Institut für Didaktik der Demokratie

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STEPin – Supporting parents to deal with the excessive online time and habits of their children: a prevention and intervention programme for all

Guidelines of research for the National Monitoring Report

IO1–A2-1

Developed by:

ric. DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION CENTRE NOVO MESTO

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Introduction

The Internet represents a technological breakthrough, a new way of communication and a new era with different characteristics in terms of transmission and speed of communication. The benefits of using the Internet are numerous, both professionally and socially. In recent years, however, we have also very often perceived the pitfalls that we can encounter online. Privacy violations, the dissemination of fake news, harmful acts such as cyber-bullying, the reproduction of crime on the dark web, internet addiction and the negative effects of the Internet on social relations and social cohesion.

This document provides an overview of the current situation relating to the Internet abusive behaviour (IAB) in Slovenia.

1 State of the Art in the field of IAB – Slovenia

1.1 Legislation framework

There is no specific law in the country that deals with the IAB, but some of the internet usage policies, the user's rights and the protection of personal data are covered within Electronic Communications Act (ZEKom-1-NPB4)[1]. This law lays down standards for protection, the rights of users, regulates the security of networks and services and their operation in exceptional circumstances, ensures the exercise and regulation of the protection of the right to communication privacy of users of public communications services.

Users can also, contact The Information Commissioner's Office[2] at any time to help them when they believe that someone has improperly interfered with personal data; when you are required choose IP decision to process personal data (biometrics, integration of databases).

However, as more and more non-chemical addictions and other forms of risk are being detected, the "Preventive Platform[3]" Program submitted a proposal for the implementation of the Addiction Prevention Act (ZPZ-1)[4], which would determine measures to prevent addiction and treat those addicts who are not included in the existing Prevention of Illicit Drug Use and Treatment of Illicit Drug Users Act (ZPUPD)[5].

1.2 Main social actors – the role of families and parents

The main government organisations working in the field of IAB are:

- Ministry of the Interior
  The Ministry of the Interior performs tasks related to providing public security in Slovenia.
- Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
  The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is responsible for all aspects of family life and related issues.
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
  Ministry of Education, Science and Sport helps in creating an inclusive, egalitarian,

[1] https://zakonodaja.com/zakon/zekom-1
[2] https://www.ip-rs.si/varstvo-osebnih-podatkov/informacijske-tehnologije-in-osebni-podatki/
[3] https://www.preventivna-platforma.si/
[4] https://www.preventivna-platforma.si/docs/pobuda/PP_pobuda_zakon_o_preprecevanju_zasvojenosti_NVO_koncna_verzija.pdf
[5] https://zakonodaja.com/zakon/zpupd

sustainable and creative society of lifelong learning, promotes the involvement of young people, and encourages participation in sporting activities

- Ministry of Justice
  The Ministry of Justice performs the tasks of judicial proceedings, enforcement of criminal sanctions, protection of personal data, international legal aid, and international judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters.
- National Institute of Public Health
  The institute is a central national establishment with a main purpose to educate, protect and enhance the health of the population of the Republic of Slovenia by means of raising awareness and other preventive measures.
- The Information Commissioner's Office
  The Information Commissioner is responsible for ensuring respect for the right to access public information and the right to personal data protection.
- Slovenian Ministry of Public Administration
  Slovenian Ministry of Public Administration is responsible for the functioning of the national communication network and provides support to the development of electronic services for citizens, the economy and the State.

Other institutions that are focusing on the role of parents and families, parent associations and other relevant stakeholders:

- Centre for digital Wellbeing (LOGOUT)
  Centre provides psychological counselling for children, young people and adults and different workshops & lectures connected to internet abusive behaviour and problematic use of digital technology.
- Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (SAFY),
  Organization that aims to raise the quality of life for children, young people and families in which we want to represent their interests, assert to their needs and protect their rights.
- Youth Information and Counselling Center of Slovenia (MISSS)
  Organization that implement social welfare and youth programs that are designed for children, adolescents, and parents.
- Clinic for the treatment of non-chemical addictions

1.3 Case studies – Scientific research

Children's digital lives during the Corona crisis (KiDiCoTi)[6]
How children (10-18) experienced online risks during the Covid-19 lockdown - Spring 20207

The research that was conducted in 11 European countries shows how did the corona pandemic crisis affected lives of most children in spring 2020.

Slovenian children aged between 10 and 18 years who were involved in the study during spring closure, reported that they have spent using digital technologies on average 6,69 hours per day, of which 3,85 hours for school purposes.

The main aim of the survey was to identify potential changes that occurred in children's online risk experiences during the Covid-lockdown, compared to the situation before Covid. The percentage of children who reported in Slovenia to feel safe online is 60% in school ranges 80% at home 96%. More than half of the children surveyed (54%) reported that they were more concerned about the increased use of digital technologies at the time of the closure of the countries.

In Slovenia, 43% of parents questioned said that they were more concerned about the overuse of digital technologies before covid-19 closure.

General internet addiction: Psychometric properties of Slovenian instrument[8]

"General internet addiction has been on the rise both in Slovenia and abroad, thus influencing our physical and mental health, interpersonal relationships, and other areas of everyday life. Only a metrics tool for problematic internet use assessment was adapted to the Slovene language. Therefore, the main aim of the research was to test the psychometric properties of the self-assessment questionnaire to measure general internet addiction."

According to the results of the Slovenian survey, which was carried out on a representative sample, 3.1% of the adult Slovenian population is at risk of becoming problem internet users. Based on the analyses, questionnaire measuring general internet addiction is a reliable metrics tool, while its validity requires further examination.

[6] https://safe.si/raziskave-in-trendi/digitalno-zivljenje-otrok-casu-koronakrize-kidicoti
[7] https://safe.si/sites/default/files/kidicoti_online_risks_report.pdf
[8] https://www.nijz.si/sites/www.nijz.si/files/uploaded/selak_et_al._jz_02-02.pdf

Secure Internet usage during the first wave of the COVID-19 epidemic in Slovenia[9]

27% of regular Internet users (16–74 years) in the first quarter of 2020 did not know whether they had a security software installed on their smartphone. 4% lost information, documents, pictures or other kind of data on their smartphone due to a virus or other hostile type of programs.

Safer Internet Day (SID) is on 9th February of each year to promote safer and more responsible use of online technology, mobile phones and aims to make users aware of the dangers of using the Internet.

According to the statistical office of Slovenia, internet usage is slowly increasing among the elderly.

In the first quarter of 2020, 87% of individuals aged 16–74 years regularly used the Internet, which is the same as in the EU-27. Compared to 2019, when 83% of 16–74-year-olds regularly used the Internet, the Internet usage increased in all age groups, except for 16–24-year-olds, where it remained the same (99%). The largest changes occurred among 55–64-year-olds (79% and in 2019: 70%), 35–44-year-olds (98% and in 2019: 94%), and 65–74-year-olds (51% and in 2019: 47%).

The findings of the research shows that the number of internet users are growing and based on the existing research, trends in prolonging the time spent in front of screens by both children and adults.

1.4 Best practices

Title	LOGOUT - Centre for digital Wellbeing
Location	Slovenia Ljubljana, Izola, Celje, Radovljica, Radeče
Organisation/Institution	Zavod Nora, center sodobnih zasvojenosti
Contact Data	Križna ulica 12, 1000 Ljubljana T: 00386 41 233 474 E: info@logout.si W: https://www.logout.si/sl/
Target Group/Context	Public, Professionals, Parents, Children/Youth
Content/Learning Outcomes	Seminar, Workshop, Training, consulting for Public, Professionals, Parents, Children/Youth
Description of the Process	LOGOUT Centre for digital Wellbeing provides psychological counselling for children, young people and adults and different Workshops & lectures connected to internet abusive behaviour and problematic use of digital technology.

[9] https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/News/Index/9359

Resources needed	/
Evaluation of the Methodology	/

Title	Safe.si - Safer Internet Centre
Location	Slovenia Ljubljana
Organisation/Institution	Univerza v Ljubljani, Fakulteta za družbene vede
Contact Data	Kardeljeva ploščad 5 1000 Ljubljana T: 00386 1 50 04 040 E: info@safe.si W: https://safe.si/
Target Group/Context	Parents, Children/Youth, teachers/adult educators, experts (youth workers, social workers)
Content/Learning Outcomes	Seminars/ Workshops/ Online Learning Material
Description of the Process	The Safer Internet Center offers three main services: • **Awareness Centre SAFE.SI** The project's aim is to provide children, teenagers, parents, teachers and social workers with knowledge and tools for guiding, empowering and helping children and teenagers in the digital world. • **Helpline TOM Telefon** TOM Telefon, is aimed at all young people and their parents who have any problems and want to discuss them. Since growing up itself is a turbulent period that brings so many changes, every child and young person needs a possibility to have a relaxed conversation about that. • **Spletno oko hotline** The main task of the Spletno oko hotline is to reduce the amount of child sexual abuse images and hate speech online, in cooperation with the Police, Internet Service providers, and other governmental and non-governmental organizations.
Resources needed	/
Evaluation of the Methodology	/

Title	Prevention Platform programme (2020-2022)
Location	Slovenia Ljubljana
Organisation/Institution	Institute for Research and Development "Utrip"
Contact Data	Laze pri Borovnici 9, 1353 Borovnica, SI-Slovenia T: 00386 31 880 520 E: info@institut-utrip.si W: https://www.preventivna-platforma.si/kontakt/
Target Group/Context	Children/Youth, parents and indirectly educators, teachers, health, social and youth workers, employees and volunteers in non-governmental organizations.
Content/Learning Outcomes	Training/Workshop/Counseling/List of good practices
Description of the Process	The programme consists of five fundamental pillars: 1. Prevention in education. 2. Family prevention and quality parenting. 3. Community-oriented prevention. 4. Environmental prevention strategies and advocacy for quality prevention. 5. Education and training. The programme covers various forms of risky behaviour of children and young people, in particular the prevention of the use of legal and illicit drugs and non-clinical addiction.
Resources needed	/
Evaluation of the Methodology	/

Title	Center Šteker / Plug Center
Location	Slovenia Maribor
Organisation/Institution	Društvo IndiJanez
Contact Data	Ob železnici 16 2000 Maribor T: 0038631 850 500 E: info@steker.si.

	W: https://www.steker.si/
Target Group/Context	Children/Youth/Parents
Content/Learning Outcomes	Counselling/preventive workshops/lectures/ technical support
Description of the Process	They focus on a number of different sub-areas of addiction, namely harmful use of the web in general, social networks, mobile phones, tablets, television, computer and on-line gaming, gambling and online pornography. • Under the "Get out" programme, they implement: Counselling to users who are addicted to digital technologies and their loved ones • Under the " latch onto " programme, they implement: ○ preventive workshops for primary and secondary school pupils on the excessive use of digital technologies, ○ workshops and lectures for parents and professionals, ○ technical support to parents aimed at informing parents of useful skills to ensure online safety
Resources needed	/
Evaluation of the Methodology	/

Title	Klinika za zdravljenje nekemičnih zasvojenosti Nova Gorica / Clinic for the treatment of non-chemical addictions
Location	Slovenia Nova Gorica
Organisation/Institution	Zdravstveni dom Nova Gorica
Contact Data	Gradnikove brigade 7, 5000 Nova Gorica 00386 5 33 83 265 miha.kramli@zd-go.si https://www.zd-go.si/ambulante/zdravljenje-odvisnosti/
Target Group/Context	Parents, Children/Youth
Content/Learning Outcomes	Workshop/Personal counselling
Description of the Process	Clinic for the treatment of non-chemical addictions.
Resources needed	/
Evaluation of the Methodology	/

Title	Inštitut za Zasvojenosti in travme, zavod za izobraževanje, raziskave in psihoterapijo, Ljubljana/ Addiction and Trauma Institute
Location	Slovenia, Ljubljana
Organisation/Institution	Addiction and Trauma Institute
Contact Data	Linhartova cesta 9, 1000 Ljubljana T: 00386 41 669 196 E: info@petertopic.si W: https://www.petertopic.si/
Target Group/Context	Parents, Children/Youth, Adults
Content/Learning Outcomes	Workshop/Personal counselling
Description of the Process	Institute practice is focused on assisting individuals dealing with addictive disorders and trauma history. We are specialized in Internet Addiction and other Addictions related to electronic media (gaming, gambling, chat rooms...).
Resources needed	/
Evaluation of the Methodology	/

Title	Posvetovalnica za učence in starše Novo mesto / Counseling for students and parents
Location	Slovenia Novo mesto
Organisation/Institution	Posvetovalnica za učence in Starše Novo mesto
Contact Data	Mušičeva ulica 2, 8000 Novo mesto T: 00386 7 39 34 420 E: info@posvetovalnica.si W: https://www.posvetovalnica.si/
Target Group/Context	Public, Professionals, Parents, Children/Youth
Content/Learning Outcomes	Seminars/Workshop/Personal counselling
Description of the Process	Posvetovalnica za učence in starše Novo mesto is a public institute that provides counselling, therapy, educational and preventive activities and therapy for children and adolescents from our inner and wider region, their

	parents, teachers, educators of adolescents, counselling work for educational, educational institutions and other institutions.
Resources needed	/
Evaluation of the Methodology	/

Title	Posvetovalnica za učence in starše Novo mesto / Counseling for students and parents
Location	Slovenia Novo mesto
Organisation/Institution	Posvetovalnica za učence in Starše Novo mesto
Contact Data	Mušičeva ulica 2, 8000 Novo mesto T: 00386 7 39 34 420 E: info@posvetovalnica.si W: https://www.posvetovalnica.si/
Target Group/Context	Public, Professionals, Parents, Children/Youth
Content/Learning Outcomes	Seminars/Workshop/Personal counselling
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Resources needed	/
Evaluation of the Methodology	/

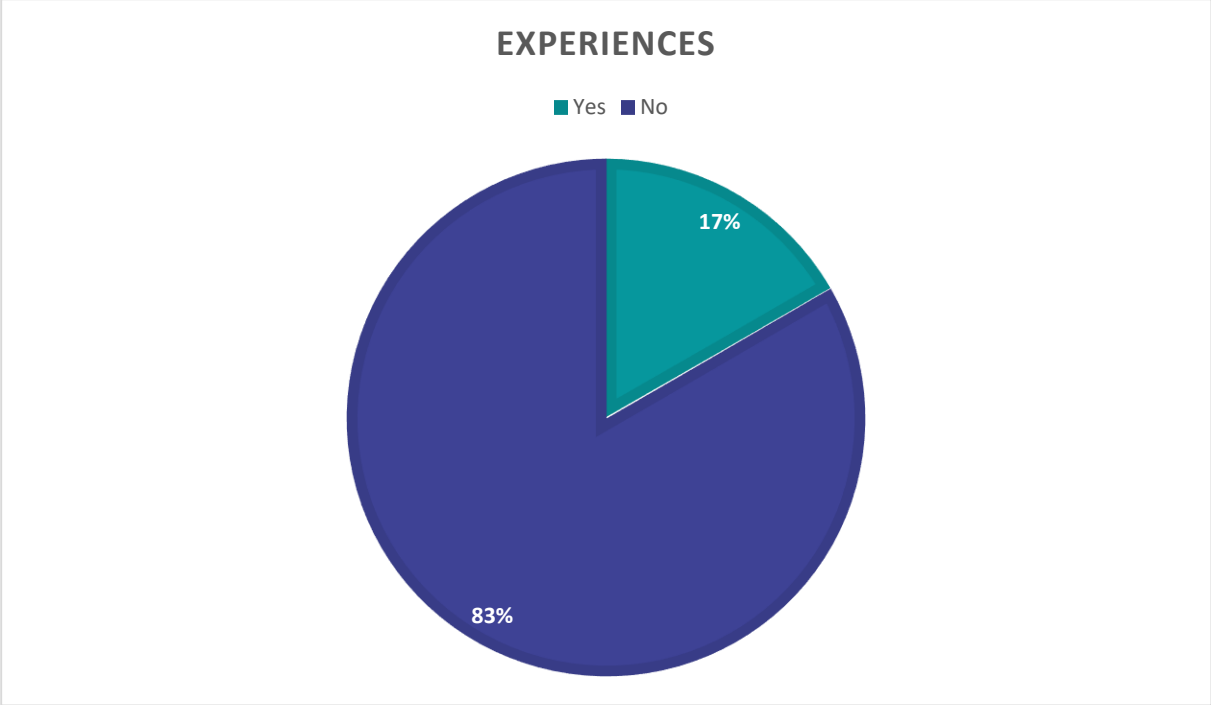
2 Needs and gaps of children, parents and adult educators

2.1 Needs and gaps of adult educators

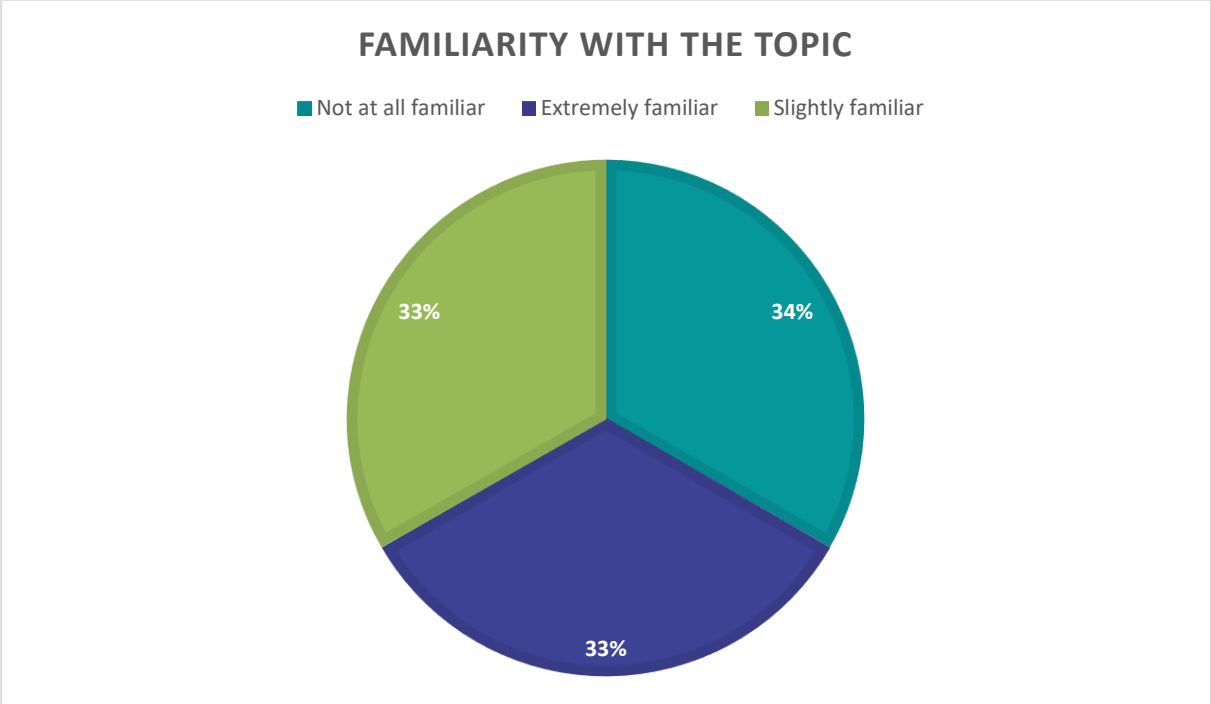
To learn more about the needs in the adult education sector, 12 adult educators took part in this survey who are working on this field on average of 10 years.

They work with different target groups, from children to adults, vulnerable target groups... 58 % of respondents also perform activities for the target group of parents.

Only 17 %t of respondents had previous experience with courses classes dealing with online addiction and/or violent behaviour online for example Work safely with the Internet - Safe, Logout workshop on addiction to smartphones, computer games. Of all respondents one has experience as a lecturer.



A third of respondents know the area well while the other third does not know at all.



17 % of respondents have already encountered online addiction and 92 % of respondents expressed their interest to learn more about the issue of IAB through seminars.

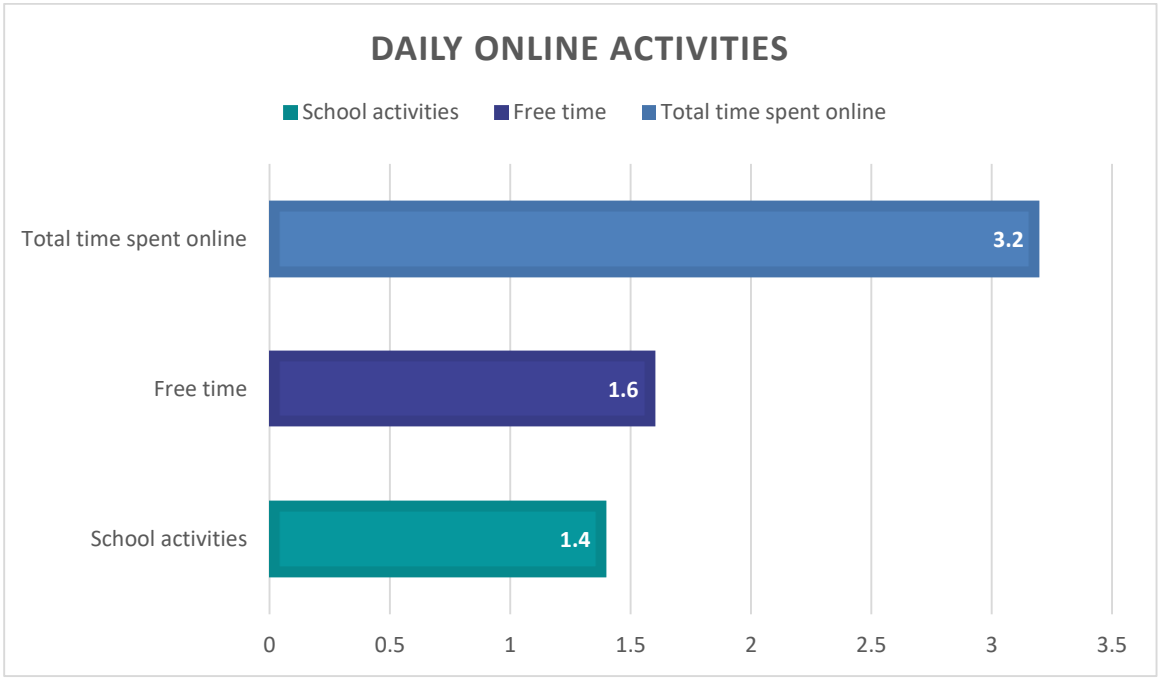
When talking about challenges, the most exposed challenges are online security, abandoning hobbies in children and other physical activities, passivity of children, physical condition of children is getting worse, nervousness and aggression, apathy. They are wondering how to identify, react and/or how to prevent addiction.

2.2 Needs and gaps of children and parents

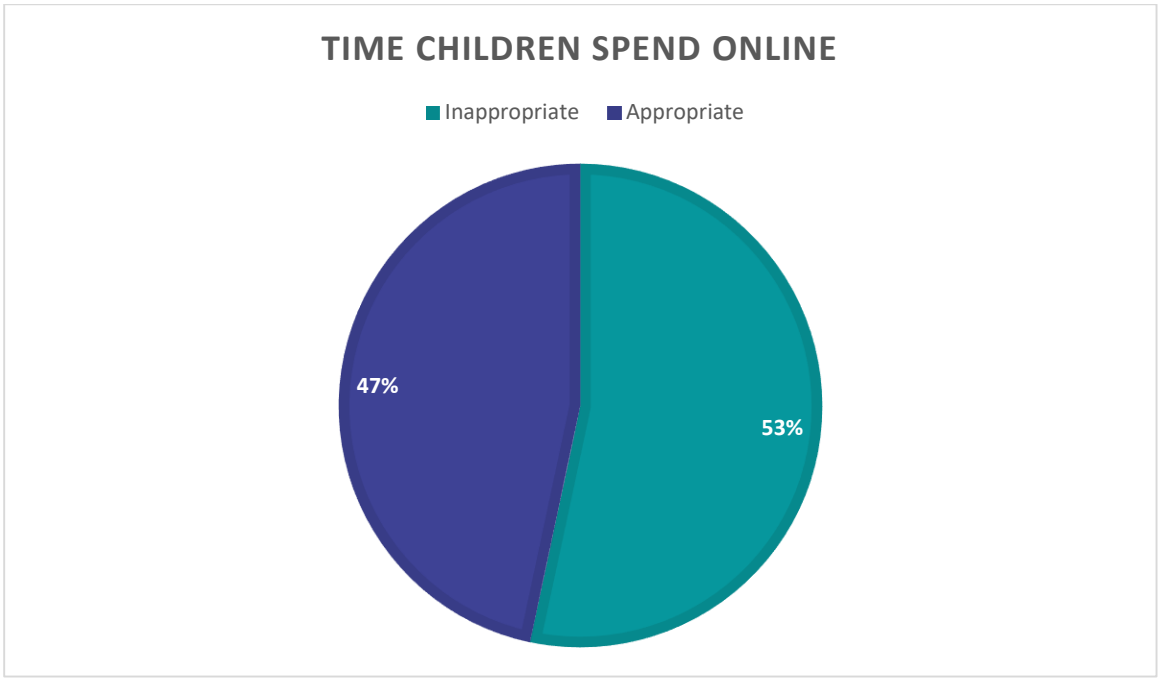
To learn more about the needs of parents and their children 15 parents took part in this survey. Average age of the respondents was 41 with children aged around 13,5 years old.

All parents pointed out that their children have internet access and on average almost 6 devices with internet access (computer, tablet, phone, PlayStation, television).

All children have their own internet access devices where they spend an average of 3.2 hours a day and 20.45 hours a week. From the whole time spent online they spent on average 2 hours a day for school and 1.8 hours of free time spent on Youtube, social networks, playing games, browsing the web.



47% of the respondents think that their children's time spent online is appropriate, while 53 % of parents believe this time is excessive.



60 % of parents have “parent-child agreement”, while 40 % of parents think an agreement is not necessary because their children know how to set up boundaries. 55 % of parents think establishing house rules helps children understand your expectations. Without them children would probably spend even more time online.

67 % of parents noticed changes in their children's habits related to their time spent online. They noticed that children do not hear and not see anything else around them while they are online, they close themselves off, there is no face-to-face communication anymore. They also notice their children are often bored, behave badly and are being disrespectful (following in the footsteps their online “role models”).

The biggest challenge for parents is to limit the time they spent online, not only when they are around.

53 % of parents do not know or use any way to deal with excessive time spent online. However, 47 % of parents use: time-for-time gauges spent online; remove devices once the limit is reached; house rules; time spent online to search for useful information.

33 % of respondents do not need additional knowledge while others have expressed interest to learn more about:

- Getting to know apps – time limiters,
- effective methods for shifting attention to other areas (sport, ...)
- how to set up restrictions,
- gain knowledge in the field of internet and internet dependency,
- gain ICT skills and learn how to set substantive restrictions.

2.3 Conclusion

Based on both studies, conducted among parents and adult educators. we found that the need to upgrade the knowledge of both adult educators and parents is very high. There is also a need for new additions and teaching materials, as well as the promotion of existing ones, which are well-set but perhaps a little under-known.