



Pelastakaa Lapset

# LASTEN JA NUORTEN KOKEMA SEKSUAALINEN HÄIRINTÄ JA SIIHEN LIITTYVÄ KIUSAAMINEN DIGITAALISESSA MEDIASSA



## SUMMARY

**Sexual harassment and the related bullying in digital media as experienced by children and adolescents**

**Keywords: sexual harassment, digital media, child, adolescent**

Specialists of Save the Children have in their work paid attention to the uncontrollable spreading and inappropriate or criminal use of suggestive children's selfies, or images of children shot by others. Save the Children set out to explore the phenomenon as experienced by children and adolescents. This report outlines sexual harassment and the related bullying in digital media as experienced by children and adolescents. The main focus is to generate knowledge on the experiences of children of 12 to 17 years of peer-to-peer sexual harassment and the related bullying in digital media. The report has been written on the basis of a survey conducted by Save the Children in February-March 2018. A total of 3210 lower and upper secondary school children responded via web-based questionnaire.

The main finding of the report is that sexual harassment over digital media among children between the ages of 12 to 17 is rather common. Children and adolescents report having witnessed other children being subjected to sexual harassment and the related bullying in digital media. The findings indicate that girls more often than boys are subjected to sexual harassment. Children and adolescents primarily perceive sexual harassment and the related bullying in terms of messing but a significant part of the respondents perceive it offensive. The findings show that the children and adolescents are aware that it is not allowed to share nude images over digital media. Despite this, approximately a third of the respondents had received on their smartphones nude images or video footage, or seen suggestive footage being shared in group conversations. The report pinpoints a contradiction between the attitudes and actions of the respondents.

According to the findings, children and adolescents rarely capture footage in secret, or share such images or footage. Footage modified and edited to portray another child in a suggestive way had come to the attention of approximately a third of the children and adolescents. Children and adolescents most commonly share naked images of themselves when they are dating. As a rule, children and adolescents do know what to do when they encounter sexual harassment and the related bullying in digital media. However, a significant part of children and adolescents do not know what to do in such situation. The most common way for children and adolescents to deal with sexual harassment is to block the perpetrator and tell a friend. The most salient reason for not telling an adult of sexual harassment is the feeling of shame. The second important reason for not telling an adult, according to the respondents, is apprehension due the potential loss of digital media privileges.

The respondents hold that schools do not offer enough information and guidance on sexual harassment or sharing suggestive footage in digital media. Children and adolescents report having received little information on legislation concerning sexual harassment, or how and where to report possible incidents of sexual harassment.

On the basis of this report, it is safe to say that children and adolescents would need to be provided with knowledge on legislation and digital skills concerning sexual footage, the possession of such footage and downloading or sharing such footage without permission. The terminology and legislation related to this phenomenon must be updated. Furthermore, multidisciplinary research and open discussion between professionals about securing the rights of children in digital media needs to be nurtured. Save the Children will utilize this report as part of their evaluation work on how the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse are fulfilled in Finland. The findings of the report will be used to generate knowledge for the use of professionals working with children, children's parents, and children and adolescents themselves.