



Skills for life in the real and digital world

Results of participatory research with young people from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia



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Foreword

If we want our work to remain relevant to young people, it is not enough to assume what they need – we need to understand how their world is changing, and to ask and listen to them. This is why we decided to update Program Y, primarily by incorporating a digital component that, at the time the programme was developed, did not exist in the form and to the extent that it does today in young people’s lives. We chose the PLA approach based on the principle that everything we do should be grounded in evidence and in young people’s own voices. Through PLA, we sought to understand their experiences, attitudes and dilemmas, assess existing approaches in practice, and explore how young people’s perceptions of gender, power and relationships have changed. A key value of the process is that young people were not only a source of data, but active participants in generating and interpreting it.

The findings confirm that the core assumptions of the programme remain highly relevant. Gender norms are not isolated beliefs, but a framework shaping much of what young people do and how they make choices: how they behave in relationships, how much they allow themselves to show vulnerability, what is expected of them within their families and peer groups, who is held responsible when something goes wrong, and what is considered “normal” for a boy or a girl. Young people do not necessarily recognise these norms as limiting – they often reproduce and reinforce them, even without being aware of their role in doing so. Increasingly, this also happens online: through algorithm-driven content, peer pressure on social media, and narratives about being a “real” man or woman. This space is not separate from young people’s real lives – it is part of the environment in which they form attitudes, build relationships and negotiate their identities. This makes the digital component essential to keeping the programme relevant. This is not a finding that should be softened through careful wording; it is precisely what the programme needs to address and change.

At the same time, the findings call for caution in how we work with groups. Even when an individual recognises a problem and challenges a particular attitude, their voice does not automatically outweigh the views of the group, particularly when those views are reinforced by someone with greater authority within the group dynamic. In some situations, the participatory format even contributed to reinforcing problematic attitudes rather than encouraging them to be questioned. An open space alone does not guarantee a more progressive outcome – facilitation grounded in a clear gender perspective is not an addition to the PLA approach, but a necessary condition for ensuring that participatory processes do not reproduce the inequalities we seek to change.

For CARE, this research is first and foremost a tool for improving the quality of our work with young people. The findings will not remain at the level of a report – they will inform the further development of the Program Y curriculum, methodology and workshop tools: not only by introducing new topics, but also by rethinking how we address them, how we work with “grey areas”, and how we support young people to critically reflect on their own attitudes and behaviours.

We particularly value the openness of participants to not always provide the “expected” answers, but to share disagreements, dilemmas and contradictions. If we want to change the norms that shape young people’s development, we first need to understand what those norms look like in their world today – and be willing to adapt our own approach based on what we have heard.

Sara Dereta
CARE Balkans

Executive Summary

This report presents findings from the Future4Youth – Skills for Life in the Real and Digital World project, conducted through four-day workshops with 38 young people aged 15–19. They were divided into three groups, with workshops held at three locations: Blagaj, 17–20 April 2026; Banja Koviljača (BK), 29 May–1 June 2026; and Hajdučke vode (HV), 4–7 June 2026. The workshops used a Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approach and covered thirteen topics organized into five broader areas: identity, emotions and coping with stress; violence, power and relationships; digital life; gambling; and entrepreneurship.

What the research found

Several patterns emerged throughout the research process, across groups, locations and topics, extending beyond individual workshops:

- Young people engage most deeply and learn most when the answer is not straightforward: when they must navigate the space between care and control, joking and violence, or knowledge and chance in gambling. Clear-cut divisions between “good” and “bad” do not prompt them to reflect; situations in which the boundary is unclear do.
- There is a consistent gap between what young people know or recognise and what they can put into practice in their behavior: they recognise harmful patterns but struggle to change them without guided practice.
- Young people place their trust in specific individuals (friends and particular trusted adults), rather than in institutions as a category; the greatest gap lies in how youth services are presented, rather than in a lack of services.
- Distrust of schools, the police and formal services recur across all topics, most often rooted in an expectation that criticism will come before support.
- Group composition, particularly the age range of participants, significantly affects which views are heard and reinforced in discussion. This matters especially when working with mixed-age groups.

Three groups, three profiles

Throughout the process, the Blagaj group consistently showed openness and a willingness to discuss real, personal experiences, alongside pronounced distrust of the school system grounded in specific experiences. The BK group was less spontaneous when discussing emotions and identity but consistently opened when topics became practical (relationships, the digital world, gambling, and entrepreneurship). The HV group, with the widest age range, showed the strongest age-related dynamics: older participants led the discussion in virtually every workshop. This enabled the group to develop the deepest analytical insights into gender norms, but in one instance also contributed to reinforcing a problematic view of the responsibility borne by a victim of digital violence.

Key recommendations

Based on the findings, the proposed future curriculum should follow seven methodological principles: introduce theory before discussion; guide discussion towards a clear conclusion; start from concrete situations rather than abstract concepts; reduce small-group work and increase facilitated whole-group discussion; use the “grey area” as a central learning tool; reveal hidden mechanisms (algorithms, betting odds and manipulation) rather than offer general warnings; and use digital formats to supplement, rather than replace, in-person facilitation. Across all three groups, participants agreed that priority should be given to relationships and boundaries, mental health, digital life, seeking help and critical decision-making, while the HV group placed particular emphasis on life skills and entrepreneurial skills. Detailed recommendations by topic, including specific proposals for gamification, are provided in the Recommendations chapter.

This summary presents only the most important findings. A detailed analysis by topic, differences between groups, participant quotations, study limitations and the full list of recommendations are provided in the Findings, Discussion and Implications of the Findings, and Recommendations chapters.

Acronyms / Abbreviations

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
CARE	CARE Balkans
BK	Banja Koviljača (workshop location)
HV	Hajdučke vode (workshop location)

Acknowledgements

The authors of this report wish to thank all the young people who took part in the four-day workshops in Blagaj, Banja Koviljača and Hajdučke vode for their openness, honesty and commitment throughout the process. They also thank the facilitators, team leaders and partner organisations that supported the organisation and delivery of the workshops, as well as CARE Balkans for supporting the implementation of the Future4Youth – Skills for Life in the Real and Digital World project.

Introduction and Project Background

Context and Rationale

Young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider region are growing up in an environment shaped simultaneously by rapid social change, the pervasive digitalisation of everyday life and social patterns inherited from the post-conflict period. Identity development, emotional regulation, gender norms, peer relationships, exposure to violence (offline and online), digital communication, risks such as gambling, and the development of entrepreneurial and life skills are all crucial to adolescents' healthy psychosocial development. Yet these subjects are rarely addressed through structured, participatory work with young people in the region.

The Future4Youth – Skills for Life in the Real and Digital World project was designed in response to this need. It is based on the premise that young people learn best and change their attitudes and behaviours when they can participate actively in inquiry and learning, rather than merely receive ready-made messages and instructions from adults.

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)

The methodology used in this project is based on Participatory Learning and Action (PLA). Previous research in the region, including research on dimensions of masculinity and violence conducted in the Western Balkans, has shown this approach to be an effective way of encouraging young people to think critically about their own identity, values, relationships and behaviours.

The core principles of Participatory Learning and Action, consistently applied in this project, are:

- involving young people in identifying and reflecting on their own experiences and strengthening their ability to act on their own behalf;
- learning from young people and their experiences, with facilitators “handing over the stick” so that participants themselves analyse and present the results of activities;
- adopting an informal, flexible approach adapted to the needs and dynamics of the group;
- conducting workshops in a relaxed manner by listening, avoiding the imposition of views, and giving all participants room to express their opinions.

A detailed account of the methodology, the roles within the research and facilitation team, and data collection procedures is provided in the Methodology chapter.

From Earlier Research to New Topics

This report builds a long-standing practice of using participatory methods in work with young people in the Western Balkans, including a 2007 study of dimensions of masculinity and gender-based violence conducted in five cities across the region. Whereas the earlier study focused specifically on the construction of masculinity and gender-based violence, the workshops covered in this report broaden the range of topics and address a wider set of life skills relevant to young people today.

The four-day workshops conducted under Future4Youth covered thirteen topics across four working days. They ranged from identity, emotions and mental health through relationships, violence (offline and online) and digital communication to gambling and entrepreneurship. An overview of all workshops is provided below in the Methodology chapter.

Future4Youth: Objectives and Sub-objectives

CARE International and local partners implement the Future4Youth – Skills for Life in the Real and Digital World project, working directly with young people aged 15–19 to strengthen their psychosocial, digital and life skills and reduce risk behaviours in real-world and digital settings.

The project is guided by three main objectives:

- Objective 1: Identify how groups of young people in different locations (the Blagaj group, the Banja Koviljača group (BK), and the Hajdučke vode group (HV)) experience and understand identity, emotions, relationships, violence, digital life and risk behaviours such as gambling;
- Objective 2: Design and test participatory workshop tools that help young people develop skills in emotional regulation, healthy communication, recognising and preventing violence, and using digital technologies responsibly;
- Objective 3: Provide guidance for the further development of programmes and policies supporting young people in real-world and digital settings, based on insights gathered during the workshops.

The workshops were divided into four thematic groups following a logical developmental progression: from the personal (identity and emotions) to the relational (relationships and violence), then the digital (communication, technology dependence and digital violence), and finally the socioeconomic (gambling and entrepreneurship):

- Part 1 – Identity, Emotions and Mental Health (Workshops 1–4);
- Part 2 – Violence, Power and Relationships (Workshops 5–7);
- Part 3 – Violence (Offline and Online) and Digital Life (Workshops 8–10);
- Part 4 – Gambling and Entrepreneurship (Workshops 11–12).
- Part 5 – Entrepreneurship (Workshop 13).

Overview of the Research Methodology

The workshops used a Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approach, with facilitators, team leaders, and participants actively involved in collecting and interpreting data. Data collection methods and specific workshop tools were selected on the basis of earlier applications of a similar approach in research with young people in the region, and adapted to the new, expanded range of topics.

Data were collected between April and June 2026. PLA workshops were conducted with three groups at three locations: the Blagaj group (Blagaj), the BK group (Banja Koviljača), and the HV group (Hajdučke vode). Participants in the Blagaj group came predominantly from different towns in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; those in the HV group came from several towns in Republika Srpska; and those in the BK group came from Serbia, primarily Belgrade. A detailed account of workshop dates and the sample for each group is provided in the Participant Profile section.

Workshop Schedule

The same schedule of thirteen workshops was implemented with each group over four working days, with each workshop lasting 90 minutes. The schedule progressed from topics that were more accessible and less sensitive for young people (identity and emotions) to increasingly sensitive ones (violence, digital violence and gambling). This followed the PLA principle of gradually building trust within the group.

Workshop	Title
Workshop 1	Who Am I Now? Identity, Social Influences and Gender Norms
Workshop 2	How Do Feelings, Values and Boundaries Work Within Me?
Workshop 3	Stress, Pressures and What Does It Mean for Us to Be Well?
Workshop 4	How Do We Cope? Strategies, Support and Relationships
Workshop 5	Violence – Power, Social Expectations and Why People Remain Silent
Workshop 6	Relationships, Closeness, Pressures and Boundaries
Workshop 7	Violence (Offline and Online)
Workshop 8	Digital Communication, Digital Life and Technology Dependence – My Digital Day and Online Communication
Workshop 9	What Devices and Platforms Do to Our Attention and Emotions
Workshop 10	Digital Violence and Healthy Online Boundaries
Workshop 11	Gambling Around Us: What It Looks Like, Why It Appeals and Who Can Access It
Workshop 12	How Gambling Works, Its Effects and What We Can Do
Workshop 13	Entrepreneurship, Skills and Sustainable Thinking

Methodology and PLA Tools

Each workshop comprised an opening check-in, a series of participatory exercises (mapping, visual representations, scenarios and small-group discussions), and a closing reflection, with exit tickets providing rapid feedback from participants. Throughout each workshop, facilitators guided the process, avoided providing direct “right” answers and supported participants in reaching their own insights into their attitudes and experiences.

In keeping with the core principles of Participatory Learning and Action, particular attention was paid to:

- the sequence of topics – less sensitive topics came first, while more sensitive ones (violence and digital violence) were introduced only after the group had built mutual trust;
- a non-judgmental approach – facilitators avoided expressing their own views on whether participants’ statements were right or wrong;
- documenting the process – each workshop followed a standard daily reporting template, and visual outputs (maps, diagrams and drawings) produced during the activities were photographed;
- debriefing after each working day – facilitators summarised key topics and observations and identified any gaps in the data collected.

The table below provides an illustrative overview of the PLA tools used for each thematic area and their purpose.

Tools Used	Purpose
Identity Map; Circles of Influence; Authenticity Line	Explore with young people how they experience their own identity and which social influences and gender norms shape their self-perception.
Emotional Silhouette; ABCDE Chain; Values Map and Decision Compass; Boundary Scenario	Understand how young people recognise, express and regulate emotions, and how they set personal boundaries.
Mental Health Concept Map; Stress Meter; “A Day in My Life”	Identify sources of stress and pressure in young people’s lives and how they understand mental health and well-being.
Response Catalogue; Force-field Analysis; Support and Communication Map	Map coping strategies and the sources of support to which young people turn.
Power Venn Diagram; Social Expectations Map; “Five Reasons for Silence”; Mini-scenarios	Explore perceptions of power, social expectations, and reasons why violence goes unreported.
Relationship Map; Healthy Relationship Map; Relationship Thermometer; Pressure and Boundary Scenarios	Understand how young people experience closeness, pressure, and boundaries in interpersonal relationships.

Violence Map; Spaces Map; “Grey Area”; Support Map	Identify the range of forms of violence (offline and online) recognised by young people and the spaces in which they occur.
My Digital Day; Communication Tone Map	Explore patterns of everyday digital communication and device use.
Dopamine Map; Triggers for Phone Use; Feed Analysis	Understand how devices and platforms affect young people’s attention and emotions.
Digital Risk Map; Digital Violence Scenario; Digital Boundaries	Identify risks of digital violence and build skills for setting healthy online boundaries.
Environment Map; Frequency Scale; Emotional Line	Explore young people’s exposure to gambling and its appeal in their surroundings.
“Safe Bet” Simulation; Case Analysis; Response and Support Scenarios	Understand how gambling works, its effects, and possible support strategies.
Resources and Skills Map; Mini budget; Cube; Values Filter	Develop basic entrepreneurial skills and promote sustainable, responsible thinking.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Data were collected in two ways: through notes taken by facilitators and note-taker during each workshop (workshop records), and through visual outputs produced by participants (maps, drawings, diagrams, and exit tickets). All members of the facilitation team were responsible for recording the course of discussions, participants’ statements, and group dynamics.

After completing the workshops with each group, the facilitation teams reviewed workshop notes, identified key themes that recurred or differed across groups, and prepared the material for analysis by research question and thematic area. Data were analysed using thematic analysis, following the same analytical framework applied in earlier PLA-based research in the region.

Informed Consent

Participants and, where applicable, their parents or guardians were informed about the purpose and methodology of the workshops and gave their consent to participate, including consent for photographs and visual materials produced during the activities to be used for project reporting. Participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw from individual activities at any time.

Participant Profile

A total of 38 young people aged 15–19 took part in the workshops across three groups. The table below shows the number of participants, locations, and dates for each group.

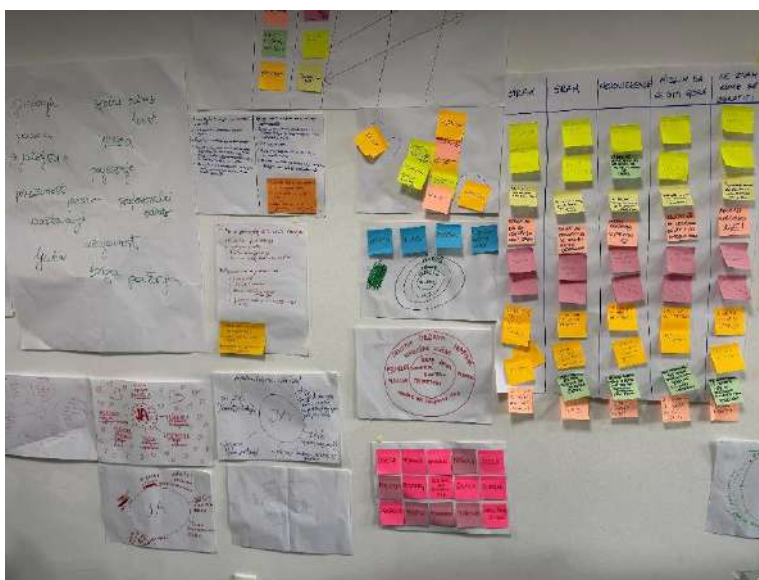
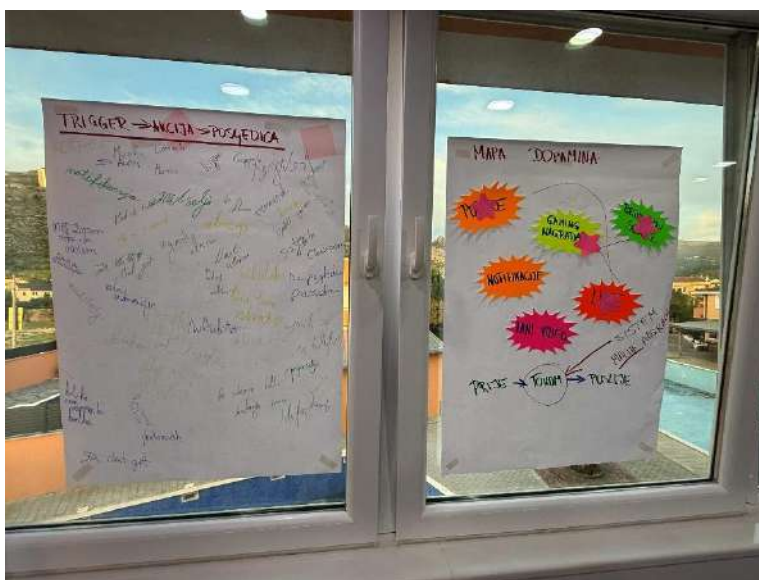
Group	Location and Dates	Number of Participants	Participant Ages
Blagaj group	Blagaj, 17–20 April 2026	13	15–18 years
Banja Koviljača group (BK)	Banja Koviljača, 29 May–1 June 2026	14	15–16 years
Hajdučke vode group (HV)	Hajdučke vode, 4–7 June 2026	11	15–19 years
TOTAL	three groups / locations	38	15–19 years

Although the age ranges differed across groups (the BK group was somewhat narrower and younger, comprising participants aged 15–16, while the Blagaj and HV groups covered wider ranges of 15–18 and 15–19 respectively), all three groups followed the same schedule of thirteen workshops over four working days. This allows findings to be compared across groups in the Findings chapter.



Findings

This chapter presents findings from workshops conducted with three groups. The findings are organised by thematic area, following the workshop schedule. They begin with identity, emotions, stress, and strategies for coping with pressure. For each workshop, findings common to all three groups are presented first, followed by nuances and differences between groups, supported by participant quotations (with an indication of which group each participant belongs to) and observations on group dynamics. Each thematic area concludes with concise guidance for the further development of programmes for young people, drawn directly from the findings presented.



1. Identity, Emotions, Stress and Coping with Pressure

(Workshops 1–4)

The first thematic area comprises four workshops held on the first day. Together, they follow a logical progression from questions about who I am and how social norms shape me, through the inner world of emotions and values, to stress, mental health and concrete strategies for coping with everyday pressures. Findings in all three groups show substantial similarities in their underlying patterns, alongside significant and informative differences in how those patterns are expressed, how openly they are put into words, and how group dynamics, particularly age differences among participants, contribute to shaping them.

Workshop 1 – Who Am I Now? Identity, Social Influences and Gender Norms

All three groups approached identity in a similar way. When asked to distinguish between “how others see me” and “how I see myself”, the image attributed to others was consistently more socially desirable and focused on behaviour (cheerful, sociable, positive, successful), whereas participants’ own self-perceptions contained more vulnerability and inner states less often shown to others. Words such as “weak”, “lost”, “often misunderstood”, “too emotional” and “indecisive” emerged. This was more than a difference in language: participants recognised it themselves and understood it as evidence that what others see is not the whole picture.

Across all three groups, young people also found it considerably easier to talk about what they do – their interests, routines, roles and hobbies – than about who they are as people: their personal qualities, fears and, especially, giving themselves credit. A female participant from the Blagaj group put it directly:

“The hardest thing is to praise myself for something, because I think I give myself very few compliments.” (Blagaj group)

In the BK group, the same difficulty appeared in a very different but telling response: asked to name his own qualities, one participant simply “froze” and could not think of anything. Facilitators recorded this as an example of how unfamiliar it is for young people to talk about themselves outside the framework of activities, achievements, and belonging.

The issue of gender norms arose in almost the same way in all three groups: young men are expected to be strong, controlled and unemotional, while girls face expectations about their appearance, restraint and “femininity”. One participant in the Blagaj group expressed this pressure clearly:

“We have to be strong through everything and can never show emotions.” (Blagaj group, young man)

“If a man shows emotions, they say, ‘You’re such a woman.’” (Blagaj group)

In the BK group, the same dynamic was expressed more openly and harshly, in the language participants themselves used to describe how peers’ sanction departures from gender expectations. A girl who is “too strong” risks being seen as “too masculine”, while a young man who does not display enough strength is labelled “effeminate”, “faggot” or “pussy”. These expressions are presented without endorsing them: they show how strongly ideas of a “real man” and a “real woman” still operate, how openly they are voiced and how they are reinforced among young people aged 15 and 16.

In the HV group, which had the widest participant age range (15–19), gender norms prompted the longest and most reflective discussion, with a clear focus on double standards:

“It’s okay when a guy cheats, but if a girl does it...” (HV group)

“You put on a short skirt and they immediately call you names.” (HV group)

“We live in a patriarchal system, because men are allowed much more; they can cross many more boundaries.” (HV group)

The group also raised the gradual loss of authenticity under the pressure of others’ expectations, expressed with striking maturity for the participants’ age:

“Little by little, we become what they think we are; we gradually become that and lose ourselves. Or we do the opposite at any cost, to prove ourselves.” (HV group)

All three groups also agreed on where they feel least authentic: at school, in front of teachers and under the pressure of grades, and on social media, where, as participants from Blagaj said, “everyone pretends”, because “we choose the best picture of ourselves”. Conversely, they associate the strongest sense of authenticity with their circle of friends (Blagaj group) or their family home (HV group). One statement sums this up: “I don’t think I’m one hundred per cent myself anywhere except at home” (HV group).

Group Dynamics

The Blagaj group came in energetically, but with responses at an initial level of reflection; the BK group used humour as a protective mechanism at the first meeting; and a pattern of older participants taking the lead emerged early in the HV group and recurred throughout the process (discussed in greater detail in the integrated account of group dynamics in Chapter 6).

Workshop 2 – How Do Feelings, Values and Boundaries Work Within Me?

Personal boundaries proved to be one of the most layered topics in the first thematic area, in ways that differed between groups. In the Blagaj group, facilitators highlighted a particular finding: some participants did not have a completely clear understanding of boundaries in an everyday, personal sense. Instead, they understood the concept through more extreme or physical situations, such as pressure to have sex, rather than as a broader range of emotional and communication boundaries. Even so, one of the most striking moments of self-criticism in all the material came from this group, when a young man acknowledged a previous pattern of behaviour:

“When it comes to these one-to-one relationships, I have to say that we guys don’t really seem to have many boundaries; we’re more the ones who cross boundaries, who push women’s boundaries in a relationship... I used to be like that. I had no boundaries at all. I thought I could do whatever I wanted and didn’t care about anything, but I realised that it really doesn’t work like that.”
(Blagaj group, young man)

Across groups, when participants were asked to formulate a sentence for setting a boundary, almost all reached for simple, direct expressions – “I don’t want that”, “That bothers me”, “Don’t do that” – while they found it much harder to develop calmer, more nuanced wording that explained their feelings. The same main obstacle arose in all three groups: it is easier to set a boundary with a stranger than with someone they care about, because they risk losing that person or upsetting them. One statement from the BK group linked this directly to feeling subordinate in a relationship: “You feel as if you’re on a leash.”

Differences between groups were clearest in the depth and direction of discussions about emotions. Initial responses in the BK group were confident and general (“we show emotions in front of people we trust”), but facilitators’ questions gradually brought out greater uncertainty, particularly around sadness, crying and vulnerability. One participant openly said he found this way of working uncomfortable because he did not know the others in the group well enough. In the HV group, discussion of emotions considered “allowed” or “not allowed” for young men and women became one of the liveliest parts of the workshop, with a clear gender dimension:

“A guy who sheds a tear, it is immediately...” (HV group)

“When a girl gets drunk, people immediately look at her differently.” (HV group)

An older participant in the same group also described emotions in a distinctly rationalised way (“I experience emotions more systematically and analytically”). This opened a broader discussion about different ways of dealing with emotions within the same generation.

As for values, freedom, honesty, respect, friendship and love consistently emerged as the most important in all three groups. Young people most often experienced inner conflict when they had to choose between honesty and preserving a relationship, or between loyalty to friends and their own boundaries.

Group Dynamics

All three groups retained the patterns seen in the previous workshop: the Blagaj group had no clear divisions; the BK group showed mild discomfort about sharing vulnerability; and the HV group had the most extensive discussion, with older participants continuing to take the lead.

Workshop 3 – Stress, Pressures and What Does It Mean for Us to Be Well?

Without exception, school emerged as the dominant source of stress in all three groups. Blagaj participants associated their highest levels of stress with accumulated responsibilities, tests and fear of failure, and described stress in distinctly physical terms:

“In those stressful situations, I’m completely unsettled, literally beside myself, and I can’t do what I want to do because the pressure in my head isn’t here or here, it’s up at the ceiling, and I feel that weight literally sitting on my head.” (Blagaj group)

The same pattern recurred in the BK and HV groups: school, grades and lack of time consistently topped the stress scale. The groups differed, however, in how much stress they attributed to sources outside school. The Blagaj group particularly noted that family relationships and conflicts, though less frequent, can be a more serious source of stress than school: “When something bad happens to someone close to us, school is nothing compared with a real problem” (Blagaj group). In the HV group, in addition to school, procrastination linked to social media emerged as an important source of stress. One participant gave a concrete example: while meant to be studying, he ends up on TikTok and loses an hour, further increasing his stress.

The most significant difference between groups in this workshop concerned young people’s spontaneous associations with the term “mental health” and the extent of stigma around seeking professional support.

In the Blagaj and BK groups, mental health was initially and most frequently associated with negative states – stress, sadness, pressure and “falling apart”. Positive terms (stability, calm, therapy, and conversation) arose less often, and only after additional guidance from the facilitator. The BK group,

however, produced a finding that stood out from the rest of the material: there was virtually no stigma about seeing a psychologist. Several participants said they would readily do so, and some had already done so. The workshop records specifically highlighted this as a possible “sign of changing attitudes compared with older generations”.

The HV group showed an opposite but complementary pattern: mental health was spontaneously associated with positive states – “calm”, “freshness” and “self-improvement”. An older participant made the particularly perceptive observation that associations would probably be different “if we were talking about mental disorders or illnesses rather than mental health”. This showed an awareness of the difference between stigmatising and normalising ways of framing the topic. Participants in the same group also distinguished between solitude and loneliness: for some, being alone is not a sign of a problem, but time deliberately sought for rest and renewal.

A shared pattern of concealing stress from others ran through all groups, perhaps most clearly expressed in Blagaj:

“I keep everything that’s happening to me inside, and then two or three days later, if some tiny thing happens, I literally lose it and blame everyone.” (Blagaj group)

*“I think a lot of people hide that they’re not okay because they don’t want others to judge them.”
(Blagaj group)*

Group Dynamics

The Blagaj group arrived tired and cautious but gradually opened through personal examples. The BK group continued to give brief answers when discussing more abstract concepts of mental health, while the HV group demonstrated the highest level of already established trust among its members.

Workshop 4 – How Do We Cope? Strategies, Support and Relationships

In all three groups, young people distinguished, at least intuitively, between strategies that bring immediate relief and those that address a problem, while acknowledging that they rely more often on the former. Short-term strategies – scrolling, sleeping, withdrawing and distraction – were everywhere seen as “normalised but potentially harmful”. Conversation, physical activity and routine were recognised as more helpful in the long term but less accessible in a moment of crisis. The BK group offered a concise, precise distinction: “The short-term ones just take our minds off it,” whereas “the long-term things help us solve the problem”.

One of the most significant findings of this workshop was expressed in almost identical terms across the groups: young people find it easier to support others than to ask for support themselves. In the BK group, it was stated directly – “It’s easier to help others” – while the HV group developed the thought further: “It’s easier to help others than to say that we need help.” The same group offered perhaps the most memorable saying in the first thematic area about why young people do not share their problems:

“What you whisper to God will blossom; what you tell people will wither.” (HV group)

The most important difference between groups in this workshop lies in the extent to which the belief that one should “not share problems” was challenged within the group or, conversely, accepted as the norm. In the Blagaj group, distrust of the school system and professional support services was particularly pronounced, alongside fear of consequences and parents becoming involved. Yet

support from close friends and loved ones was unquestionably seen as desirable and sought after. The BK group showed more mature, and nuanced reflection: participants recognised that those they turn to “sometimes simply don’t have the capacity” to provide the support they need. This finding goes beyond a simple division into “who I trust and who I don’t”.

In the HV group, however, a pattern emerged that merits particular attention in future work. Older participants, especially those already studying at university, openly advocated a highly reserved, self-reliant approach to sharing problems: serious difficulties should be “carried alone” or shared only with a very small circle. Younger participants largely accepted this view without questioning it, instead of challenging it or offering another perspective. The note-taker themselves highlighted the potentially wider consequences of this finding. Because younger participants clearly viewed the older, more verbally confident participants as authorities, group dynamics could contribute to normalise isolation as a desirable way of coping with problems instead of seeking support.

A positive, promising finding across all groups concerned what young people consider useful support: not advice or ready-made solutions, but presence, uninterrupted listening and, crucially, action after the conversation. From the Blagaj group: “For me, what they do after I tell them about my problem matters more than the conversation itself.” From the HV group: “Just saying ‘Do you need anything?’ isn’t the same as actually doing something.”

Group Dynamics

All three groups experienced less discomfort in this workshop than in the previous one because the topics were more concrete. In the HV group, older participants’ role also had a clear substantive effect on attitudes towards seeking help.

What Should Be Included in the New Programme for Young People

Based on the findings across all groups, the first four workshops point to several clear directions for further programme development. These appear throughout the material regardless of regional differences in expression and group dynamics.

Identity, Gender Norms and Authenticity

- Create space to explore the difference between one’s public image and inner sense of self, without the two must always align.
- Address gender norms and double standards explicitly (particularly prominent in the HV group), not as an abstract topic but through concrete situations young people themselves recognise from everyday life.
- Pay particular attention to the language peers use to sanction departures from gender norms (recorded in the BK group), as it shows how openly this pressure remains present among young people of this age.
- Strengthen exercises in giving oneself credit and naming personal qualities, as this consistently proved more difficult in all three groups.

Emotions, Values and Boundaries

- Clarify the concept of personal boundaries before working on the skills needed to set them. Some young people (especially in Blagaj) understand boundaries only in extreme or physical situations, rather than as a broader part of everyday life.
- Develop exercises to practice calmer, more nuanced ways of expressing boundaries that go beyond a simple “I don’t want that”.
- Address gender-based differences in what is considered acceptable emotional expression, using young people’s own language (e.g. expressions describing the judgement faced by young men who cry or girls who drink alcohol).

Stress and Mental Health

- Adapt programme content to the groups’ different starting points regarding stigma: build on existing openness to professional support and positive associations in the BK and HV groups, while placing particular emphasis on trust in support systems in the Blagaj group.
- Strengthen content that presents mental health as an everyday topic, rather than solely a crisis issue, particularly where associations with problems and disorders dominate.
- Introduce practical tools for time management and coping with school-related pressure, as this was a universal and frequent request across groups.

Seeking Support and Relationships

- Address the pattern “it is easier to help others than to help myself” directly, through exercises that normalise asking for help with one’s own needs.
- In mixed-age groups (such as the HV group), pay particular attention to the influence of older, more verbally dominant participants on younger participants’ attitudes and gently redirect it where necessary, particularly when they convey messages that discourage seeking support.
- Emphasise the difference between formal concern and actual support (listening without judgement and taking concrete action after a conversation), a distinction young people in all three groups already recognise and value.

2. Violence, Power and Relationships (Workshops 5–7)

The second thematic area comprises three workshops that together explore a connected line of inquiry in greater depth: how young people understand power and silence in situations involving violence, how they recognise healthy and unhealthy patterns in close relationships, and how violence and relationships intersect when control is presented as care or violence is normalised as a joke. Findings from all three groups show that young people have a developed understanding of basic forms of violence and signs of unhealthy relationships. Yet the greatest uncertainty and liveliest discussion consistently concern boundaries: between care and control, between a joke and harm, and between silence born of fear and silence born of distrust.

Workshop 5 – Violence: Power, Social Expectations and Why People Remain Silent

Asked why people do not react when they witness violence, young people in all three groups answered, almost without exception, that they are afraid. The fear concerns not only the person using violence, but also what might happen to the bystander if they intervene. Young people in all three groups described the same pattern: fear that the situation might “turn against them”, fear of becoming the next target, and a belief that reporting it would change nothing. There is also a phenomenon that might be called the diffusion of silence: everyone waits for someone else to react first, so that, as the BK group put it, “responsibility is shared among everyone, and in the end, nobody reacts”.

The analysis of power developed by young people in all three groups through an exercise mapping those involved is particularly noteworthy. In every group, without facilitators guidance, participants concluded that the “loudness” of institutions such as schools and the police does not necessarily translate into real power to change a situation. Instead, they attributed real influence over whether violence continues or stops to peer groups, people close to those involved and, particularly significantly, bystanders themselves. A statement from the BK group sums this up:

“Being louder isn’t what gives you power.” (BK group)
“Power is what you can do in that situation.” (BK group)

The HV group developed this idea further, openly asking whether bystanders underestimate their own ability to respond, support the victim, or document what happened. This insight shows that young people are not only aware of the problem of silence but are also capable of analysing the mechanisms behind it.

All three groups recognised social messages that sustain violence and hinder a response, even when they appear harmless. The Blagaj group gave a concrete example of what young people experience as normalised: “Online insults are normal; just ignore them.” This shifts responsibility from the person causing harm to the person experiencing it. The HV group linked the same type of message directly to a wider cultural pattern: “Don’t get involved in other people’s problems” and “Everyone should mind their own business.” All three groups also recognised the gender dimension of these messages: the expectation that a young man must be strong and must not ask for help, and that a girl should “put up with it” so as not to seem difficult.

The most pronounced difference between groups concerned their reasons for distrusting institutions and the extent to which this distrust was grounded in specific personal experience. In the Blagaj

group, distrust was expressed most concretely and emotionally: participants gave real examples of conversations with a school psychologist that had not led to a solution, and described a feeling that information shared in confidence was passed on to parents, the police or social services without them retaining control over their own story:

“At school, we have those 45-minute talks, but honestly it’s a waste of time because nothing changes afterwards.” (Blagaj group)

“In most cases, it’s actually the people closest to the victim who respond most and fight for them, because the victim often doesn’t have the courage to talk about it themselves.” (Blagaj group)

The BK group discussed the same topic more cautiously and through hypothetical examples. There was also an additional, analytically interesting shift: some participants openly argued that bystanders share almost as much responsibility as the perpetrators themselves, which is a more ethically demanding position than those recorded in the other two groups. In this group, it is also worth noting that participants once again showed reluctance to engage with “mental health” as a topic – an ironic comment by a participant during discussion of this workshop echoed a similar attitude observed in the first thematic area.

The HV group expressed distrust of institutions through a more indirect, almost geographical analysis. Participants distinguished between their own local community, where they said they would be more likely to get involved because they knew the people and circumstances, and a situation in a larger city, where they would most likely limit their response to calling the police without intervening directly. The group also clearly stated the condition under which they would be more willing to report violence:

“I’d find it easier to respond if my name remained anonymous.” (HV group)

“We don’t have to be heroes to help.” (HV group)

Group Dynamics

In the Blagaj group, participants with personal experience naturally dominated the discussion; the BK group again needed additional follow-up questions from the facilitator; and in the HV group, older participants continued to lead the discussion about institutions.

Workshop 6 – Relationships, Closeness, Pressures and Boundaries

If one phenomenon characterised this workshop across all three groups, it was the “grey area” between care and control. When young people were asked whether behaviours such as asking where they are, who they are with and what they are doing, asking them to check in, or demanding that they delete certain contacts express care or are attempts at control, views within the groups were clearly divided. This disagreement produced the liveliest discussion of the workshop. In all three groups, young people more readily identify extreme, obvious forms of control (reading messages without permission, forbidding contact with friends and blackmail) than subtler patterns presented as care, love or protection.

The Blagaj group perhaps articulated the distinction most precisely. Participants themselves drew a clear line: care leaves room for choice and does not create pressure, whereas control involves demands, repetition, checking up on someone and a lack of trust. This insight is particularly valuable because it arose from the group’s discussion rather than from the facilitator:

“If someone keeps asking where you are and what you’re doing, that’s no longer care, that’s controlling you. Why do you need to ask me every half-hour where I am and what I’m doing?” (Blagaj group)

In the BK group, discussion of relationships focused more directly from the outset on romantic and sexual relationships, a topic that emerged more gradually in the other groups. The greatest disagreement concerned deleting contacts at a partner’s request. Some considered it justified if the partner “has a reason to suspect something”, while others insisted that someone who trusts their partner has no need to make that demand. This group also produced one of the most notable personal reflections in the thematic area, about assuming emotional responsibility for someone else’s actions:

“I felt as if I was responsible for everything that person did.” (BK group)
“I have the right to say both yes and no.” (BK group)

In the HV group, alongside the now familiar pattern of older participants leading the discussion, this topic brought out the most explicit gender dimension. Girls more often pointed to double standards and social expectations, while some young men spoke about protectiveness and jealousy as potentially arising from care. A significant statement from this group indicates that some young people lack experience of trying to set a boundary at all, rather than merely finding it difficult to do so:

“I don’t think I’ve ever set a boundary.” (HV group)
“Silence is not consent.” (HV group)

“We have to remain individuals in a relationship so that we don’t lose ourselves along the way.” (HV group)

Despite clear gender differences in views, the same group independently reached a balanced and well-considered conclusion: the same act, such as asking a partner to say where they are, can be healthy or controlling depending on the context, the level of trust and how the request is made. This suggests that the “grey area” is not necessarily a sign of confusion but can reflect an awareness of the complexity of relationships.

Group Dynamics

The Blagaj group approached the workshop in a relaxed manner and joined the discussion immediately. The BK group was more engaged than it had been with topics concerning emotions, with lively, sometimes opposing exchanges. In the HV group, older participants continued to lead, while the group collectively arrived at a phrase that became the workshop’s motto: “Not everything is black and white.”

Workshop 7 – Violence (Offline and Online)

The third workshop in this thematic area confirmed and extended the findings of Workshop 5: schools and social media were identified without exception as the two main spaces in which young people across all three groups encounter violence. A particularly consistent finding was that, when asked to categorise violence (physical, verbal, emotional, social or digital), young people themselves recognised that the categories overlap. They described ignoring someone, for example, as both verbal and emotional violence, and sometimes as physical violence when it involved an overt violation of boundaries. This insight, repeated across all three groups, shows that young people

experience violence not as a set of separate boxes but as a phenomenon shaped in practice by context.

The “grey area” between joking and violence, foreshadowed in the previous two workshops, found its clearest expression here. The same kinds of examples divided opinion in all three groups: teasing that some considered harmless but others experienced as insulting; taking photographs or recording video without permission; and advice about clothing that becomes a demand. The Blagaj group precisely described the mechanism behind this grey area: something stops being a joke “as soon as it bothers one person or is repeated”. In the HV group, participants put it more simply but no less accurately:

“It’s a joke to one person and violence to another.” (HV group)

“It all depends on the context.” (HV group)

Consistent with the findings from the first thematic area, friends again emerged across all three groups as the primary and most trusted source of support. Adults and institutions were mentioned only as secondary or conditional options, dependent on an existing relationship of trust. The Blagaj group expressed this very directly, strongly criticising the idea of turning to someone who lacks credibility in their eyes:

“I would train every teacher up to a point so that they know how to deal with a child. A teacher should be able to help me in that moment. They can’t solve my problem for me, but they can make it easier.” (Blagaj group)

“I think the most important thing is that we have no one to turn to. And when we do turn to someone, they don’t listen.” (Blagaj group)

The BK group recognised violence on social media and in group chats more quickly and readily than control in romantic relationships, which participants discussed more cautiously and mainly through hypothetical situations rather than personal experience. In the HV group, as in the previous workshop, traditional gender roles resurfaced, prompted by a comment that sparked one of the liveliest exchanges in this thematic area:

“I don’t want my girlfriend going out into town half-naked.” (HV group)

Other participants responded by trying to draw a line between personal opinion, advice, and control. This shows that, despite the presence of traditional attitudes, the group was actively re-examining them through peer discussion rather than unanimously rejecting or accepting them.

Group Dynamics

The Blagaj group participated actively and showed noticeable criticism of the system. The BK group needed frequent redirection to stay focused. In the HV group, older participants continued to dominate, with one university student steering for the conversation.

What Should Be Included in the New Programme for Young People

The second thematic area, covering violence, power and relationships, points to several interrelated directions that should be developed together rather than separate modules. Across all three groups, young people themselves linked questions of power, silence, control and boundaries within a single framework.

Recognising Violence and the “Grey Area”

- Develop content that starts from young people’s existing recognition that categories of violence overlap, rather than imposing a rigid classification that does not reflect their actual experience.
- Explicitly address the “grey area” between joking and violence and between care and control through concrete situations from young people’s everyday lives, rather than abstract definitions.
- Introduce exercises that help young people recognise subtle as well as obvious forms of control in relationships, as this consistently proved more difficult in all three groups.

Power, Bystanders and Silence

- Strengthen content on the role of bystanders, clearly distinguishing between “I do not want to get involved” and “I do not know how to help”: a distinction that young people in the HV group themselves identified as important, but for which they lack sufficient practical tools.
- Offer concrete, realistic and gradual options for responding safely (discreet support for the victim, indirect involvement of others, documentation), rather than presenting direct reporting or confrontation as the only choice.
- Address distrust of institutions openly, particularly in the Blagaj group, where it is most concretely grounded in personal experience. Explain clearly what happens after a report is made and how the person making the report is protected.

Boundaries and Healthy Relationships

- Introduce practical work on formulating and, especially, maintaining boundaries when the other person continues to apply pressure. Young people in all three groups showed that setting a boundary is harder than understanding it in theory.
- Adapt programme content to the fact that some young people, as a statement from the HV group shows, have no experience even of attempting to set boundaries. Work should therefore begin with recognising the right to a boundary, not merely techniques for expressing it.
- Explicitly address gender double standards in relationships and partner control, particularly prominent in the HV group, through facilitated peer discussion. When given room to exchange views, young people themselves re-examine traditional attitudes.

Working with Mixed-age Groups

- Across all three workshops in this thematic area, a consistent pattern emerged in the HV group: older participants took the lead while younger participants accepted their views without challenging them. This should be recognised as a structural feature of the group rather than a coincidence. Work with mixed-age groups should actively create space for younger participants to form independent views, for example by temporarily separating participants by age before a joint discussion.

3. Digital Life (Workshops 8–10)

The third thematic area examines how young people in all three groups experience their everyday relationship with their phones and social media – from specific patterns of communication and message interpretation, through the mechanisms that shape their attention and emotions, to recognising digital violence and setting online boundaries. One consistent pattern runs through all three workshops in this area: young people have a well-developed awareness of what is happening to them in the digital space, but this awareness does not automatically translate into behavioural control or a clear recognition of the boundary between care and control. This directly links this thematic area to the findings on relationships and violence from the previous thematic area.

Workshop 8 – My Digital Day and Online Communication

Findings from all three groups show that young people do not see communication solely as an exchange of text. In their view, sending reels, TikTok videos, stickers or memes is a form of communication in itself – not something accompanying a conversation, but a substitute for it or a continuation of it. The Blagaj group expressed this most directly:

*“We mainly use it for communication, but in different ways – we communicate by sending reels.”
(Blagaj group)*

The most significant and consistent finding from this workshop, repeated almost word for word across all three groups, is that misunderstandings in online communication do not arise from the content of the message, but from the absence of the tone, facial expressions and context that would accompany it in a face-to-face conversation. Young people have developed an entire unwritten code for interpreting small signals: a full stop at the end of a message is read as anger or coldness, short replies such as “K.” or “OK.” as passive-aggressive, and phrases such as “we’ll see” or “we’ll talk” as a polite way of refusing something without saying so directly. From the Blagaj group:

“When someone writes ‘K.’ or ‘OK.’ with a full stop, it’s like... something isn’t right. It feels emphasised; it’s not the same as just ‘ok’.” (Blagaj group)

The BK group produced an almost identical finding, phrased differently, confirming that this is a widespread rather than a local pattern:

*“It’s not the same when you write ok and okaaaay.” (BK group)
“It depends on how many letters they use or which emojis.” (BK group)*

In the HV group, this phenomenon was further explained through an awareness of the role of non-verbal communication itself, rather than only through examples. One participant summed it up in a way that could almost serve as a theoretical definition of the issue addressed by the workshop:

“I think non-verbal communication makes up more than half of communication.” (HV group)

Perhaps the most valuable insight from the entire workshop, raised independently by young people in all three groups rather than in response to a facilitator’s suggestion, is that the interpretation of a message depends as much on the mood of the person reading it as on the message itself. From the Blagaj group:

“When I’m irritated, every message sounds aggressive to me, like someone is attacking me, even though maybe it wasn’t written that way.” (Blagaj group)

This insight shifts the focus from the question of “how to write so that we do not get it wrong” to “how to recognise that our interpretation also says something about us, not only about the sender” – a distinction of considerable importance for programme development.

The most noticeable difference between the groups in this workshop concerns not what young people recognise, but how willing they are to apply that recognition to themselves. The Blagaj group showed the greatest analytical distance, explicitly identifying a whole range of “communication minefields” and recognising that the problem lies not only in the message, but also in the way we receive it. The HV group approached the topic in a similarly analytical way, with the characteristic contribution of older participants, who introduced a broader framework for thinking about the difference between online and face-to-face communication. The BK group, by contrast, focused mostly on describing specific situations from everyday messaging – who replies to whom more quickly, what “seen” means – and less on generalising the pattern, so the facilitator needed to ask more follow-up questions to encourage deeper reflection. Nevertheless, this group produced one noteworthy piece of information, mentioned entirely in passing and without any indication that it was perceived as a problem:

“(I spend) ten hours on TikTok.” (BK group)

The tone in which this statement was made – casually, as a passing fact rather than an admission – is itself informative: unlike the Blagaj group, where spending a great deal of time on the phone was regularly accompanied by feelings of guilt, in the BK group it was not yet being questioned at this point in the workshop.

Group Dynamics

The Blagaj group approached the topic in a relaxed manner and showed a high degree of personal identification with it; the BK group required regular redirection because of side comments; the HV group continued the pattern of more analytical responses from older participants.

Workshop 9 – What Devices and Platforms Do to Our Attention and Emotions

Across all three groups, an almost identical emotional cycle recurs, described by young people spontaneously and with very little variation in wording: boredom or waiting leads them to pick up their phone, most often automatically and without a specific purpose; this is followed by brief satisfaction or distraction, and then by feelings of guilt, emptiness or fatigue. In the Blagaj group, the pattern participants themselves articulated through discussion was: “fatigue → scrolling → brief relief → feeling bad afterwards”. The HV group offered an almost textbook-precise formulation of the same mechanism:

“I don’t know how to stop once I start scrolling.” (HV group)

“Sometimes it kills my boredom, and sometimes it makes it even worse.” (HV group)

One of the most significant findings from this workshop, consistent across all three groups, is that young people recognise the pattern, but their awareness of it is separate from actual control over their behaviour. This was expressed most clearly in the Blagaj group, where participants explicitly said that “the hardest thing is to stop that first impulse”, even when they know where they should stop. This gap between knowledge and behaviour, which also emerged in previous thematic areas (for example, when setting boundaries in relationships), appears here in the digital context, suggesting that this is not an isolated phenomenon related to phone use, but a broader pattern among this generation of young people.

The content that most strongly affects self-image and comparison with others is consistently described in terms of other people's portrayals of success, appearance and lifestyle. The HV group added another serious dimension to this topic by raising the issue of the impact of negative and disturbing content that appears without being sought out, because of algorithmic recommendations:

"I go online to cheer myself up, and then sad songs and quotes come up and I feel like crying." (HV group)

The same group also produced a finding that requires serious attention in future work: one participant described how his daily feed, without him searching for it, showed him an extremely disturbing news item which, as he himself said, determined his mood for the rest of the day. This finding shows that young people are exposed not only to content they consciously seek out, but also to content pushed to them by algorithms, over which they have no control and which can have a real and immediate impact on their emotional state. Facilitators in this group also recorded a broader conclusion that participants themselves reached through discussion: algorithms do not display content randomly, but actively shape what users see and, consequently, how they feel.

Differences between the groups in this workshop were reflected primarily in the degree of self-reflection. The Blagaj group provided the most detailed self-assessment (ranging from several dozen to more than two hundred instances of picking up the phone per day) and the most developed categorisation of types of content according to their effects. The HV group showed the most open and least defensive discussion of the issue: unlike some other topics in this research, participants rarely denied or downplayed the existence of the problem. The BK group, by contrast, showed the least spontaneous interest in analysing the figures and habits themselves – the facilitator had to encourage the group several times to check usage statistics on their devices – yet it was precisely this group that produced a sophisticated insight concerning the use of multiple Instagram profiles to control who can see which content:

"When we realised that we actually didn't want all those people to see what we post, we opened another profile." (BK group)

This finding shows that young people, even when they do not describe it in these terms, already apply sophisticated strategies for managing privacy and online identity – an insight the curriculum should use as a starting point, rather than introducing privacy as an entirely new topic.

Group Dynamics

The Blagaj group was energetic and showed clear self-awareness regarding their own habits; the BK group was distracted, but the discussion about multiple profiles revealed unexpected depth; the HV group continued the pattern of participants recognising one another's habits, combined with the broader theoretical framework introduced by older participants.

Workshop 10 – Digital Violence and Healthy Online Boundaries

The pattern established in the previous thematic area – easy recognition of obvious forms of violence, but considerably greater uncertainty when closeness gradually turns into control – is repeated in the digital space. Young people readily identify blackmail, threats and the unauthorised sharing of content as violence, but find it much more difficult to recognise the point at which care or

trust becomes control. The HV group illustrated this through a scenario in which a partner asks for a password, using a phrase often invoked to justify such a request:

“If you have nothing to hide, give me your password.” (HV group)

It is worth noting that, when presented with this scenario, the same group independently arrived at a clear counterargument, showing that young people have the capacity to recognise manipulative logic when given space to discuss it:

“If there is no trust without a password, then the problem lies somewhere else.” (HV group)

“That isn’t trust; it’s control.” (HV group)

When it comes to responding to violence in group chats and gaming communities, all three groups consistently recognise that responsibility does not lie only with the person who initiates offensive content, but also with everyone who shares it, supports it or watches without reacting – a finding that directly builds on the understanding of bystander responsibility developed in the previous thematic area on violence outside the digital space. Across all three groups, the phrases young people suggested for setting digital boundaries were short and direct, without any need for further justification: “That bothers me”, “That’s enough”, “I don’t want that”.

The Blagaj group brought the strongest emotional component in all the material collected so far to this workshop when the discussion touched on a real, traumatic event in their community that had spread online, together with people’s comments beneath posts about it. That discussion also produced a finding that directly explains why young people do not seek help from their parents even in serious situations – not because of a lack of parental care, but because they fear the initial reaction:

“I would only tell my parents when I absolutely had to, because I know the first question would be ‘why did you do that?’, rather than how they could help me. And that holds me back, because I feel I’ll get criticism first and only then support, so I’d rather stay quiet until it gets really serious.”

(Blagaj group)

This quotation is particularly important for future work because it shows that the problem is not the absence of support within the family, but the sequence of reactions young people expect – criticism before support – which leads them to remain silent until the situation becomes difficult to resolve.

The BK group approached the same scenarios more cautiously and through hypothetical situations, without deeper personal disclosure, but showed a good understanding of responsibility in digital forms of violence, particularly in gaming environments, where participants recognised that the consequences extend beyond the game itself and affect the person on a personal level.

A Finding Requiring Attention: Shifting Responsibility onto the Victim

In the HV group, while working on a scenario involving the sharing of intimate photographs after a relationship ended, one of the older female participants – whose views had influenced younger group members throughout this thematic area – explicitly and repeatedly stated that a person who had sent a photograph must bear some responsibility for its subsequent misuse, and that she would blame herself in such a situation. Other members of the group, including one female participant who challenged this view openly, argued instead that responsibility lies solely with the person who abuses that trust. This was one of the few situations in which views within the

group came into direct and open conflict. Of particular importance is the fact that the younger participants, consistent with the pattern observed across all three thematic areas in this group, generally listened to the older participant's position without openly challenging it, even when they themselves appeared uncertain about it. Because this belief directly affects whether a person who experiences this form of violence will seek help or remain silent out of a sense of guilt, this finding should be treated as a priority when developing content on digital consent and responsibility, rather than as a passing episode.

Group Dynamics

The Blagaj group approached the workshop with a combination of seriousness (for the more difficult topics) and humour (for the lighter segments); the BK group showed a solid understanding of digital risks through concrete scenarios; the HV group, for the first time, displayed an open conflict of views within the group, described in greater detail in the separate section.

What Should Be Included in the New Programme for Young People

The third thematic area, devoted to young people's digital lives, shows that young people in all three groups have developed an understandable and, in places, sophisticated awareness of the mechanisms that govern their attention and communication, but that this awareness consistently lags behind their actual control over their behaviour. It also shows that the "grey area" identified in the previous thematic area – between care and control – appear in the digital space in the same form, only through different tools (passwords, location sharing and access to messages).

Interpreting Online Communication

- Programme content should start from the insight that misunderstandings arise from the absence of tone and context, rather than from the message itself, and that interpretation is always a two-way process influenced by the mood of the person reading the message.
- Use the existing, well-developed "code" young people to apply when interpreting messages (full stops, length of replies, response time) as a starting point for discussing intention versus interpretation, rather than explaining these rules from scratch.
- Introduce exercises in which participants identify when their own mood colours their interpretation of a message they receive, as a complement to skills for expressing themselves clearly.

Attention, Habits and Emotions

- Develop content that starts from the fact that young people already recognise the boredom–use–regret cycle, and focus on practical, small and gradual strategies for interrupting automatic behaviour, rather than raising awareness of a problem they already recognise.
- Introduce algorithmically generated content as something over which young people do not have complete control, particularly considering the recorded cases of unintentional exposure to disturbing content and develop practical guidance for managing their own feeds.

- Use the privacy-management strategies young people already apply (e.g. multiple profiles) as a foundation for discussing online identity, rather than presenting privacy as an entirely new topic.

Digital Violence, Consent and Responsibility

- Directly address, as a high priority, beliefs that shift responsibility for digital violence onto the person who experienced it, particularly in the context of intimate content and relationship break-ups, because such beliefs were recorded as being openly expressed and insufficiently challenged within the peer group.
- Explicitly address the distinction between trust and control in the digital context (passwords, location sharing, access to messages), building similar findings from the thematic area on relationships.
- Address why young people do not seek parental support in digital crises – not because of a lack of care, but because they expect criticism before support – through concrete guidance for parents and other adults on how to respond when a child turns to them for help.

4. Gambling (Workshops 11–12)

The fourth thematic area comprises two workshops that together explore how young people perceive gambling in their surroundings – from recognising its forms and accessibility, through myths about control and knowledge, to mapping its real consequences and strategies for resisting pressure. Findings from all three groups show that young people have a surprisingly broad and intuitive definition of gambling that naturally includes mechanisms from digital and gaming environments, but that the groups differ significantly in how willing they are to move beyond the questions of “where and how” towards the question of “why is it a problem”.

Workshop 11 – Gambling Around Us: What It Looks Like, Why It Appeals and Who Can Access It

When young people in all three groups were asked to list everything, they considered gambling, their answers were consistently broader than expected: in addition to traditional forms (betting slips, betting shops, slot machines and roulette), they spontaneously mentioned loot boxes, opening packs in video games, fantasy leagues and various prize draws involving the purchase of a product for a chance to win a prize. What is particularly noteworthy is that this expanded list, rather than the traditional forms, surprised the participants themselves the most – they recognised gaming mechanisms as analogous to gambling only when explicitly prompted to consider them, even though they are based on the same principle of “stake something – maybe win something”. From the Blagaj group:

“Games are gambling too; we just don’t see them that way because it isn’t always real money, so it doesn’t seem serious to us.” (Blagaj group)

All three groups also agreed on where gambling is most accessible and normalised: in the immediate vicinity of schools and along young people’s everyday routes. The specific figures cited by participants themselves are more telling than any generalisation. From the HV group:

“There are six betting shops within 150 metres.” (HV group)

The Blagaj group gave an almost identical description of this everyday normalisation, expressed through a personal routine:

“There’s literally a betting shop as soon as you leave school; you don’t even have to turn off anywhere, you just walk past it and you’re already there, and somehow it becomes normal to go in, even if it’s just to see what’s there.” (Blagaj group)

The BK group ubiquity, in a statement referring to the broader social environment rather than merely the physical proximity of betting shops:

“There’s literally far too much of it in Serbia. Gambling, betting shops, all of it.” (BK group)

The same group also produced a finding that sheds new light on the sources of normalisation: according to participants, gambling is mentioned more often in conversations at school than it is physically encountered in betting shops, showing that normalisation operates not only through spatial accessibility but also through peer communication itself.

The myth that there is a “system” that makes it possible to control the outcome – as opposed to pure chance – emerged in all three groups as a dominant factor making gambling appear more attractive and rational to young people than simple randomness would. The Blagaj group offered the most

developed analysis of motives for gambling: through a group exercise, participants themselves identified money and “easy earnings” as by far the dominant motive, ahead of coping mechanisms, entertainment, adrenaline and social pressure. The same group also described the most complete emotional cycle of gambling recorded in the material as a whole – from curiosity and euphoria after an initial win, through hope and nervousness, to fear, concealment and, ultimately, a sense that there is no escape.

The most significant difference between the groups in this workshop concerned not what young people knew about gambling, but what they were, or were not, willing to discuss. In the HV group, discussion remained almost entirely focused on the accessibility and forms of gambling, while emotional consequences, addiction and the development of gambling-related problems were barely addressed. The facilitators themselves noted that the absence of this topic was an important finding in its own right, suggesting that young people in this group found it much easier to talk about where and how gambling appears than about why and how it becomes a problem. In the same group, most of the discussion focused on whether fantasy leagues constitute gambling or a knowledge-based activity. Older participants, who were more familiar with gaming and e-sports, led this discussion, while younger participants mainly added to their observations.

Group Dynamics

The Blagaj group engaged energetically, with humour helping to make the topic easier to discuss; the BK group participated readily without additional encouragement; the HV group continued to display its age-related dynamic, in this case linked to familiarity with the gaming industry and e-sports.

Workshop 12 – How Gambling Works, Its Effects and What We Can Do

In two groups, this workshop produced almost opposite outcomes from the same activity – the “safe bet” simulation – making it one of the most methodologically valuable findings in the entire study. In the Blagaj group, the simulation did not achieve its purpose: most participants, especially girls, did not understand the basic principle of multiplying odds or the fact that every selection on a betting slip has to win for the bet to be successful, and the subsequent facilitation was not sufficiently clear to resolve this. Only two participants who had previous personal experience of betting demonstrated an understanding. In the BK group, by contrast, the same activity unfolded exactly as intended: participants selected outcomes based on their knowledge of sport and statistics, using terms such as “safe bet”, and when their betting slips began to lose during the simulation, they themselves concluded through direct experience that knowledge can increase the probability of an outcome but cannot guarantee it.

“You may have a better chance, but a win isn’t guaranteed.” (BK group)

This difference indicates that the success of the simulation as a teaching tool depends on how clearly and gradually the mechanism of odds is introduced to the group before participants are expected to draw a lesson from the experience – a finding that should be incorporated directly into the instructions for facilitators.

Regardless of the group, the myth that proved hardest to dispel was the belief that knowledge of statistics, sport or a “system” provides genuine control over the outcome. The Blagaj group described this through the insight that the idea of a system makes gambling appear “more acceptable and rational” to young people because it separates it from pure chance. The HV group reached a similar conclusion through a discussion of knowledge of sport and the gaming scene, in

which participants, when confronted with the arguments, gradually recognised that even the best knowledge of the system does not eliminate risk. Alongside this myth, all three groups also recognised that the myth of “quick money” remains attractive even after being rejected in theory, because it relies on selective memory – participants from the Blagaj group expressed this precisely:

“Everyone talks when they win, they immediately brag about it, but no one says how many times they lost before that and how much money they actually spent.” (Blagaj group)

In identifying early signs of a problem, all three groups cited an almost identical set of indicators: thinking about betting increasingly often, spending money intended for other purposes, borrowing money, concealing the actual amounts and losses, and talking only about wins. The Blagaj group also added a precise psychological marker of the point at which entertainment turns into a problem:

“It isn’t a problem while it’s couple of BAM, just for fun, but it becomes a problem when you start thinking about how to win back the money you lost and when that becomes your goal.” (Blagaj group)

The BK group produced a finding that particularly illustrates how difficult gambling addiction can be to recognise from an outside perspective: an example of a person who appeared fully functional for years and only later admitted to having a serious problem prompted participants to question the limits of their own ability to recognise a problem in someone around them in time.

Mapping the consequences of gambling – for the individual, partner, family and society – showed a high degree of consistency across all three groups: loss of money and control at the individual level, arguments and damaged trust at the family level, and normalisation and isolation at the societal level. The BK group added a specific and serious insight about long-term family consequences related to the inheritance of debts, while the HV group, consistently with the pattern from the previous workshop, found it easiest to identify financial consequences but spoke much less spontaneously about emotional and family aspects – a pattern of avoiding the topic of consequences that recurred in both gambling workshops in this group.

Group Dynamics

The Blagaj group engaged in a relaxed manner, with a pronounced gender division of roles (boys explaining the mechanisms and girls discussing the consequences); the BK group was considerably more active in the simulation than in earlier topics; the HV group maintained a neutral tone without focusing on consequences, with the discussion dominated by an older participant knowledgeable about gaming.

Methodological Note: the “Safe Bet” Simulation Requires Clearer Guidance

The same activity – a simulation of putting together a “safe” sports betting slip – produced opposite results in two groups for a reason related not to the groups themselves, but to the way the mechanism of odds had been explained beforehand. In the BK group, the activity achieved its purpose: through the direct experience of losing their betting slips, participants themselves concluded that knowledge does not guarantee an outcome. In the Blagaj group, the activity did not have this effect because most participants did not understand the basic principle of multiplying odds, and the additional explanation during the workshop did not resolve the confusion. Before this activity is used further in the curriculum, it is recommended that the facilitators’ instructions include a clear, simple and tested way of explaining the mechanism of

odds before the simulation begins, so that the lesson the activity is intended to convey is accessible to all participants, not only to those who already have previous betting experience.

What Should Be Included in the New Programme for Young People

The fourth thematic area, devoted to gambling, shows that young people in all three groups recognise gambling as a widespread, normalised and expanded phenomenon that goes beyond traditional betting shops and includes numerous mechanisms from digital and gaming environments, but that there is a significant difference in how willing and able they are to talk about its actual consequences.

Expanded Definition and Accessibility of Gambling

- Programme content should build on the already expanded definition of gambling used by young people themselves (loot boxes, fantasy leagues, prize draws), rather than presenting gambling exclusively through traditional forms (betting shops, slot machines, lotteries).
- Explicitly address the “grey area” around fantasy leagues and e-sports betting, where some young people do not perceive these activities as gambling because they involve an element of knowledge, through facilitated discussion that distinguishes the role of knowledge from the role of chance in the final outcome.
- Use concrete, local examples of accessibility (the number of betting shops near a school or home) as a starting point for discussing normalisation, because young people already have this information and can readily cite it.

Myth of Control and Gambling Mechanisms

- Retain and further develop simulation activities that allow young people to reach the conclusion through direct experience, rather than explanation alone, that knowledge and statistics do not eliminate risk – considering the methodological note provided in the separate box above.
- Directly address the myth of “quick money”, bearing in mind that it remains attractive even after being rejected in theory because of selective memory of wins among people around them – it would be useful to include data or examples showing the actual ratio of wins to losses, rather than merely issuing a warning.
- Explain reward mechanisms in video games (loot boxes, opening packs) as analogous to gambling, building on the fact that young people already have this insight but do not spontaneously make the connection unless prompted.

Recognising Problems and Seeking Support

- In groups where discussion of the consequences of gambling is less spontaneous (the HV group in both workshops), the curriculum should open this topic explicitly and in a structured way, rather than relying on participants to raise it spontaneously.
- Use examples of the gradual, inconspicuous development of a problem (including examples of long-term “hidden” addiction) to help young people recognise early signs in themselves and others, rather than only extreme, late stages of the problem.

- Strengthen content on whom to approach for support and how, bearing in mind that young people in all three groups identify friends as their first choice, and parents and professional help only once the problem becomes serious – and include concrete wording for offering support to a peer, which young people themselves successfully articulated during the workshops.

5. Entrepreneurship (Workshop 13)

The fifth and final thematic area consists of one workshop that rounds off the four-day programme by exploring how young people in the three groups think about their own skills, resources and opportunities to turn them into a sustainable idea. Although thematically different from the preceding, more sensitive areas, this workshop produced findings that directly build on patterns identified earlier – particularly the difference between what young people know and what they are prepared to say about it, and the role of structure and guided reflection in turning a spontaneous idea into a realistic plan.

Workshop 13 – Entrepreneurship, Skills and Sustainable Thinking

The final workshop in the series brings a change in the tone of the entire study. Unlike the topics of violence, digital risk or gambling, entrepreneurship does not require young people to share personal, sensitive experiences, but rather to reflect on their own abilities, ideas and future – a difference which, as shown below, also affected the dynamics of all three groups.

The most consistent finding of the entire workshop, repeated almost identically in all three groups, is that young people find it much easier to talk about what they would like to do or what their interests are than about the specific skills they already possess and could immediately offer to others. In the Blagaj group, this was reflected in the frequent conflation of occupations, aspirations and business ideas – in response to a question about an entrepreneurial idea, participants mentioned “being a waiter” or “being a psychotherapist”, indicating that the distinction between an occupation and an independent service offered on the market is not entirely clear to them. In the HV group, the same difficulty appeared in an even more pronounced form, through a noticeable difference in the length and confidence of responses:

“What am I missing? Money and age.” (HV group)

This brief formulation summarises a pattern that runs throughout the workshop in this group: when participants are asked to say what they know and can do today, their answers are shorter and less confident than when they talk about what they would like to do in the future.

The second common thread, present in all three groups, is that young people most often base an entrepreneurial idea on the logic of “I know how to do this, so I will offer it”, without sufficiently considering who would buy it and why they would buy it specifically from them. The Blagaj group provided a direct acknowledgement of this pattern, unusually candid for this type of discussion:

“Honestly, I only wrote sewing because I know how to do it, but I didn’t think at all about who would buy it and why specifically from me.” (Blagaj group)

In the BK group, the same difficulty was evident in the fact that, when presenting an idea, participants were much more willing to talk about how much money their idea could make than about who would specifically benefit from it or what need it would address – the question of users and benefits almost always emerged only through additional questions from the facilitator, never spontaneously.

In all three groups, the mini-budget activity proved to be the moment of greatest insight. It revealed a clear gap between the costs young people readily identified, such as materials and equipment, and those they consistently overlooked. Almost none of the participants in any of the three groups spontaneously recognised their own time and labour as costs that should be taken into account. This

became apparent in different ways across the three groups. In the Blagaj group, participants struggled to understand the very concept of “breaking even”, which they interpreted superficially. The BK group showed the same tendency through excessive optimism when estimating potential revenue, while their cost estimates were either overly cautious or incomplete. This pattern was most pronounced in the HV group, particularly during discussions of large-scale entrepreneurial projects:

“The biggest risk is that people won’t come.” (HV group)
“You should learn first and then start a business.” (HV group)

Perhaps the most significant difference between the groups in this workshop concerns not the quality of young people’s thinking, but the scale of their ideas. The Blagaj and BK groups, almost without exception, proposed small, achievable ideas close to the skills and resources participants already had – sewing, tutoring, make-up services, childcare, dog walking and photography. In the HV group, by contrast, the discussion very quickly and spontaneously shifted towards large, long-term ventures – hotels, tourist complexes, football clubs and IT companies – without a clear connection to the skills or resources participants currently possess. Facilitators describe this as a gap between ambition and practical planning, which is not a sign of disinterest or lack of motivation, but a consequence of insufficient exposure to entrepreneurship and financial literacy. A quote from the Blagaj group, although referring to a small idea, illustrates the same universal pattern of underestimating the steps between an idea and its implementation, simply on a different scale:

“If I do something well and people see it, then they’ll contact me themselves; that’s somehow how I think business works.” (Blagaj group)

A gender difference in the type of ideas proposed was recorded only in the Blagaj group, where girls more often suggested creative and service activities (sewing, make-up, making gifts), while boys proposed digital and technical solutions (websites, design). The facilitators of this group emphasise, however, that the key difference in the quality of thinking was not gender-based, but related to previous experience – participants who had already tried or done something thought more realistically and concretely than the others, regardless of whether they were girls or boys.

The approach to questions of ethics and sustainability showed a very similar pattern in all three groups: the first, spontaneous response was declarative and general (“I’m not harming anyone”; the idea is good because it is fair), while deeper reflection on service quality, environmental impact or long-term responsibility towards clients emerged only through additional, guiding questions from the facilitator. This suggests that young people currently understand ethics as a matter of personal intention rather than as a systemic consequence of a business decision – a distinction that should be an explicit part of the future curriculum.

Group Dynamics

This workshop produced one of the most interesting contrasts in the entire study: the BK group, otherwise more passive on topics related to emotions, showed noticeably greater activity here (discussed in more detail in the synthesis of group dynamics in Chapter 6); the Blagaj group approached the topic more casually than the topics of gambling or violence; and the HV group demonstrated a high level of ambition alongside a clear gap between self-confidence and understanding of the practical steps involved.

What Should Be Included in the New Programme for Young People

The final thematic area shows that young people in all three groups do not lack ideas, motivation or interest in entrepreneurship, but rather a structured framework for thinking that translates an idea into a realistic, achievable plan – a framework that should be equally useful to those considering small, immediate services and those with large, long-term ambitions.

From Aspiration to Idea, from Idea to Service

- Explicitly address the distinction between an occupation, a hobby and an independent service offered on the market, as young people consistently fail to distinguish between these categories in all three groups.
- Introduce exercises that ask young people to start from what they already know and can do today before thinking about future, more ambitious projects – particularly important when working with groups such as the HV group, where the gap between current resources and the scale of envisaged projects is most pronounced.
- Directly and consistently ask “who would buy this?” and “why from you specifically?” As a standard part of developing every idea, these questions proved in the workshops to be the most effective way of moving thinking from superficial to concrete.

Financial Literacy and the Reality of Costs

- Pay particular attention to valuing one’s own time and labour as a cost, as young people in all three groups systematically omit it from their estimates.
- Clearly explain the concept of “breaking even” and the difference between revenue, costs and actual profit through small, concrete examples before introducing more complex business scenarios.
- Balance work on small, immediately achievable ideas with work on larger projects, using the same tools for estimating costs and time, so that young people aspiring to more ambitious ventures (as in the HV group) gain a more realistic picture of the steps ahead without discouraging their ambition.

Ethics and Sustainability as an Integral Part of the Idea

- Introduce questions of ethics and sustainability at an early stage of idea development rather than as an afterthought, because young people do not currently connect these issues spontaneously with business planning.
- Use concrete follow-up questions (quality of service, environmental impact, responsibility towards the client) to move ethics from the framework of personal intention to the framework of the systemic consequences of a decision.

6. Synthesis of Common Patterns Across All Groups

After all thirteen workshops had been completed, the facilitator teams in each group prepared a final analytical synthesis which, unlike the preceding five thematic areas, does not follow an individual workshop or topic, but considers the entire four-day process as a single whole. The purpose of this synthesis was to identify patterns that appear across several different topics, regardless of whether the discussion concerned identity, relationships, violence, digital life, gambling, or entrepreneurship. This subsection presents the part of the synthesis relating to young people themselves – the problems they highlight when the process is viewed as a whole, where they engage most, the language they use to speak about their experiences, the barriers that prevent them from seeking help, and whom they actually trust. The part of the synthesis concerning methodological and programme recommendations – gamification, digital tools and specific priorities for curriculum development – is presented in the Discussion and Implications of the Findings chapter, where it can be linked to the recommendations arising from each individual thematic area.

Key Problems Recurring Throughout the Process

When the entire series of workshops is considered together, rather than topic by topic, several patterns emerge that go beyond the boundaries of individual thematic areas. The first and most significant is pressure from the surrounding environment and the need to belong to a group, which is not limited to peer violence or relationships but, as the BK group noted, runs “from relationships and jealousy, through digital behaviour, all the way to gambling and everyday decision-making”. Young people rarely use the term “peer pressure” themselves, but their examples from all thematic areas consistently show how important it is what the group thinks and how it will react.

The second pattern that goes beyond individual topics is difficulty in recognising and maintaining boundaries – a phenomenon that has already appeared in this report as a “grey area” in the thematic areas on relationships and digital life, but which the final synthesis identifies as one of the central problems of the entire process rather than a feature of a single topic. The BK group describes this precisely: young people “recognise extreme forms of control, manipulation or violence relatively easily, but have far more doubts when it comes to behaviours that fall within the grey area”.

Through its synthesis of the entire process, the Blagaj group particularly highlighted an insight that had appeared only partially in the individual thematic areas: young people’s feeling that adults, through the attitude that “nothing is more important than school”, fail to acknowledge that young people also have other important things in their lives, leading to frustration and withdrawal. This group directly linked the problem of being under pressure by school to a broader sense of being misunderstood by older generations, rather than merely to issues of time or grades.

The HV group focused its synthesis on the pressure of norms and authenticity – a topic that appeared in different forms throughout the individual workshops (gender norms, double standards, digital self-image), but which this group’s final analysis identifies as a single, pervasive pattern. The quote selected by the facilitators as representative of this pattern is:

“Be yourself, but don’t stand out too much.” (HV group)

This quote, together with the previously recorded “We slowly become what they think of us”, shows that the issue of identity and authenticity, introduced in the very first workshop of the programme, is

not an isolated introduction to the topic, but appears and intertwines throughout the entire four-day process – in relationships, on social media, and even in discussions about the future and success.

Finally, all three groups independently confirmed a finding that directly explains the pattern already identified in the first thematic area of this report: school consistently emerges as a source of stress for young people but is rarely mentioned as a place of support. The BK group formulated this gap most directly, noting that it “may indicate a certain gap between young people’s needs and the way they currently perceive the education system”.

Where Young People Engage Most

All three groups independently reached the same conclusion: young people’s engagement increases when activities are concrete and practical and decreases when they become abstract. Throughout the process, engagement was lowest in activities that required participants to define concepts or talk directly about their own emotions. By contrast, the highest levels of engagement were consistently observed in situations where there was no clear consensus – dilemmas, grey areas, and differences of opinion. This finding confirms and helps explain a pattern observed across all the thematic areas covered in this report: discussions of grey areas (between care and control, joking and violence, or knowledge and luck in gambling) were consistently the liveliest and most substantive.

A particularly valuable finding, observed in both the Blagaj and BK groups, was that topics which might initially appear less serious than violence or mental health – gambling and entrepreneurship – generated unexpectedly high levels of engagement. The BK group illustrated this through an activity in which participants mapped betting shops in their local area and “spontaneously shared observations from everyday life with little additional guidance”. However, the Blagaj group also revealed an important limitation to this finding: although participants were engaged during the entrepreneurship workshop, their engagement was often “superficial”. Ideas emerged quickly, but more in-depth discussion required consistent guidance from facilitators. This is consistent with the findings presented earlier in the section on entrepreneurship.

The HV group identified the widest range of topics that generated high levels of engagement: gender norms and double standards, jealousy and control in relationships, gambling and gaming, and discussions about the future and success. This is consistent with the pattern of age-related group dynamics observed in the preceding sections, where these very topics prompted the liveliest and, at times, most divided discussions within this group.

Young People’s Language

All three groups paid particular attention to documenting the authentic language young people use to describe their experiences, with a clear recommendation that this language should be retained in the future curriculum, as it conveys meaning, emotion and context that are lost in formal, professional terminology. The Blagaj group documented gambling-related vocabulary in the greatest detail, recording expressions such as “get hooked”, “just one more bet”, “I know the system” and “I missed it by a whisker”. According to the facilitators, these expressions “clearly show how young people understand the problem, often downplaying it, rationalising it or treating it as something normal”.

The BK group recorded vocabulary originating in digital environments but also used in everyday relationships, including expressions such as “cringe”, “ofirno” (embarrassing or awkward) and

“dopamine”. They also documented direct expressions of needs and concerns that appeared across several topics, such as “someone hassling me”, “someone controlling me”, “being disrespected”, “fitting in” and “being taken seriously”. The HV group focused on the language of identity and social pressure, recording expressions that reveal an internal conflict between being authentic and conforming to others' expectations:

“They can humiliate us with one comment and then we develop a new insecurity.” (HV group)

“What will people say?” (HV group)

Barriers to Seeking Help: A Synthesis

When barriers to seeking help are examined across the entire process rather than within individual thematic areas, an almost identical picture emerges in all three groups, lending weight to this finding. Young people are reluctant to seek help primarily because they fear being judged rather than supported, distrust institutions they perceive as distant and formal, and feel that even when they open up, they receive no concrete guidance on what to do next. The Blagaj group highlighted this last point through an insight that extends beyond individual topics: the problem is not simply that young people do not receive support, but that they “do not receive clear guidance on what to do next”. As a result, even the rare occasions when they do open up can become experiences that discourage them from seeking help again.

An important contribution to this report is the recognition that shame and concealment, most prominently observed in the thematic area of gambling, are in fact part of a broader pattern that extends beyond this topic. The Blagaj group expressed this directly: “It’s easier to talk about winning than losing.” While this applies to gambling, it also reflects a range of other situations in which young people choose to present themselves in a more favorable light rather than reveal the difficulties they are facing.

Trust and Connection with Youth Services

The most consistent finding in this part of the synthesis, independently confirmed by all three groups, is that young people place their trust in individuals rather than institutions. The Blagaj group expressed this as a conclusion that applies to the entire research process: “Young people rely primarily on people, not on the system. They build trust through relationships, not through institutions.” The hierarchy of trust was similar across all three groups: peers and friends came first, followed by individual adults who had demonstrated understanding (a particular teacher, coach or mentor, rather than members of a particular profession or institution in general). Family came next – selectively and with caution – while formal institutions were mentioned least frequently, and usually only when participants were explicitly asked about them.

All three groups also agreed that the greatest gap lies not in the lack of services for young people, but in how those services are presented and perceived. The BK group illustrated this through the observation that young people “often know that support is available, but are unsure whom to approach, what to expect or how well their privacy will be protected”. The HV group added that discussions across several workshops revealed a recurring belief that it is “safer to keep problems to yourself than to risk being judged, having information shared or facing negative consequences after reporting”. This finding reinforces the pattern of distrust towards institutions already identified in the thematic area on violence, now confirming that it extends across the entire programme rather than being confined to that topic.

Group Dynamics Throughout the Process

A brief account of group dynamics was provided after each of the thirteen workshops in the preceding thematic sections. These observations help place quotations and findings in their proper context by showing, for example, whether a particular statement came from a group that discussed the topic openly and spontaneously or from one in which the atmosphere was more tense. When these observations are considered together, across the entire four-day process in each group, several patterns emerge. These patterns are not specific to any single topic or workshop day but shaped how each group experienced the programme as a whole.

Across all thematic areas, the Blagaj group displayed relatively stable and consistent dynamics. Participants approached the workshops openly and with little resistance, frequently using humour as a natural part of the conversation rather than as a way of avoiding difficult topics. This pattern was evident from the very first workshop on identity and continued through to the workshops on gambling and digital violence. Even when discussions turned to more difficult and emotionally charged subjects, the group remained fully engaged, while humour continued to feature in the lighter parts of the conversation. Within these generally stable group dynamics, what varied from one topic to another was which participants took the lead in discussions. This was not determined by age or gender, but rather by who had direct or indirect experience of the topic being discussed (participants with experience of gambling during the gambling workshops or those with relevant digital experience during the workshops on online communication).

The BK group displayed a different but equally consistent pattern throughout the process. During workshops on emotions, identity and mental health, facilitators regularly had to ask additional follow-up questions to encourage participants to move beyond superficial responses. However, when discussions focused on relationships, digital life, gambling, or entrepreneurship, the same group responded much more spontaneously and gave considerably more detailed answers. This difference was not an isolated occurrence in a single workshop. It was observed often enough to become a defining characteristic of the group: topics that required participants to reveal their own vulnerabilities consistently prompted greater caution than those that allowed them to discuss the outside world, other people's experiences or concrete, practical decisions. This pattern was most evident during the entrepreneurship workshop, when some of the participants who had been the least active in earlier discussions became among the most active members of the group.

In the HV group, the most significant feature of group dynamics throughout the process was the influence of age – a pattern observed in virtually all thirteen workshops, regardless of topic. Older participants, particularly university students and those nearing the end of secondary education, consistently took the lead in discussions, provided longer and more reasoned responses, and shaped the direction of the conversation. Younger participants generally accepted, expanded or confirmed their observations, rarely challenging them openly. First observed during the workshop on identity, this pattern continued throughout the workshops on violence, relationships, digital life, gambling and entrepreneurship, making it one of the most consistent findings of the entire study. It is important to emphasise that this pattern was not inherently negative. In most workshops, it encouraged richer and more analytical discussions than might have emerged in a group of participants of similar ages. However, during one workshop focusing on digital violence and the sharing of intimate content, it also had a specific and more serious consequence: An older female

participant who held considerable influence within the group expressed a view that placed some of the responsibility on the victim, while younger participants generally listened without openly challenging it. This episode, described in detail in the section on digital life, shows that the age-related dynamics of this group are not merely a methodological observation, but a factor that facilitators should actively recognise and, where necessary, gently balance – for example, by temporarily separating younger participants to allow them to discuss the topic independently before bringing the group back together.

Taken together, these observations demonstrate that group composition is not simply a neutral setting in which findings emerge, but an active factor that influences which voices and perspectives are heard and given prominence. This finding should be considered both when interpreting participants' quotations in the preceding thematic sections and when planning future activities with groups of a similar composition.

Discussion and Implications of the Findings

The previous chapter presented the findings from thirteen workshops organised into five thematic areas, together with a synthesis of the findings following the completion of the entire process in all three groups. Rather than repeating these findings, this discussion considers them together, with the aim of addressing three questions that extend beyond individual topics: what patterns connect seemingly different areas (identity, relationships, violence, digital life, gambling and entrepreneurship); what these patterns reveal about the three groups as distinct but comparable groups; and what all this means for the methodology and content of future programmes for young people. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the study's limitations, which are important to bear in mind when interpreting and applying these findings.

Cross-cutting Patterns: Findings That Go Beyond Individual Topics

A review of all five thematic areas, together with the section on common patterns presented in the Findings chapter, reveals that certain patterns cannot be attributed to a single topic or workshop, but represent characteristics of how young people in all three groups think, feel and make decisions, regardless of whether the discussion concerns relationships, money, the internet or identity.

The “Grey Area” as a Central Phenomenon, Not an Exception

Throughout the report, the liveliest discussions and greatest differences of opinion did not arise around clear, extreme cases, but around situations in which the boundary is not obvious: between care and control in relationships, between joking and violence in everyday communication, between trust and surveillance in the digital space, and between knowledge and the illusion of control in gambling. This pattern, which might be interpreted as a weakness in young people's understanding, is in fact consistently associated with a higher, rather than lower, level of engagement – the integrated findings explicitly confirmed this, noting that engagement increases precisely in situations “without a clear consensus”. This has an important methodological implication: programme content that offers young people ready-made, simple divisions into “good” and “bad” is likely to prompt less genuine reflection than content that directly confronts them with ambiguous, borderline cases and asks them to articulate for themselves where and why they draw the line.

The Gap Between Awareness and Behaviour

The second pattern recurring across topics that at first glance have little in common – digital habits, setting boundaries in relationships and recognising gambling risks – is the difference between what young people know or recognise and what they are able to apply in their behaviour. Young people recognise the boredom–phone use–regret cycle but cannot stop automatic behaviour. They understand the difference between care and control in theory but find it difficult to apply in their own relationships. They recognise that a winning “system” is a myth, yet the idea still appeals to them. This consistency suggests that information alone is not enough and that the curriculum should devote less time to conveying facts that young people often already know, while leaving more room for practicing the application of that knowledge in simulated or real situations.

Trust Is Personal, Not Institutional

The third, highly consistent finding, independently confirmed in all three groups and across all topics that touched on support – relationships, violence, digital violence and gambling – is that young people do not place their trust in institutions as a category, but in specific people with whom they

have built a relationship. This finding has serious implications for how youth services should be presented: the message “contact the school psychologist” has a very different effect from a message that names a specific, approachable and trusted person. The gap reported by young people is not an absence of services, but an absence of visible, personal and non-judgemental access to them.

Distrust of Institutions as a Thread Running Through All Topics

Closely related to the previous finding, but deserving separate attention, distrust of schools, the police and formal services does not appear as an attitude specific to one topic, but appears in workshops on violence, digital violence and gambling, and even in discussions about whom young people would approach for support with personal problems. This distrust is not necessarily rooted in a bad experience with every individual institution, but in the expected sequence of the response – that criticism or suspicion will come before support. A quote from the Blagaj group, recorded in the thematic area on digital life, sums this up in a way that applies to the entire report, not only to that topic:

“I would only tell my parents when I absolutely had to, because I know the first question would be ‘why did you do that?’, not how they could help me.” (Blagaj group)

Age-Related Dynamics as a Factor Shaping the Findings, Not Merely the Context

Finally, the synthesis of group dynamics presented in the Findings chapter showed that group composition – particularly in the HV group, which had the widest age range – was not merely a neutral setting, but an active factor shaping which views came to the fore. This is important when interpreting all the findings in this report: when quoting a view expressed in a group with a pronounced age-based hierarchy, that view should be understood as a product of that hierarchy, rather than necessarily representing the views of all participants in that age group. In one instance (digital violence, HV group), the same dynamics also had a specific, more serious consequence, influencing which ethical position became reinforced within the group. This turns a methodological finding into a programme priority, addressed in greater detail in the recommendations that follow.

Three Groups, Three Profiles: A Concise Portrait

Although all three groups followed the same schedule of thirteen workshops, differences in how they approached the topics, how openly they expressed themselves and the nuances they brought to the discussions resulted in three distinct and consistent group profiles. These profiles should not be interpreted as an assessment of one group in comparison with another, but rather as descriptions of three different starting points that future programmes should consider.

Blagaj Group

- A group that showed stable openness throughout the process and a willingness to talk about real, personal experiences – from family relationships to real, sometimes traumatic events in their surroundings. This openness went hand in hand with pronounced and concretely grounded distrust of the school system and institutions, based on personal experience that reporting problems did not lead to solutions. Their entrepreneurship ideas were realistic and modest in scope but insufficiently developed; their understanding of digital communication and its “communication minefields” was the most analytical in the entire study. What distinguishes this group most is its ability,

when provided with structure and guidance, to reach insights quickly that go beyond the topic itself (for example, that interpretation of a message is influenced by the reader's mood, not only by the message itself).

BK Group

- A group that was consistently the least spontaneous during workshops devoted to emotions, identity and mental health, requiring additional follow-up questions from the facilitator to move beyond the first, superficial level of response – but which clearly and consistently opened up when topics became practical, concrete or related to the outside world (relationships, digital communication, gambling and especially entrepreneurship). This group also produced some of the most sophisticated individual insights in the entire study – using multiple social media profiles to manage privacy and openly mentioning high amounts of screen time without any discomfort, unlike the consistent signs of unease seen in the other two groups. The greatest area for further work with this group is not a lack of insight, but enabling young people to reach those insights even when the topic is more personally sensitive.

HV Group

- The group with the widest age range (15–19 years), resulting in the most consistent and pronounced age-related dynamics observed in the entire study. Older participants, particularly university students, led discussions in virtually all thirteen workshops, while younger participants generally accepted their views without openly challenging them. These dynamics enabled the group to engage in the most developed and analytical discussions on gender norms, double standards, and social pressure of all three groups. However, in one instance (the sharing of intimate content, in the thematic area on digital life), they also contributed to reinforcing a problematic view that placed blame on the victim. Entrepreneurial ideas in this group were more ambitious and larger in scale than those in the other two groups, but the gap between ambition and an understanding of the practical steps needed to achieve it was also the most pronounced.

Methodological Implications: What Worked and What Did Not

In addition to substantive findings about what young people think and feel, this process also produced clear insights into which methods of working with young people achieve their purpose and which do not – insights articulated by the facilitators themselves through observations following individual workshops and through the final analytical synthesis in all three groups.

The most significant methodological finding concerns the “safe bet” simulation in the thematic area on gambling, which achieved its purpose in the BK group – participants concluded through direct experience that knowledge does not guarantee an outcome – but did not do so in the Blagaj group because the basic mechanism of odds had not been explained clearly enough in advance. This difference, considered in detail in the thematic area on gambling, confirms a broader principle independently formulated by facilitators in all three groups in the final synthesis: an activity that encourages participants to reach an insight independently through experience works only if a sufficiently clear and simple foundation has first been established so that all participants, not only those with previous experience, can draw the intended lesson from it.

The second consistent methodological finding, repeated in each of the three group syntheses, is resistance to prolonged, unstructured work in small groups, particularly when it involves writing or producing materials without a clear, immediate purpose. Young people in all three groups consistently respond better to short, clearly guided activities – scenarios, quick decisions and positioning on an opinion scale – than to conventional “school-like” group work, and they expect the facilitator to actively guide the discussion and offer a conclusion rather than leaving the discussion as a mere exchange of views without any resolution.

The third finding concerns the role of a concrete; personal example as opposed to an abstract explanation. Across all thematic areas, engagement was consistently higher when discussion centred on a real story, scenario or example from participants’ immediate surroundings than when they were asked to speak in general, theoretical terms. This is particularly true of topics requiring emotional openness (emotions, mental health), where speaking through hypothetical situations or other people’s experiences consistently created more space for honesty than direct questions about participants’ own feelings.

Limitations of the Study

The findings presented in this report should be interpreted considering several methodological limitations inherent in a qualitative, participatory approach such as PLA.

- **Sample size and composition:** the study involved 38 young people in three groups, which is sufficient for rich qualitative analysis but does not allow statistical generalisation of the findings to the broader population of young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region. Differences in the age range between groups (BK group aged 15–16, compared with the broader 15–19 range in the other two groups) mean that the observed regional differences may partly reflect differences in participants’ ages rather than exclusively regional or cultural differences.
- **Influence of group dynamics on the content of the findings:** as discussed in this chapter, age-related and other hierarchies within the groups (particularly the HV group) influenced which views came to the fore in discussion, meaning that the recorded quotes and views probably do not represent all voices within a group equally.
- **Role of facilitators in shaping responses:** the quality and depth of individual findings depended on how extensively facilitators asked follow-up questions and how actively they guided the discussion, meaning that differences between workshops (and groups) partly reflect differences in facilitation style, not only differences in participants’ views.
- **Self-reporting and social desirability:** as in any study based on group discussion, participants may have given answers they considered more socially acceptable or aligned their responses with the views of more vocal group members, particularly on sensitive topics such as violence, gambling and digital risks.
- **Lack of longitudinal follow-up:** the study captured a single point in these young people’s development over a four-day period; there are no data on whether and how the attitudes and behaviours recorded during the workshops persisted or changed after the programme ended.

These limitations do not diminish the value of findings for developing programmes for young people. Quite the contrary, the participatory, qualitative methodology provided a depth of insight that would have been difficult to achieve through a quantitative approach. However, they suggest that caution is needed when generalising the findings beyond the context in which they emerged, and that future phases of work with these or similar groups should be designed with these limitations in mind.

Recommendations

This chapter consolidates the recommendations arising from all five thematic areas presented in the Findings chapter, along with the methodological and content-related priorities identified by the facilitation teams in all three groups during the final analytical synthesis. The recommendations are organised at three levels: general methodological principles applicable to the entire future curriculum, regardless of the specific topic; thematic priorities, drawn together from all five thematic areas and the three group syntheses; and specific proposals for gamification and digital formats as a separate, innovative layer of the programme.

General Methodological Principles for the New Curriculum

The seven principles below arise directly from what facilitators in all three groups independently identified as the difference between activities that achieved their purpose and those that did not.

Principle	What This Means in Practice
Theory before discussion	Each workshop should begin with a brief, clear explanation of how the topic works (gambling mechanisms, odds, algorithms, dynamics of control in relationships) before opening the floor for discussion. Without this foundation, young people become lost in abstraction (e.g. the “safe bet” simulation in the Blagaj group), or the discussion remains superficial.
Guided discussion with a conclusion	The facilitator actively guides the discussion, corrects mistaken assumptions, and provides a clear conclusion at the end of the activity. Young people in all three groups explicitly ask to “get something back”, rather than merely being given space to talk.
Concrete before abstract	Content is introduced through real-life scenarios, examples from participants’ surroundings or hypothetical stories (such as the story of Amar in the thematic area on gambling), rather than through general definitions or theoretical concepts.
Less group work, more guided discussion	Prolonged work in small groups, particularly involving writing or producing materials, consistently proved demotivating. Short, dynamic formats (2–5 minutes per task), guided with the whole group, achieve greater engagement.
The “grey area” as a starting point, not an exception	The greatest and most productive engagement across all thirteen workshops arose from situations without a clear consensus. The curriculum should systematically use borderline cases (care/control, joking/violence, knowledge/luck) as a central learning tool rather than an additional complication.
Unpacking mechanisms, not just warnings	Young people often already know the basic facts (that the internet carries risks, that gambling can become a problem); what engages them further is an explanation of the hidden mechanisms – how algorithms shape the feed, how betting operators set odds, and how manipulation works in relationships.

Online as an extension, not a replacement	Digital content (short videos, quizzes, simulations) works best as preparation for or a continuation of an in-person workshop, not as a standalone replacement for facilitation.
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The three group syntheses of priorities, presented in the Findings chapter, confirm these principles from two complementary perspectives: the Blagaj group focused its contribution on methodological principles (how to teach), while the BK and HV groups offered thematic priorities (what to teach). The thematic priorities from all three groups – relationships and boundaries, mental health and emotional literacy, digital life, seeking help, critical decision-making, and, in the HV group, life and entrepreneurial skills – fully correspond with the five thematic areas of this report, confirming that the structure of the Future4Youth programme is already aligned with what the groups themselves recognise as priorities.

Thematic Priorities by Area

The recommendations below bring together the conclusions from each of the five thematic areas presented in the Findings chapter. For clarity, they are presented concisely by area; detailed explanations and supporting quotes are provided in the relevant thematic section.

Identity, Emotions, Stress and Coping with Pressure

- Create space to explore the difference between public image and one's inner sense of self and explicitly address gender norms and double standards through concrete situations rather than abstract theory.
- Develop exercises for nuanced boundary-setting that go beyond a simple "I don't want that", with particular attention to gender-related differences in expressing emotions.
- Adapt programme content on mental health to groups' different starting points regarding stigma and present it as an everyday topic, not exclusively a crisis issue.
- Directly address the pattern that "it is easier to help others than yourself" and monitor the influence of older, more dominant participants on messages about seeking or not seeking support in mixed-age groups.

Violence, Power and Relationships

- Explicitly address the "grey area" between joking and violence and between care and control through concrete situations, with exercises that identify subtle rather than only obvious forms of control.
- Strengthen content on the role of bystanders, with concrete, gradual options for safe responses rather than relying exclusively on direct reporting or confrontation.
- Address distrust of institutions openly, with a clear explanation of what happens after a report is made and how the reporting person is protected.
- Introduce practical work on maintaining, not merely formulating, boundaries, and explicitly address gender double standards in partner control.

Digital Life

- Start from the insight that misunderstandings in online communication arise from the absence of tone and context, not merely from the message itself, and that interpretation also depends on the reader's mood.
- Focus on practical, small-scale strategies for interrupting automatic phone use, because young people already recognise the boredom–use–regret cycle.
- Address algorithmically generated content as something young people do not fully control, with concrete guidance for managing their own feeds.
- Give high priority to addressing beliefs that shift responsibility for digital violence onto the victim, particularly in the context of intimate content and relationship break-ups.

Gambling

- Start from the expanded definition of gambling that young people already use (loot boxes, fantasy leagues), rather than focusing exclusively on traditional forms.
- Use simulation activities to challenge the myth that control and knowledge guarantee a win, with clear, step-by-step instructions for facilitators (see the methodological note in the thematic area on gambling).
- Directly address the myth of “quick money” and selective memory of wins, and explicitly open discussion of the consequences of gambling in groups that do not raise them spontaneously.
- Strengthen content on whom to approach for support and how, including concrete wording for offering support to a peer that young people themselves successfully articulated.

Entrepreneurship

- Explicitly distinguish between an occupation, a hobby and an independent service offered on the market, and consistently ask “who would buy this?” and “why from you specifically?”
- Pay particular attention to valuing one's own time and labour as a cost, and clearly explain the concept of “breaking even” through small, concrete examples.
- Balance work on small, achievable ideas with work on larger projects, particularly in groups aspiring to ambitious ventures without a connection to their current resources.
- Introduce questions of ethics and sustainability at an early stage of idea development rather than as an afterthought.

Gamification and Digital Formats: Common Findings across All Three Groups

The final analytical synthesis in all three groups independently proposed similar directions for gamification and digital formats, together with cautions that should be taken very seriously before implementation.

What Makes Gamification Effective

- Fast, clear feedback – participants immediately see the consequence of their choice (money, stress, relationships), without complicated rules.

- Short, focused tasks (2–5 minutes) instead of long, complex activities involving extensive writing.
- The facilitator actively guides and directs the activity – too much “free” space without structure consistently reduces the quality of discussion.
- Every activity must have a clear conclusion and an explicit link to participants’ real lives.
- A format resembling discussion with rapid interaction rather than a conventional “game” or school-style group work.

Specific Proposals by Thematic Area

- Gambling and decision-making: rapid decision rounds in which participants choose an option and immediately see the consequence (money, stress, relationships); a digital betting-slip or budget simulation with rules clearly explained in advance.
- Digital violence and online situations: interactive “what do you do next?” scenarios, guided through options with group discussion of the outcome – more of a “played-out discussion” than a conventional game.
- Risk recognition (online and offline): short “where is the catch?” challenges based on real advertisements, messages or offers from participants’ surroundings.
- Entrepreneurship: a mini-simulation with clear steps (“you have X amount of money → choose 2–3 things → what happens?”), focusing on rapid understanding rather than lengthy elaboration.
- Relationships and boundaries: interactive scenarios in which participants make a series of small decisions and track how these gradually affect the quality of a relationship.

Digital Tools and Platforms Relevant to Young People

All three groups mention a similar set of platforms that young people already use every day and that should be taken into account when designing digital additions to the curriculum: TikTok, Instagram and YouTube Shorts for short visual content; Discord, particularly highlighted in the HV group, as a space where young people spend significant time in gaming communities; and WhatsApp, Viber and Snapchat for everyday communication. Recommended digital formats include short video scenarios (30–60 seconds) with response options and explanations of outcomes, interactive quizzes with immediate explanations of answers, mini decision simulations, and “story” formats – stories divided into steps with questions between them, similar to the example of “Amar’s story” used in the gambling workshops.

All three groups likewise cautioned that digital content should not feel like “a lesson transferred into a video or PDF” – if it resembles a school lecture, it loses the engagement it would otherwise generate. The guiding principle should be for the digital format to reflect how young people already use the internet: through short, interactive content that offers a sense of choice and immediate results.

Conclusion

This report presents the findings from four-day workshops conducted with 38 young people in three locations, covering thirteen thematic areas encompassing identity, emotions, relationships, violence, digital life, gambling and entrepreneurship. A consistent message emerges across all themes: young people in all three groups demonstrate a high level of awareness of the challenges they face, a well-developed ability to arrive at nuanced, independent insights through guided discussion, and clear preferences regarding how they want to learn. The differences between the groups lie not in the quality of their thinking, but in their starting points, the age composition of the groups and the specific experiences that shape how these shared patterns are expressed. The future programme of work with young people has an opportunity to draw on the principles and priorities presented in this chapter to develop a curriculum that not only informs but also actively empowers young people to recognise, articulate and apply insights that, as this report demonstrates, they are already capable of reaching independently.

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Note on Sources

The empirical basis of this report consists of the minutes and transcripts from thirteen workshops and three final analytical syntheses prepared by the facilitator teams during the PLA workshops held between April and June 2026. These documents constitute internal project documentation and have not been publicly released; quotations and findings drawn from them are presented in this report with an indication of the group from which they originate, without identifying individual participants. The methodological framework of the research (the Participatory Learning and Action approach) and the structure of the report draw on the experience of earlier research conducted in the region in 2007, listed above, which served as a reference model for organising the content, but not as a source of data for the findings presented in this report.

Annex 1: PLA Agenda – Complete Workshop Schedule

The original agenda applied in all three groups (Blagaj Group, BK Group and HV Group), under the working title “Future4Youth – Skills for Life in the Real and Digital World”, is presented below. The schedule is identical for all three groups/locations; only the specific dates and locations differ, as stated in the Participant Profile chapter.

Day 1

Time	Activity
11:30 – 12:30	Arrival at the hotel and check-in
12:30 – 13:15	Introductions and basic information about the event
13:15 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00	Workshop 1: Who Am I Now? Identity, Social Influences and Gender Norms
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee break
16:30 – 18:00	Workshop 2: How Do Feelings, Values and Boundaries Work Within Me?
18:00 – 18:30	Daily reflection
19:00 – 20:00	Dinner
20:30 – 21:30	Team-building activities

Day 2

Time	Activity
8:00 – 9:30	Breakfast
9:30 – 11:00	Workshop 3: Stress, Pressures and What Does It Mean for Us to Be Well?
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 13:00	Workshop 4: How Do We Cope? Strategies, Support and Relationships
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00	Workshop 5: Violence (offline and online) – Power, Social Expectations and Why People Remain Silent
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee break
16:30 – 18:00	Workshop 6: Relationships, Closeness, Pressures and Boundaries
18:00 – 18:30	Daily reflection
19:00 – 20:00	Dinner
20:30 – 21:30	Team-building activities

Day 3

Time	Activity
9:30 – 11:00	Workshop 8: Digital communication, digital life and Technology Dependence – My Digital Day and Online Communication
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 13:00	Workshop 9: What Devices and Platforms Do to Our Attention and Emotions
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00	Workshop 7: Violence (Offline and Online)
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee break
16:30 – 18:00	Workshop 10: Digital Violence and Healthy Online Boundaries
18:00 – 18:30	Daily reflection
19:00 – 20:00	Dinner
20:30 – 22:00	Free-time activities

Day 4

Time	Activity
8:00 – 9:30	Breakfast
9:30 – 11:00	Workshop 11: Gambling Around Us: What It Looks Like, Why It Is Appealing and Who Has Access to It
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 13:00	Workshop 12: How Gambling Works, How It Affects Us and What We Can Do
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00	Workshop 13: Entrepreneurship, Skills and Sustainable Thinking
16:00 – 17:30	Closing of the training, event evaluation and certificate award ceremony
17:30	Departure



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