Italy. It would seem that new arrivals make limited use of mobile phones, doing little more than making and, more often, receiving phone calls. While language may be an issue for new arrivals, for everyone, the main issue when it comes to accessibility is the affordability of technology. That is why the type of mobile phone is not the determining factor in

its use. And why internet, while being one of the most requested activities at CivicoZero, is not a necessity, but a recreational activity that attracts many youth to the centre because it is free.

Therefore those adolescents who have been in Italy for a relatively short period are less net savvy, and many wish they could do more on the internet. It became clear from our observation that, given the opportunity, those who had more recently arrived in Italy and did not have good NT skills gradually developed those skills over time. Hence, more skilful internet-users appeared to be a future projection of these new arrivals.

At any rate a significant group of interviewees showed a tendency towards the same kinds of risky behaviours typically displayed by Italian adolescents in their use of ICT, and it usually they had been in Italy for a longer time than most.

Example

In one case, a youth described accessing a Chat option (using Bluetooth technology) in his mobile phone through which he could send and receive messages with others using the same tool within a certain range of his location. When this option is turned on, people write him a message with a brief description of themselves, and after exchanging a few messages to get to know the person better, often they request to meet him in person. (Romanian boy, 18years)

Use of new technologies

Half of the interviewees used NTs before they came in Italy. Mobile phones are most commonly used in countries of origin (29 persons out of 50 in total), then computers (19/50) with 15 interviewees who regularly used a computer to surf on the Internet. Once in Italy, for the majority of the group Internet becomes a way to stay in contact with families and friends, to search for information about their own countries (mainly for those who come from conflict zones or countries at war), as a tool for entertainment (watching music videos, chatting with new

people, playing video games). Google and You Tube (37/50) are the main internet tools used, followed by email used by 30 of them; fewer play video games (15/50 often not online) and only 10 interviewees use the internet to make phone calls.

Regarding mobile phones, most use them in a very simple way: to call, and send and receive sms. This is mainly because the majority cannot afford to do much more than this, and may not have the right kind of phone (not hi-tech enough), but a significant part demonstrated to be quite skilful using mobile phones. In fact, even if only 10 interviewees habitually use their mobile phones to access internet, 21 make films with it, 14 download music, ringtones and images, and 19 share these kinds of files.

Almost all of the group chat on the Internet (39 out of 50 chat using Yahoo messenger, MSN Messenger, Hi5 - a Romanian chat room - etc...) and are part of social networks (Facebook etc.). More than half the group use social networks as an opportunity to meet new people but only 9 of them declare to have met strangers whom they have gotten to know on the net in person. Six of them expressed an interest in meeting people in person and 7 interviewees reported knowing of friends who had met strangers after chatting with them.

Behaviour on the internet
Some interviewees attending CivicoZero were Italian girls who were friends of foreign unaccompanied minors who regularly attended the centre. These girls demonstrated riskier behaviour while using the internet than most of the other interviewees.

Example

"I'm happy when someone asks me out on the internet, otherwise I would never go out. It's easier to get a date using the Internet because we can't see each other (it's a way to overcome embarrassment). This specific situation partly intrigues me, partly scares me." (Italian girl, 17 years)

This girl's statement appears to show risky behaviour fed by her loneliness ("otherwise I would never go out") and lack of self-confidence ("It's easier to get a date using the Internet because we can't see each other"), which encourages her to make friends online.

A Romanian boy told researchers about some of his friends who met up with people known on the internet: "Sometimes strangers make fun of them but nothing bad has ever happened (to his friends)". (Romanian boy, 17 years)

When considering how interviewees react in certain situations arising from their internet use, questions were asked to ascertain what kind of contact might bother them. Only 10 answered positively to the question "would it bother you if someone proposed to meet you in person?", while for 11 of them it would not be a problem. Even though only 10 interviewees had actually ever received an invitation to meet someone in person, of those ten, 6 accepted. Therefore in most cases, this kind of invitation would be acceptable. Further, 14 interviewees had already chatted with unknown adults and 13 of them would chat with adults if the possibility arose.

Furthermore, 5 interviewees declared having spoken about sex with strangers and a further 8 interviewees would not mind doing so in future. The attitude is one of cautious acceptance of certain situations: "It doesn't bother me to chat with adults because I know I don't have to meet them in person" (Albanian boy, 17 years), and a certain sense of self-preservation "If someone bothers me, I just tell them to bug off and cancel their contact". (Eritrean boy, 17 years)

A moment from the focus group

During the focus group Romanian boys talked about an adult-only chat room with optional web-cam which they use to chat with girls. They flirt with them and if things are going well, they try to encourage them to strip. They mentioned that when they access someone's webcam they sometimes find out they are chatting with men, but instead of being offended, they just make fun of them.

Behaviour towards our interviewees

A strong sense of self-preservation appears to lead to a greater level of awareness and intolerance of disrespectful behaviour. In fact, the majority of interviewees do not accept receiving offensive messages (18 teenagers would be bothered by this) or having personal information shared without their authorisation (15). Of those who had received offensive messages, 8 preferred to face the situation by themselves. In fact, only 2 referred to another person about what happened (one spoke with a friend and the other with his parents). Regarding the unauthorised posting of personal photos, the answers are evenly spread: out of 25 respondents[7], 15 of them would be bothered yet 10 would not. Of those who would be bothered, some are young asylum-seekers who are very guarded in general when it comes to spreading any kind of personal information about themselves. Of those who are not, it is less surprising, given the way social networks are used nowadays, where publishing friends' photos without authorization is the norm and most are used to seeing photos of themselves on the internet.

Regarding the posting and exchange of files on the Internet, most of the interviewees stated that they download files (30/50) and 19 posted material. Considering that 39 of the interviewees use chat and social networks, it is assumed that the lack of posting could be either to defend their privacy or due to a limited familiarity with this aspect of NTs.

No cases of sharing personal photos in exchange of phone top-ups arose from the interviews, despite the specific question in this regard and despite having heard from operators of such cases among those children in financial difficulties. While it was a sensitive topic to address, some teenagers (6 of them) stated they would not be bothered by such a proposition. One even replied "I wish!"[8] (Bosnian boy, 17 years)

[7] Specific question not raised during the focus group, and others did not reply due to the interviewer's difficulty in asking the question due to lack of internet experience, or linguistic problems.
[8] "Magari!" – Typical Italian phrase!

While some interviewees mentioned occasions when they had been contacted online by people who wanted to discuss sex , none described ever having been in a dangerous situation, such as being groomed or meeting with strangers for sexual encounters. Amongst this limited number of respondents, the attitude towards such conduct showed a real understanding of the difference between the real world and the virtual world, even for those who were interested in social networks in order to find a partner through the internet.[9]

New technologies and migration

The vast majority of teenagers did not use Internet to organise their journey to Italy. In fact, while 9 used internet and mobiles phones to prepare their journey and/or during travel, the vast majority did not. An Afghan boy, recounting his experience, stated not to have used a mobile phone during his journey because it might have been risky for his safety: "If they see you with a mobile phone, they think you have money, kidnap you and ask your family for money to free you" (Afghan boy, 19 years)

Those who used internet did it to find maps and ask for information and advice from migrants who had already made the journey while mobile phones were also used to communicate with migrants and persons who could assist the minor in crossing borders, as well as with their family members, from whom they asked for financial help to continue the journey.

Another moment from the focus group

Talking with Moldovan boys during the focus group, they explained to us that Internet is not considered safe enough by smugglers, so they did not use this tool to organise their travel. Even though the Romanian boys migrated in another

[9] In this category we would place our female respondents. They engage in some risky behaviour, but they are apparently not reckless.

context (with their families when they were children) they were able to tell us about other children's migration from Romania and they confirmed to us at most, Internet might be used to consult a map, but it is not used to plan the journey.

New technologies and risk perception

In the final survey question, an attempt was made to draw out the interviewee's attitude and inclination towards risky behaviour, giving them an opportunity to comment on hypothetical situations, such as if an adult contacted them online, and relate their experience if such a situation had happened to them or to a friend. Despite some linguistic challenges, it became clear that:

a) more inexperienced internet or mobile phone users do not understand the significance of chatting to adult strangers online or discussing sex in general;

b) inexperienced internet users are more concerned about their privacy than those who use internet more;

c) inexperienced internet users are only aware of a limited number of internet functions, and unable to fully describe what they do on the internet for lack of understanding of relevant technical language (names of social networks, search engines, websites)

It is more difficult to generalise about experienced internet users as less were interviewed, however given their online behaviour, they would appear to be at risk of exploitation and abuse similar to Italian youth. In fact, during the focus group where Romanian boys of Roma origin who had lived in Italy from a young age were consulted, they were open about their use of internet chatrooms to meet new people and their wariness of possible paedophiles, but did not exclude the possibility of meeting people, adults or not, known online. They raised the issue of girls who came from Romania and the fact that they were likely to end up exploited in the sex industry if they could not look after themselves.

Conclusion

Regarding the links between trafficking and exploitation and the use of new technologies in Italy, trafficking for sexual exploitation is the most common form, while for labour exploitation, exploitation in illegal activities or for begging purposes, there is less information. While the survey results highlighted the difference not so much between different nationalities as the difference between more or less experienced young, and foreign, internet users, given the risk factors faced by unaccompanied and foreign children in Italy (see below), it was found that new technologies can be used as a means to either recruit or control children who are not aware of the dangers that they may face.

Risk factors *considered in the AGIRE project, for the identification and support of child victims of trafficking and exploitation:*

1. The younger the person, the more vulnerable he/she is.
2. The less amount of time spent in a new country, the lesser a person's understanding of how to survive, who they can trust, how to access services, and their rights in general.
3. Lack of knowledge of the local language (which can vary depending on the length of time spent in the country of destination and degree of schooling).

4. Lack of continuity in telephone contact with their own family, and therefore the likelihood of receiving moral and material support, and the chance to return home.
5. Requirement to repay debts or send money home, especially if the child has been sent by the family.
6. Poor state of health and physical well-being that may undermine natural self-defence.
7. Lack of ability in managing street dynamics, to be streetwise.
8. Lack of familiarity with survival strategies, to satisfy their own primary needs in particular.
9. Unfavourable immigration laws which affect the possibility of legal stay in the country.
10. Lack of possibility for protection and rehabilitation, particularly for those found in the penal circuit.

In conclusion, from the sum of knowledge obtained on inexperienced internet users, they were found to be a "group at risk", as they do not have the awareness of and tools to deal with certain people or a certain kind of interaction with others on the internet.

However the survey would lead us to conclude that their risk of trafficking and exploitation through the use of new technologies remains low because:

a) we are not convinced that traffickers and exploiters are seeking to recruit or engage this particular group of adolescents;
b) their language ability means that these adolescents are unlikely to understand an attempt at recruitment or grooming;
c) their general attitude is diffident, at least at the beginning most are only interested in contact with friends and family;
d) their resilience, particularly related to their migratory experience, makes these adolescents more worldly than most Italian youth their age.

REACT

Raising awareness and Empowerment Against Child Trafficking

Save the Children is the world's leading independent organisation for children whose mission is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. It was founded in 1919 and delivers programmes in 120 countries around the world to promote children's rights to survival, protection, development and participation.

Save the Children Italy was established in 1998 as an ONLUS (non-profit organization), and started its activities in 1999. Today, Save the Children Italy is a NGO recognized by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and works for children's protection, particularly for migrant children; the education of children in the safe use of new technologies; and for the promotion all children's rights and their full participation.