

# Progress Report for Children's Rights Online Hub Development

May 2026



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### 1. Summary

In early 2026, DFF consulted with groups working on the rights of children and young people to determine whether we should create a hub where these groups can form stronger partnerships and share knowledge to develop legal strategies that protect our children online. This report highlights that there is an urgent need to develop this collaborative space, especially to jointly strategise on topics such as child-centred AI and platform design, and the prevention of the online abuse of children.

### 2. Background

In today's technology-driven world, it is more urgent than ever to protect our children. AI is embedded in the everyday lives of many children. They turn to AI chatbots for companionship, homework, and to play. Similarly, online platforms are used for socialising, self-expression and having fun. Unfortunately, these technologies were not designed to prioritise their best interests and safety. Many of these tools are designed to be addictive, exposing children to sexual predators and harmful content. Profit, not children's well-being, is at the centre of these technologies.

Given the universality of the issues children are facing and the limited resources that those of us striving for children's best interests have, we decided to consult with others working on online children's safety to determine whether there is a need to establish a shared space to collaborate on legal strategies to protect our children.

### 3. Consultation Process

In early 2026, we consulted around 20 different organisations working on children's rights and combined their input on our idea to set up a Children's Rights Online Hub (**Hub**).

The basic concept of the Hub is a space where 30+ groups across Europe, Latin America and Africa can jointly collaborate and share knowledge on legal strategies that protect our

children from online harms. The Hub would help raise funding for some of the most promising cases developed in the Hub, either directly through DFF or our funder network.

Our consultation had three goals:

- Find out whether there was a need to develop a shared space to collaborate on legal strategies for protecting children online.
- If yes, what the key elements are for the Hub.
- The most pressing topics relating to online children's rights and safety.

#### 4. Need for the Hub

There was overwhelming support for the development of a shared space, i.e. the Hub, where groups could develop legal strategies to protect online children's rights. The 20 groups enthusiastically confirmed the importance of the Hub and their desire to take part, while recommending dozens of other groups and associations that could also take part in the Hub.

For groups in Europe, the development of the Hub would be especially timely given that recently passed legislation, such as the [EU Digital Services Act](#) and [AI Act](#), offer new avenues for protecting children online. Likewise, the African Union was the first regional body to develop a comprehensive [Child Online Safety and Empowerment Policy](#).

Participants suggested that the following aspects would give the Hub an added value that is currently missing from children's rights spaces and discussions:

- Finding common strategies for systemic change related to the well-being of children, including coming together around points where there has been disagreement, like the impact of some child safety measures on privacy rights and social media bans and restrictions for younger children in many countries such as Australia, Spain and Brazil.
- Sharing of knowledge and learning from different experts.
- Meeting other Hub participants in person.
- Centring those children and young people most affected by online harms.

#### 5. What will the Hub achieve?

Through the Hub, we aim to:

- Have a larger, more resilient and more connected children's rights community who centre children affected by online harms and their caregivers.
- Have justice for children and young people secured through accountability of government and tech companies, better laws and stronger enforcement.
- Ensure technology is designed and used in a way that increases the well-being and safety of children and young people.

#### 6. Key Online Child Rights and Safety Topics

Hub participants identified topics of importance broadly related to the following areas:

- Child-centred AI, platform and app design.
- Stopping the development and distribution of child sexual abuse materials.
- Preventing child abuse enabled by technology.
- Preventive and educational work for children's wellbeing.
- Ensuring children's privacy and data is protected.

- Countering and protecting children from being recruited or used for scams, terrorism or other illegal activities.
- Protecting children's wellbeing in relation to adult content like gambling and porn.

## 7. Who Should Be Involved?

An extensive list of groups that could provide input or be part of the Hub was identified by participants, including:

- Over 35 children's rights groups
- A dozen youth and parent associations
- 14 litigators and legal organisations
- 7 funders
- 10 other regional groups or collectives like UNICEF, EDRi and BEUC

## 8. Key Targets

The participants felt like the main targets for enforcing online children's rights and safety were:

- Big Tech, including Meta, Google, TikTok, Apple and OpenAI
- Other companies, like game and EdTech providers, and gambling companies
- Governments and municipalities
- Regional bodies like the EU

For governments, a number of initial target countries and regions were identified including the EU, United Kingdom and Brazil.

## 9. Next Steps

Our next steps are:

- Host an online meeting in June, bringing together those who have provided input so far, and other potential Hub participants, to analyse the discussions so far and plan the launch of the Hub.
- Partner with foundations and other philanthropic bodies to find seed funding of EUR 500 000 for launching the Hub and funding the promising legal cases and strategies that are developed within the Hub.
- Reaching out to more groups, especially children and youth-led groups including in Africa to get their additional inputs.