*Study on the solutions to promote digital education for young people and to ensure their protection from online threats - Human Rights Council Resolution 51/17*

*Reference: OHCHR/TESPRDD*

**Submission from the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (question 1 and 2) and Ministry of Culture and Equality (question 3)**

**1) What are the main challenges that young people in your country face in accessing digital education? Please consider the specific situation of marginalized young people and those in vulnerable situations in your response.**

* In Norway, according to the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act, all digital learning materials should be universally accessible (WCAG 2.1). Recent supervision from The Authority for Universal Design of ICT and complaints from parents of pupils with special needs, has revealed that not all digital learning resources are sufficiently accessible and in compliance with the regulations.

**2) What steps is the Government taking to ensure that digital education is accessible and promoted among young people? Please provide examples of specific laws and regulations, measures, policies, and programmes directed at ensuring young people’s universal access to digital education.**

* In 2023, the Government developed a Strategy for digital competence and infrastructure in kindergarten and school (2023-2030). The strategy was developed in collaboration with The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) and contains 80 different measures and actions.
* According to the Education Act in Norway, public primary to upper secondary education is free of charge, including learning materials. The Local and Regional Authorities that own the schools provide both analogue and digital learning materials to the pupils. As a measure in the new Strategy for digital competence and infrastructure, the government is currently developing a service directory for digital learning materials, in order to help teachers find relevant learning materials. These will primally be commercially developed products, procured under licensing agreements between the school owners and developers, but the government also provides funding for the development of learning materials where there is no viable commercial market.
* The strategy also contains measures for increasing compliance to the regulation of universal access of ICT. The government is in 2024 examining the legal, pedagogical and organisational grounds for a support service for municipalities and suppliers of digital teaching material, with regard to universal design and access.
* The national curriculum in Norway defines digital skills as one of five basic skills. These skills are part of the competence in the subjects and necessary tools for learning and understanding them. Programming and algorithmic thinking was introduced in several subjects with the renewal of the curriculum in 2020.
* In order for pupils to be able to develop basic skills and academic knowledge in a more digital school-day, teachers must have professional digital competence (PDC). There have been many national efforts to increase teachers' digital competence over the last few years, among others further education in professional digital competence through the Competence for Quality strategy and the development of digital competence packages: Digital Skills, Professional Digital Competence, Programming and Algorithmic Thinking, and Digital Teaching at School and at Home.
* The Norwegian digital learning arena (NDLA) is funded by a collaboration 18 county municipalities, and is by NDLA described as an OER repository developed for Upper Secondary School.
* For the higher education sector, Sikt is the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research. The organization is a public administrative body under the Ministry of Education and Research. Sikt has developed and managed DLR (Deling av læringsressurser), which is an OER service for several years.
* Children and youth encounter digitalization and new technology in all arenas. This provides opportunities, but also challenges that we need increased knowledge about. The Government has therefore constituted a committee which will examine the consequences of children and youths screen use, on their health, learning, well-being and upbringing, and suggest measures. The committee is foreseen to deliver its recommendations within November 1st 2024.

**3) What steps is the Government taking to ensure that young people can realize their human rights online in a safe, empowering, and inclusive way?**

The Government has increased its operational support for the movement *Stopp hatprat* (stop hate speech) since its inception. *Stopp hatprat* has built up a broad national network of young people, voluntary organisations, municipalities, youth workers and other professionals who are in contact with young people on a daily basis. It holds workshops, seminars and courses, and has developed a separate system of stop hate speech ambassadors.

Stop Hate Speech Movement was established in Norway in 2014. The campaign is part of the European No Hate Speech Movement started by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe in 2013.

In 2021, the Government set up a national grant scheme for actions to combat racism, discrimination and hate speech. The aim of the grant scheme is to facilitate local, regional, and national initiatives and activities aimed at countering racism, discrimination and hate speech on the grounds of ethnicity, religion, and beliefs. The scheme will help to promote anti-racism, diversity, and dialogue, as well as contributing to knowledge and awareness among the majority population about racism, discrimination and hate speech. NOK 20.9 million will be allocated under the scheme in 2024.

The Government will launch a new Action Plan to Combat Discrimination and Hatred towards Muslims and a new Action Plan against Antisemittisme, by the end of 2024. In the meantime, the efforts in the existing action plans will be prolonged. A new action plan against harassment of Sami people is also currently under preparation.

The Government is currently working on a white paper on sexual harassment, which will also address online sexual harassment.

Proba Research has been tasked by the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs to study children and young people’s experiences of racism and discrimination. The project will help to improve understanding of such experiences, the arenas in which they occur, and who is involved. The project will result in recommendations for suitable measures and efforts for preventing and combating racism and discrimination targeted at children and young people. The Government will assess the findings and recommendations of the report. The report will be made public by the end of March 2024.