INCLUSO Conference

CHILD FOCUS
Perspective from the
Safer Internet Centre Belgium

Ellen STASSART
Who are we?

- Foundation for Missing and Sexually Exploited Children

Strong link with ‘new’ technologies
Who is Child Focus?

- Foundation for Missing and Sexually Exploited Children
- Child Focus = SAFER INTERNET CENTRE BELGIUM

- An ‘All-in-one’ organisation
- European and global perspective
Our vision

- The Internet is an enormous enrichment in the life of children and young people = Opportunity
- Social media, Web 2.0 – Web 3.0, increasing interactivity and global interaction
- Press – society: focus on risks and ‘dangers’
- Positive attitude = key
- But not being blind for risks, especially for vulnerable children
Our vision

- The Internet is an enormous enrichment in the life of children and young people = Opportunity
  - As there are risks involved, children should learn how to use the Internet in a safe manner
    - Two primary target groups: children and young people
      - Direct approach: young people
        - Inform
        - Empower
      - Indirect approach:
        - Educators
          - Education is crucial
        - Stakeholders
          - Enhance
Building expertise = necessary

Awareness raising:

- towards mentality & behaviour changes
- prevention = pro-active

Child Focus: all-in-one organisation: facilitates this process of sharing expertise en policy-influencing

Focus on vulnerable children: start @ Child Focus
Awareness raising & Inclusion?

- Awareness & e-inclusion =
  - Unexplored area

- NECESSITY:
  - Research: explore the specific need, do we really need another approach?
  - Collaboration = key (Belgium good practices Child Focus, Digidak, INCLUSO, ...)
  - Financial support: develop targeted tools = expensive
  - Thinking ‘out of the box’: interdisciplinarity (communication, technology, criminology, ...) at academic and EU level
Campaigns Child Focus

Help us to stop Child abuse images online!
The Belgian civil initiative for reporting child abuse images found on the Internet.

StopChildPorno.be is...

Anonymous
The site is not managed by the police. You can report the existence of inappropriate images found on the Internet and the likelihood of children at risk.

In Belgium
The site is for Belgium and will further investigate and report suspected illegal images found on the Internet.

European Commission
The site is the Belgian and child unsafe site of the "Child Monitor" project, initiated by the European Commission.

Media Campaign
The site assists in bringing awareness raising campaigns to the attention of the public.

Stop à l'exploitation sexuelle des enfants sur Internet
Co-funded by the European Union
Awareness tools Child Focus

Co-funded by the EU
Awareness tools
Children & new technologies

- Research: Belgian TIRO and EU Kids Online

- Typical internet use: 3 aspects:
  - Communication and information
  - Socialising and networking
  - Entertainment

- Interaction = fun!

- Differences boys (entertainment and information) & girls (communication)

Co-funded by the EU
Children & new technologies

- Aspect Communication
  - E-mail
  - Chat: most popular
  - SNS: frequently used and very popular

- See www.clicksafe.be and the INCLUSO-manual

- Online communication = pedagogical challenge!
  ➔ being aware of the risks and downsides
  - Disclosure of personal information
  - Disclosure of images
  - Chatting with strangers
  - Cyberbullying
Online communication = pedagogical challenge!

- Digital divide: discussion and communication to avoid pedagogical paradox!
- Finding the balance between
  - Protection of children
  - Fundamental rights of children (privacy, freedom of expression, protection for sexual exploitation, …)
  - Empowering children
- TRUST & CONFIDENCE = crucial!
- Empowering: not easy for vulnerable children
Online communication = pedagogical challenge!

- Communication: is bringing in personal elements
- Total anonymity is impossible nor desirable
- Social workers or youth workers?
  - online friends? Waiting the initiative of the youngster
  - Balancing professionalism with self – disclosure
  - Set out rules and agreements
  - Reciprocity = key!
Empowering & educate to benefit from the positive aspects

Vulnerable children: not 1 definition!

2 streams:

- Inclusion and digital divide
- Awareness raising and education

NEW = INTEGRATION!
Collaboration = key

- WIN-WIN: collaboration researchers & Safer Internet Centres
  - WIN for SIC:
    - Evidence based work: needs, changes,…
    - Knowledge about the phenomena
    - Opportunities as well as risks in perspective

- Win for research
  - Knowledge of the needs of the field
    - Parents
    - Teachers
    - Young people
    - …
Collaboration = key

- WIN-WIN: collaboration researchers & Safer Internet Centres
  - Win for research
    - Network of SIC with different stakeholders
      - Awareness + helpline + hotline
      - Industry (acces- and content providers and mobile industry)
      - Government
      - LEA
      - social services and youth workers
Future challenges

- As long as there are new technologies being developed
- As long as there are children using these technologies
- As long as there are parents educating these children

We will need awareness raising projects to help parents, guide children and protect their safety
Future challenges

- Undiscovered research territory:
  - The real link between disclosure and victimization
  - Overcome stereotypes (e.g. offender profiles)
  - Mechanisms of online sexual exploitation and abuse

- ‘Global’ perspective

- Interdisciplinary
  → Thinking out of the box!
Thank you

Ellen Stassart
Coordinator Safer Internet Centre Belgium
Chief Officer Sexual Exploitation and e-safety
ellen.stassart@childfocus.org