

THE TRUTH GAP

Netherlands

Country Fact Sheet

This country fact sheet presents key country-specific findings from the Plan International survey for the State of the World's Girls (SOTWG) Report 2021. For the global analysis, qualitative findings and details on the methodology please refer to the technical report. For region-specific findings please refer to the regional fact sheets. This document is for internal use only. If you have any questions about this fact sheet please email aisling.corr@plan-international.org or lucia.rost@plan-international.org.

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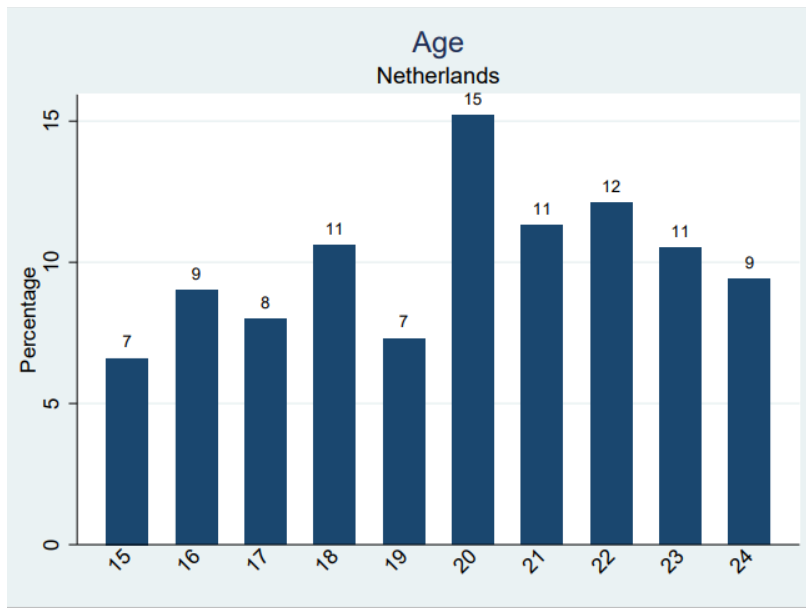
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Overview of the survey respondents

Regions: In the Netherlands, 1000 girls and young women participated in the survey, residing in the following regions: West-Nederland (45 per cent), Noord and Oost Nederland (35 per cent), and Zuid-Nederland (21 per cent).¹

Age: The surveyed girls and young women are between 15 and 24 years old. The majority (59 per cent) are aged 20 to 24 years and 42 per cent are 15 to 19 years.

Figure 1: Age



Total: 1000

Intersectional characteristics: 39 per cent of girls and young women who participated in the survey identify with at least one of the listed intersectional characteristics:

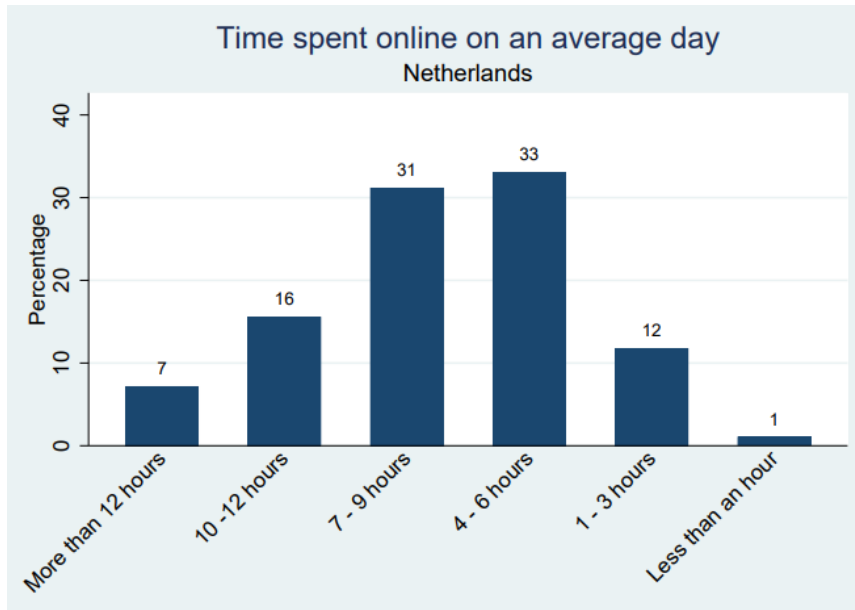
- 18 % identify as LGBTIQ+
- 10 % identify as belonging to a racial or ethnic minority
- 8 % identify as belonging to a religious minority
- 6 % identify as having a disability
- 2 % identify as a displaced person or refugee.

Time spent online

Only 1 per cent of the survey participants reported spending less than an hour a day online. One third (33 per cent) of girls and young women said they spent more than four hours online and 31 per cent more than seven hours a day online. 7 per cent of girls and young women reported spending more than 12 hours online. However, this could be due to the fact that data collection took place at a time where many countries still had remote schooling and time for online schooling could have been factored into their answers.

¹ The regions were determined by the survey company, for precise information please contact us and we can liaise with them for further details.

Figure 2: How much time do you spend online on an average day?



Total: 1000

Engaging with social topics online

The very large majority (90 per cent) of the survey respondents said that they regularly engaged with social topics online. The topic that most girls and young women engage with is COVID-19 (57 per cent), followed by news and current affairs (47 per cent) and health and physical wellbeing (43 per cent).

Table 1: Do you regularly engage with any of the following topics online?

Do you regularly engage with any of the following topics online? (select all that apply)	Frequency	Percent
COVID-19	568	57%
News and current affairs	467	47%
Health and physical wellbeing	430	43%
Mental health	344	34%
Climate change	301	30%
Racial justice	299	30%
Politics and elections	257	26%
LGBTIQ+ rights	238	24%
Sex and sexual health	231	23%
Gender equality and feminism	217	22%
Gender-based violence	187	19%
War and conflict	145	14%
Economic inequality	137	14%
Other topic	124	12%
I don't engage with topics online	99	10%

Total: 1000

Sources to get information online

Most girls and young women who participated in the survey use mainstream news media to access information on the social topics listed above (51 per cent). Friends or peers (50 per cent) and family members or relatives (44 per cent) were also listed as key sources of information for girls and young women.

Table 2: Which sources do you use to get information on these topics online?

Which sources do you use to get information on these topics online? (select all that apply)	Frequency	Percent
Mainstream news media (e.g. BBC World Service and Aljazeera etc.)	464	51%
Friends or peers	455	50%
Family members or relatives	392	44%
Social media influencers (includes bloggers and vloggers)	376	42%
Alternative news media (e.g. WikiNews, Altnet, OneWorld)	381	42%
National government	259	29%
Educational institutions	255	28%
Celebrities	233	26%
Politicians	191	21%
Charities or community organisations (e.g. Non-governmental organisations)	117	13%
Private businesses and companies	78	9%
Other	65	7%
Religious or community leaders	54	6%
Mainstream news media (e.g. BBC World Service and Aljazeera etc.)	464	51%

Total: 901

Influence of online information on girls and young women

Almost all (89 per cent) of the surveyed girls and young women have been influenced by online information. Almost half of the girls and young women (46 per cent) feel that online information has helped them understand and feel more confident about the topics they are about, whilst 34 per cent have changed their opinion on a topic, and 21 per cent have learned about a new issue and began actively engaging on it because of online information.

Online information has been especially important to girls and young women during the COVID-19 pandemic, with 33 per cent saying that it has changed how they behaved during the pandemic and 22 per cent saying that online information has influenced their decision whether to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Table 3: Has information online ever influenced you in any of the following way?

Has information online ever influenced you in any of the following ways? (select all that apply)	Frequency	Percent
It helped me understand and feel more confident about the topics I care about	458	46%
I changed my opinion on a topic	342	34%
It changed how I behave during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. wearing a facemask, keeping distance)	333	33%
It helped me decide whether I get the COVID-19 vaccine or not	224	22%
I learned about a new issue and began actively engaging on it	211	21%

It helped me connect with like-minded people	189	19%
It helped me access educational opportunities	172	17%
It informed who and what I voted for	167	17%
It helped me access health services	125	13%
It helped me access economic opportunities	113	11%
Online information has never influenced me	110	11%
I changed my political beliefs	99	10%
Other	40	4%

Total: 1000

Mistrust in online sources

The internet is an important source of information for girls and young women. But the survey clearly shows that it is not always a safe and trusted space. There is no online source that the majority of surveyed girls and young women trust to provide information on the social topics listed above. The most trusted source is mainstream news media but less than half (46 per cent) trust this source. Only 27 per cent of girls and young women trust online information provided by educational institutions. Girls and young women are particularly unlikely to trust religious or community leaders (6 per cent), private businesses and companies (6 per cent), charities or community organisations (10 per cent) and celebrities (10 per cent).

Table 4: Which of the following sources do you usually trust with the information they provide online?

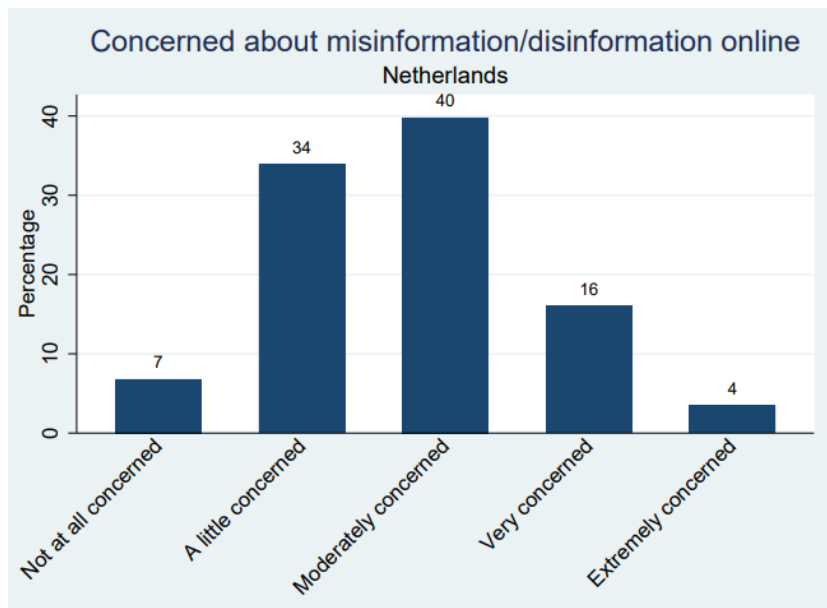
Which of the following sources do you usually trust with the information they provide online? (select all that apply)	Frequency	Percent
Mainstream news media (e.g. BBC World Service and Aljazeera etc.)	462	46%
National government	332	33%
Alternative news media (e.g. WikiNews, Altnet, OneWorld)	304	30%
Family members or relatives	285	28%
Educational institutions	273	27%
Friends or peers	263	26%
Politicians	176	18%
Social media influencers (includes bloggers and vloggers)	114	11%
Celebrities	99	10%
Charities or community organisations (e.g. Non-governmental organisations)	103	10%
Other	79	8%
Private businesses and companies	62	6%
Religious or community leaders	59	6%

Total: 1000

Concerned about misinformation and disinformation online

Of the girls and young women who participated in the survey, 93 per cent are concerned about misinformation and/or disinformation online. One fifth (20 per cent) are extremely or very concerned about it.

Figure 3: In general, to what extent are you concerned about misinformation and/or disinformation online?



Total: 1000

Topics with misinformation/disinformation

Of the survey participants, 83 per cent said they have seen misinformation and/or disinformation online. The actual percentage may be even higher because not all girls and young women may be aware that they have been exposed to it. The topic that most girls and young women have seen misinformation and/or disinformation on is COVID-19 (54 per cent), followed by politics and elections (30 per cent), news and current affairs (30 per cent) and racial justice (30 per cent).

Table 5: Have you ever seen misinformation and/or disinformation online on any of the following topics?

Have you ever seen misinformation and/or disinformation online on any of the following topics? (select all that apply)	Frequency	Percent
COVID-19	537	54%
Politics and elections	296	30%
News and current affairs	299	30%
Racial justice	296	30%
Climate change	279	28%
Health and physical wellbeing	227	23%
War and conflict	222	22%
LGBTIQ+ rights	219	22%
Mental health	189	19%
Gender equality and feminism	193	19%
Sex and sexual health	174	17%
I have never seen misinformation and/or disinformation online	172	17%
Gender-based violence	162	16%
Economic inequality	161	16%
Other topic	69	7%

Total: 1000

Platforms with misinformation/disinformation

Six out of ten girls and young women who participated in the survey have seen misinformation/disinformation on social media platforms (61 per cent). Other platforms where they spotted misinformation/disinformation are video sharing platforms (45 per cent) and instant messaging platforms (38 per cent). 30 per cent of girls and young women have found misinformation on blogs and 28 per cent on search engines. Official government websites (9 per cent) and charities and community organisations (9 per cent) are the platforms that the smallest number of girls and young women have seen misinformation/disinformation on.

Table 6: Have you ever seen misinformation and/or disinformation online on any of the following platforms or websites?

Have you ever seen misinformation and/or disinformation online on any of the following platforms or websites? (select all that apply)	Frequency	Percent
Social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter etc)	507	61%
Video sharing platforms (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo)	373	45%
Instant messaging platforms (e.g. WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal, Weibo and WeChat)	314	38%
Blogs (e.g. Tumblr, Medium and Wordpress)	248	30%
Search engines (e.g. Bing, Alibaba and Google)	232	28%
Wikipedia or other wiki pages	213	26%
Forums and message boards (e.g. Reddit etc)	201	24%
Mainstream news websites (e.g. BBC World Service and Aljazeera etc.)	195	24%
Womens/girls magazine websites	142	17%
Alternative news websites (e.g. WikiNews, Altnet, OneWorld)	134	16%
Charities or community organisations (e.g. Non-governmental organisations)	74	9%
Official government websites	72	9%
Other online platform or website	44	5%

Total: 828

Social media platforms with most misinformation/disinformation

Only 5 per cent of the girls and young women who participated in the survey said that no social media platform has misinformation and/or disinformation. The majority (56 per cent) believe that Facebook is the social media platform with the most misinformation/disinformation, whilst 35 per cent of girls and young women feel that Instagram and TikTok are the platforms with the most misinformation/disinformation. Only 7 per cent selected Facebook Messenger.

Table 7: In your opinion, which of the following social media platforms have the most misinformation and/or disinformation?

In your opinion, which of the following social media platforms have the most misinformation and/or disinformation? (select up to three options)	Frequency	Percent
Facebook	560	56%
Instagram	349	35%
TikTok	346	35%
Twitter	300	30%
YouTube	292	29%
WhatsApp	188	19%

Snapchat	152	15%
Facebook Messenger	74	7%
Other social media platform	45	5%
In my opinion, no social media platforms have misinformation and/or disinformation	46	5%
WeChat	42	4%

Total: 1000

Negative effects of misinformation/disinformation on girls and young women

Misinformation and disinformation online have serious effects on girls and young women, with three quarters saying that misinformation and/or disinformation had a negative effect on them (75 per cent). The most common negative effect of misinformation and disinformation is feeling stressed, worried or anxious (20 per cent), followed by questioning whether to get the COVID-19 vaccine (19 per cent), questioning information that they received at school (16 per cent) and believing a myth or fake information about COVID-19 (16 per cent). About one quarter (27 per cent) of the interviewed girls and young women have either felt sad, depressed, stressed, worried or anxious,² and 8 per cent felt physically unsafe because of misinformation or disinformation online.³

Table 8: Has misinformation and/or disinformation online ever caused you any of the following negative effects?

Has misinformation and/or disinformation online ever caused you any of the following negative effects? (select all that apply)	Frequency	Percent
Misinformation and/or disinformation had no negative effect on me	204	25%
It made me feel stressed, worried or anxious	166	20%
It made me question whether to get the COVID-19 vaccine	156	19%
It made me question information that I received at school	136	16%
It made me believe a myth or fake information about COVID-19	136	16%
It led to an argument or confrontation with friends or family	127	15%
It made me less confident to share my views	123	15%
It made me feel sad or depressed	115	14%
It made me stop engaging in politics or current affairs	86	10%
It made me do something that had a negative effect on my health	74	9%
Other negative effect	76	9%
It made me feel physically unsafe	70	8%
It affected my trust in election results	69	8%
It stopped me taking effective action on the issues that are important to me	60	7%
It made me regret who or what I voted for at an election/referendum	51	6%

Total: 828

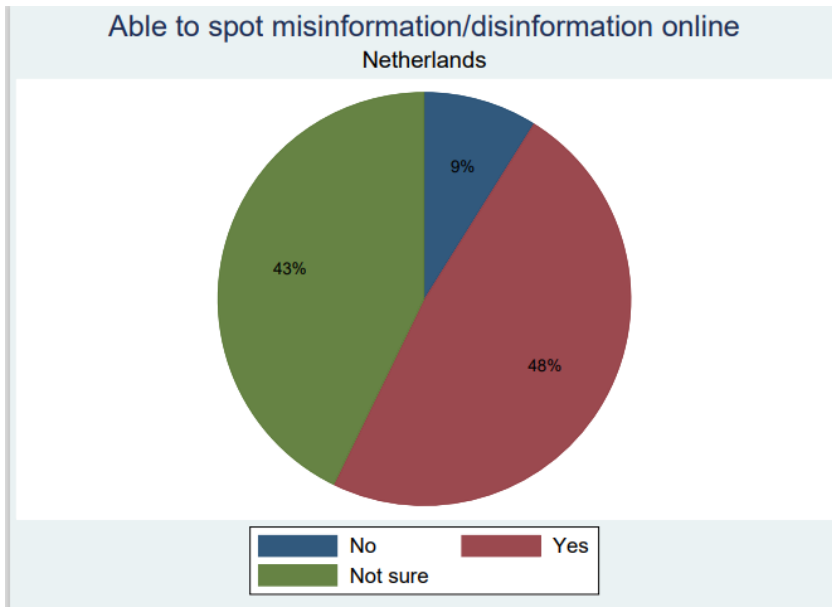
² This percentage refers to those survey respondents who selected that misinformation and/or disinformation made them feel 'stressed, worried or anxious' or 'sad or depressed'. This variable does not double-count those who felt both 'stressed, worried or anxious' and 'sad or depressed', which explains why it is not equal to the sum of the percentages for feeling 'stressed, worried or anxious' and 'sad or depressed'.

³ The actual effects of misinformation and disinformation on girls and young women may be even more severe since the statistics only capture the experiences of those girls and young women who are aware of misinformation/disinformation negatively affecting them.

Identifying misinformation/disinformation online

48 per cent of the surveyed girls and young women feel able to spot misinformation or disinformation online.

Figure 4: Do you think you can spot misinformation and/ or disinformation online?



Total: 1000

Strategies for spotting misinformation online

Almost all girls and young women who took the survey (96 per cent) use a strategy to check whether the information they access online is truthful. Only 4 per cent assume that any online information is truthful. The most common strategy to assess online information is to cross-check the information with other sources (46 per cent), followed by checking if they have provided evidence (45 per cent) and looking for signs of low-quality information such as grammatical errors (38 per cent).

Table 9: How do you decide if the information you access online is truthful?

How do you decide if the information you access online is truthful? (select all that apply)	Frequency	Percent
I cross-check the information with other sources	457	46%
I check if they have provided evidence	446	45%
I look for signs of low-quality information such as grammatical errors	383	38%
It was from a reliable and trustworthy author and/or institution	349	35%
I look at the profile of who posted the content to see if they are credible	336	34%
I determine if the source is one-sided or biased	297	30%
I check if the image(s) look sensationalist or are click-bait images	286	29%
I use an online fact-checking tool	87	9%
It was shared by a popular celebrity or social media influencer	87	9%
It was shared by someone I know	79	8%
It had a lot of likes or reshares	69	7%
Other	60	6%
I assume any information I access online is truthful	41	4%

Total: 1000

Education on misinformation and disinformation

68 per cent of girls and young women have never been taught how to identify misinformation and/or disinformation at school, and 77 per cent have never been taught by their parents; 84 per cent have never been taught about spotting misinformation by social media platforms and 87 per cent by government institutions.

Table 10: Have you ever been taught how to identify misinformation and/or disinformation online by any of the following?

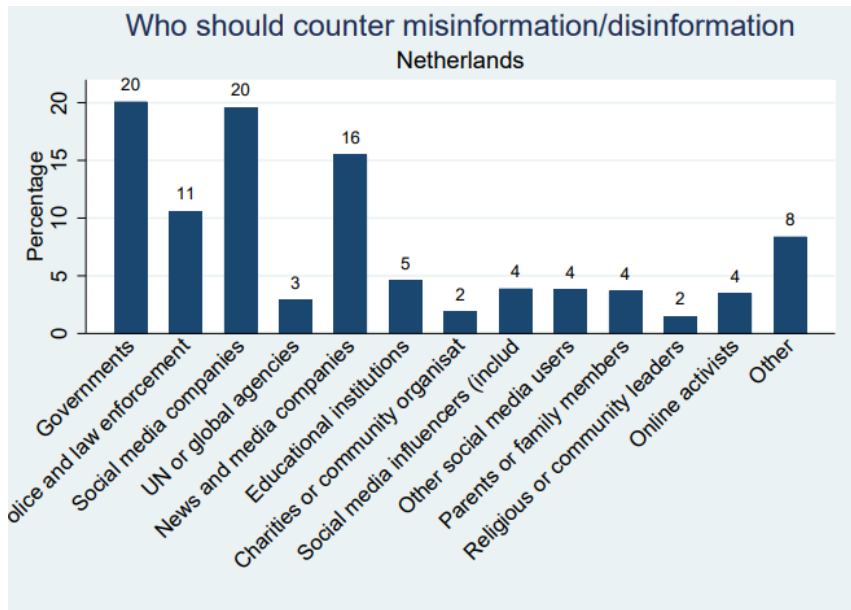
Respondent has <u>never</u> been taught how to identify misinformation and/or disinformation online by the following	Frequency	Percent
Religious or community leaders	942	94%
Youth club network or group	944	94%
Other	939	94%
Charities or community organisations (e.g. Non-governmental organisations)	909	91%
Government institutions	867	87%
Social media platforms	840	84%
Social media users	833	83%
Friends or peers	779	78%
Parents or other family member(s)	772	77%
School or other educational institution	677	68%

Total: 1000

Who should be responsible for countering misinformation/ disinformation online

Girls and young women feel that governments (20 per cent), social media companies (20 per cent) and news and media companies (16 per cent) should primarily be responsible for identifying and countering misinformation and/or disinformation online. Only 2 per cent selected religious or community leaders and charities or community organisations as the key actors.

Figure 5: Who should be responsible for identifying and countering misinformation and/or disinformation online?



Total: 1000

EMBARGOED