

The Information Needs of the Global Child Rights Community

A role for the Child Rights Information Network

Eddie Halpin, Andrea Khan
and Daniela Reale

[final draft 25 September 2002]

The Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) exists as an independent, non-partisan forum for the exchange of information that assists the work of all those actors committed to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. CRIN aims to democratise information on child rights and to encourage information sharing between different parts of the world and different actors in the implementation of the UNCRC. CRIN was formally established in 1995 but has a history dating back to 1991.

Information is disseminated to thousands of individuals and organisations around the world, including over 1,300 organisations that have formally joined as members to the Child Rights Information Network. The CRIN Working Papers are published occasionally by the Child Rights Information Network, and can be downloaded in pdf format at www.crin.org/about/working-papers.

The School of Information Management at Leeds Metropolitan University focuses on the management of information as a strategic resource to meet the needs of individuals, groups, and organisations. Research in the School of Information Management at LMU has a wide reach extending across a number of areas. The overall effect is that we are able to support several research groups, attract funding for specific projects and provide significant input to the full range of courses in the school. The School gained a rating of 4 in the Research Assessment Exercise.

Please send letters, comments and suggestions to:

Child Rights Information Network
C/o Save the Children UK
17 Grove Lane
London SE5 8RD
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 (0)20 7716 2240
Fax: +44 (0)20 7793 7628
Email: info@crin.org
Website: www.crin.org

Leeds Metropolitan University
Priestly Hall
Beckett Park
Leeds LS6 3QS
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 (0)113 283 7585
Fax: +44 (0)113 283 7599
Email: e.halpin@lmu.ac.uk
Website: www.lmu.ac.uk/ies/im/

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Managing editor Andrea Khan

Authors Edward Halpin
Andrea Khan
Daniela Reale

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Executive Summary

CRIN's research into the needs of the child rights community is jointly undertaken with Leeds Metropolitan University and partially funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board. The research forms part of a structured strategy that comprises a number of phases of which this research deals with the first two.¹

This research is participative action research-orientated and encourages member involvement. It follows and builds upon the two bi-annual surveys that were conducted in 1997 and 1999. The research programme included a quantitative survey conducted between October 2001 and January 2002, a follow-up targeted survey of respondents to the first survey, and case study consultative forums in Kenya and Nepal.

The research aims to inform practical decisions relating to all aspects of CRIN's work and to provide examples of best practice for the larger human rights community. The finds will be used to ensure continued improvement of products and services as well as relations with members. It will also provide a basis for the development and implementation of a regional programme.

Phase 1 research

The CRIN Membership Survey

The CRIN Membership Survey, which composed a key part of the first phase of this research programme, found that:

- Consistent with previous findings, CRIN Newsletter remains the most popular of CRIN services with 82% of respondents using this product regularly. This represents a significant increase since 1999 when 75% of CRIN members used this service. CRINMAIL is the second most popular service with 73.3% of users followed by the website with 69% users.
- Three of CRIN's products in particular have good reach in the South: CRIN Newsletter, CRINMAIL and CRINMAIL Special Session. The preference amongst African and Asian respondents for email services seems to suggest that members in those regions prefer that information is directly delivered to them using email rather than having to obtain it on through the internet. The use of CRIN's website appears in fact lower in these regions compared to other services than in Europe and North America.
- Results showed that there is a need for hardcopy material in addition to electronic products. The survey highlighted that respondents use these frequently and express a need for publications as means of information retrieval and information sharing. The publications section is in fact the most used section of CRIN website. Additionally, a high percentage of respondents (74%) indicated that use CRIN to find out about child rights publications and 74.6% identified publications on child rights as the kind of information that would help their work.
- Information appears to have predominated originated from northern regions. Overall, 83% of European and 89% of North American organisations indicated that they use their own publications to share information while only 61% of African and 64% of Asian respondents use their own publications for information exchange.

¹ This final draft dated 25 September 2002 represents a summary of the research undertaken. It is available electronically at <http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/CRIN-workingpaper-2-en.pdf>. Comments are welcome and may be addressed to the authors Eddie Halpin (e.halpin@lmu.ac.uk) and Andrea Khan (akhan@crin.org). Additionally an academic article will be produced incorporating the major findings from this study report. A summary of this report including recommendation will be distributed to CRIN members.

- A high percentage of respondents now have access to email (89%) and the Internet (82%) with all European and North American respondents having access to both services. However, in returning the present survey, African and Asian respondents have opted for the use of email comparatively more often than European and North American organisations.
- When asked to comment on the most effective methods of exchanging information, 78% ranked face-to-face meetings, conferences and workshops followed by own publications, and networks. Interestingly, websites and discussion lists are at the bottom of the preference. However, Southern organisations use email lists relatively more than Northern organisations.
- Southern respondents distribute CRINMAIL outside their organisation and use it to network with others more than Northern respondents.
- The survey revealed an interesting change in the activities conducted by CRIN membership. Members using CRIN to inform their own research and to support lobbying and inform policy discussion almost doubled in the last two years.

Phase 2 research

Qualitative survey

The second phase of the research programme focussed on how CRIN members manage information to support their work in child rights. It aimed to situate CRIN in association with other child rights and human rights organisations.

The majority of the members surveyed appear to be part of networks having international and/or national character. Regional and local networks are used by a slight lower number of members. Some respondents pointed out that they are part of networks that are also parts of other networks, which implies a larger flow of communication and information. Working with networks is highly regarded as a very effective way of accessing additional information that would not be accessible otherwise. The ability to 'speak with one voice' is considered as a great benefit of working with networks as well as the ability to effectively reach larger audiences.

Over 68% of respondents reported that their information requirements and needs relate to the process on the reporting and monitoring on the UNCRC; and on children and education. Nine members felt that they do not have sufficient information on child rights to keep them up to date on current issues at the international and national level. Of these, two were African organisations, three Asian, one South American, two European and one North American. Among the additional information needed, members listed examples of best practice, information on child poverty in developed countries, information in languages other than English, legal information, and historical data on child abuse.

A high percentage of respondents refer specifically to international institutions working on child rights issues as a source of information. Almost all organisations surveyed indicated that they contact UNICEF and Save the Children to acquire information on child rights. Over two-thirds contact other sources such as academic institutions, the NGO Group for the CRC, international, national and local NGOs, national and local government authorities, and the media. Fifty-six percent of respondents contact the NGO Committee on UNICEF (56%).

The extremely high use of email and meetings for contacts with other national and local NGOs shows that members tend to use means that ensure a two-way communications at the local level. This is confirmed by the popularity of phone and mail when communicating with these organisations. The frequency of contacts also reveals that members heavily rely on local networks and local organisations for their work. Members in fact appear to get in touch with their local counterparts particularly on a daily and weekly basis.

Email and Internet communications are highly appreciated for their speed of delivery and economy. One interesting indication is the differentiation between international communications where e-mail and

Internet are considered as the best communications method, and local and national communications where mail and phone have a predominant role. Meetings, seminars, workshops, and face-to-face contacts at local, national or international events are preferred by a large percentage of respondents who consider them highly effective. Publications and printed material are still highly regarded to exchange information within networks.

Consultation with members in Nepal and Kenya

At regional consultations with CRIN members in Nairobi, Kenya and Kathmandu, Nepal the following list of issues was drawn up by participants. Each of these were identified as key issues pertaining to information sharing in the child rights community.

- Digital divide
- Information imperialism
- Conceptual clarity
- Relevance of materials
- Importance of CRIN
- Regions and communities of interest
- Donor driven resources
- Mixed modes of delivery
- Network and network of networks
- Two-way flow and 'multi-flow' of information

Introduction and Background

This research examines some of the challenges of managing increasing information flows in the child rights community. Conducted in collaboration with Leeds Metropolitan University, the research looks specifically at the experience of the Child Rights Information Network in balancing the needs of a global community with varied technological capacities.

The Child Rights Information Network is a global information service that disseminates information about child rights to a membership of 1,294 organisations (as at 31 August 2002) that are based all around the world. In addition to working with member organisations, CRIN services the needs of approximately 1,600 organisations that have joined its mailing lists without becoming members. About 84 percent of CRIN members are non-government organisations (NGOs) and about two-thirds are in the South.

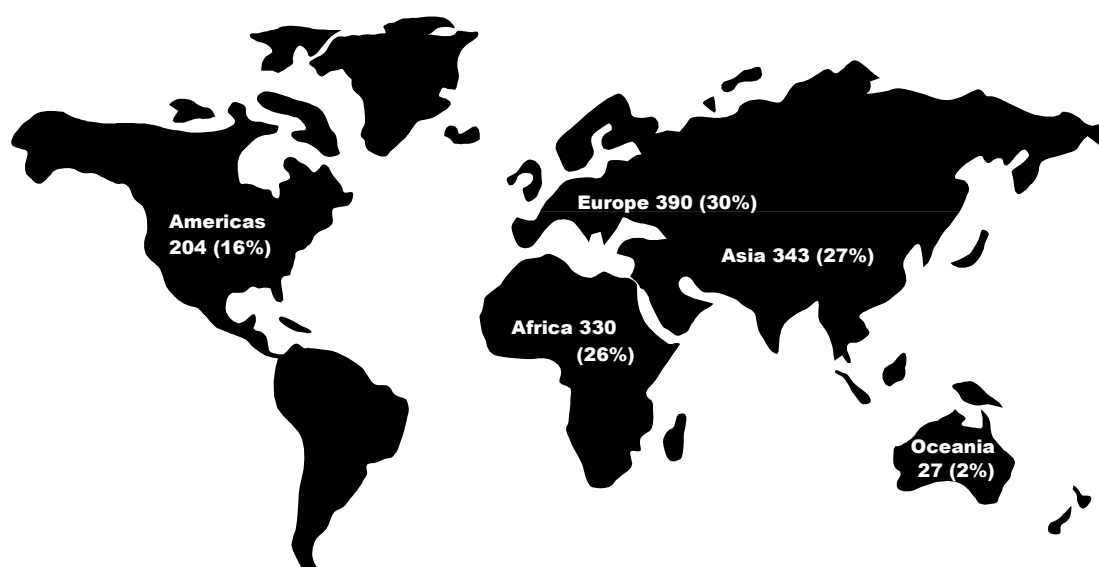


Chart 1: Regional distribution of CRIN membership

Table 1: Sub-regional distribution of CRIN membership

	No. Members	Percent		No. Members	Percent
Australia and New Zealand	22	2%	Polynesia	1	0%
Caribbean	15	1%	South America	56	4%
Central America	23	2%	South-central Asia	232	18%
Eastern Africa	102	8%	South-eastern Asia	56	4%
Eastern Asia	16	1%	Southern Africa	35	3%
Eastern Europe	36	3%	Southern Europe	66	5%
Melanesia	4	0%	Western Africa	139	11%
Micronesia	0	0%	Western Asia	39	3%
Middle Africa	35	3%	Western Europe	111	9%
Northern Africa	16	1%	Other – Africa – non specified	3	0%
Northern America	110	9%	Total	1294	100%
Northern Europe	177	14%			

Source: CRIN (31 August 2002)

Top ten countries for membership are the United Kingdom (144 member organisations), India (116), United States (80), Ghana (52), Bangladesh (44), Kenya (34), Switzerland (31), Canada (30), South Africa (27) and Nepal (24).

CRIN plays a unique role within the human rights community. It is the only child rights organisation that works with a global network of organisations involved in child rights including national, regional and international NGOs, IGOs, United Nations agencies and research institutions. Additionally, CRIN's products and services enable it to be a global information resource on wide range of information, news and documentation on child rights issues. Its partnerships with key NGO coalitions, groups and caucuses also allow CRIN to promote and support the implementation of child rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Such a unique role naturally positions CRIN at the very centre of the debate on the digital divide and on the potential of information management systems and information and communications technology to promote and realise child rights.

CRIN has been actively involved in the UK DotForce consultations on a DFID study into the significance of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for reducing poverty and is now part of the OneWorld Reference Group for the production of a report on ICTs and the Millennium Development Goals.

This research therefore aims to inform practical decisions that relate all aspects of CRIN's work and inform a process that sees CRIN moving from mapping and visioning itself, to knowledge management and to moving into a learning organisation promoting capacity building in the child rights community. Additionally, it will allow CRIN to evaluate how the different access to information and communications technology and well as to information management systems influences the work of organisations involved in implementing child rights.

The research projects is dividend into a number of phases:

Phase 1 - Mapping CRIN

- (a) Analysis of previous research work undertaken by CRIN
- (b) Literary and context review
- (c) Quantitative survey of full CRIN membership

Phase 2 - Visioning CRIN

- (a) A qualitative and quantitative sample survey of original respondents to phase one of the survey that demonstrates an in depth understanding of user needs and then identifies user requirements;
- (b) Case studies of a sample of CRIN members with a global spread (from each of the regions represented, large and small organisations) in order to analyse information usage and flows, and to identify best practice and appropriate strategies for information management and dissemination.

This reports looks at phases 1 and 2 of the research programme and examines the results of a quantitative survey of full CRIN membership and a qualitative and quantitative sample survey that demonstrates an in depth understanding of user needs and then identifies user requirements. It also includes the results of a consultation process conducted with members in Nepal and Kenya.

Research Objectives

This research project addressed two key questions:

1. What are the information management needs of CRIN and its constituent members; and how are these needs best addressed using traditional mechanisms and new technologies?

2. What information systems and methods of information exchange are most suitable for a global, diverse and specialist children's human rights organisation to adopt and use in meeting specific goals and responding to disparate requirements of members?

Through the analysis of the results of two surveys conducted by CRIN, this report reviews how CRIN is now meeting a challenge that is threefold:

- How to manage the specialised needs of experts working in national and international NGOs, the United Nations, and research institutions?
- How to meet the regional and national needs of child rights professionals working in Africa, Asia, the Pacific and South America as well as Europe and North America?
- How to bridge the digital divide that exists between North and South in order to capitalise on the global information society?

The findings of this research programme provide a range of qualitative and quantitative evidence, which addresses the many challenges facing a global network for child rights. It provides an opportunity to build on skills and strengths already existing whilst developing CRIN for the future. The programme of research will continue enabling the development of a model of information management that will inform the future work of the wider human rights world and associated policy makers and decision takers.

Chapter 1: CRIN Membership Survey 2001

Introduction

This survey follows two other membership surveys that have been conducted by CRIN in 1997 and 1999. The present survey was sent to all CRIN members, that is 1,241 child rights organisations as of 5 October 2001. The quantitative survey was based on questions from earlier survey work with additional questions designed to identify new issues and evaluate changes since the previous survey.

CRIN's services have seen important changes since the last CRIN survey was conducted in 1999. The historically most popular services (CRIN website, Newsletter and email service) have recently been re-launched. The survey therefore aimed to evaluate the impact that such changes have had on both the frequency of use and the perception of their success amongst members.

CRINMAIL, the oldest CRIN service dating back to January 1997, is an email list service providing a news bulletin about child rights issues as well as up-to-date information about publications and events. During 2000-2001, CRIN launched thematic and language email list services. The Children and Armed Conflict email list was launched after the International Conference on War-Affected Children which took place in September 2000; CRIN Special Session on Children was launched in advance of the Second PrepCom of the UN Special Session on Children; Occasional French and Spanish-translated compilations of the English CRINMAIL service started in 2000 and are part of CRIN's regional programme.

The website was re-launched in March 2001. It includes sections on publications, news, events, details on member organisations, sections on reports submitted by NGOs to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child through the NGO Groups for the CRC and "virtual" thematic desks.

CRIN Newsletter was completely re-launched at the end of 1999 with new design and format and more space dedicated to thematic features.

Objectives

The overall objectives of the survey included the following:

- Identify the information needs of CRIN and its constituent members
- Examine current information systems and information exchange methods
- Evaluate information flows and usage by CRIN, between CRIN and its members, and by members and their associates in the child rights community
- Analyse perceived success of CRIN in meeting goals
- Identify possible strategies for future information management with CRIN

Methodology

The questionnaire, which was piloted within the child rights community, was produced in English and translated into French and Spanish. It was sent to all 1,241 CRIN members on 5 October 2001 using a number of communications mediums including email, mail, and fax. A first deadline was set for 16 November 2001 and then extended to 30 November 2001.

Two official reminders were sent to all members: first, via e-mail and mail, and then via mail through a reminder card. The reminder card was designed and produced in English, French and Spanish.

A selection of organisations was specifically contacted via phone to ensure that we received their survey. These included:

- Members on CRIN Management Team
- Members of the facilitating group
- Organisations involved in the Global Movement for Children
- National Child Rights Coalitions that are members of CRIN

Returns

In total, of the 1,241 sent in October 2001, 240 completed questionnaires were returned by January 2002. This represents a 19.3 per cent response rate, which is near the target of 20 – 25 per cent of returns. The return rate is slightly lower than the previous survey when 27% of the then 730 CRIN members responded to the survey. One possible explanation might be linked to the fact that the survey was sent in the aftermath of the tragic events of September 11. It is possible that the events in the US and the emergency that followed the developments in Afghanistan, by re-directing the attention and the resources of many organisations towards the Afghan crisis may have impacted the response rate.

Regionally, response rates closely matched our targets calculated on regional membership proportional distribution. A detailed regional response rate is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Response to the CRIN membership survey

Region	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
Africa	53	22%
Asia	58	24%
Central America and the Caribbean	5	2%
Europe	83	35%
Middle East	8	3%
North America	19	8%
Oceania	4	2%
South America	10	4%
Total	240	100%

Findings

Return Methods

The requested method of return for the survey was either mail or fax. Ultimately a high proportion of responses were received through these traditional means of communications. In total 141 organisations responded via mail (56.4%) and 47 (18.8%) via fax, however 51 respondents chose to use e-mail (20.4%). It is interesting to note that 20.4% of respondents opted to use email even though it was not a recommended mode of response. As way of comparison, within the 240 responses received, 168 organisations were sent the survey via e-mail (67.2%) and 71 via mail (28.4%). Fax was used mainly as a reminder or following a specific request by the organisations contacted.

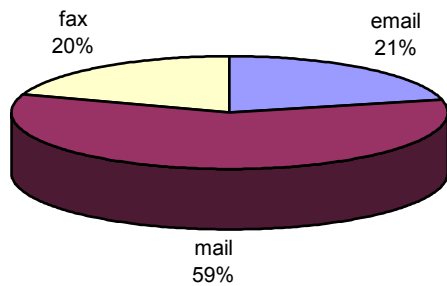


Chart 2: Returns of survey by communications methods

A second observation relates to the distribution of the returns by region compared as a percentage of regional returns. Chart 2 shows that mail was the most used tool in absolute terms. This is in line with the instructions provided in the questionnaire. However, a closer look at the single communications method used, reveals that African and Asian respondents have opted for the use of email comparatively more often than European and North American organisations where respondents appeared more inclined to use mail and particularly fax.² One factor to take into account when looking at these differences is that communications infrastructures may have played a determinant role in such a choice by discouraging the use of mail particularly in developing countries, with email being viewed as a more reliable than snail mail (postal service).

As an example of this, the CRIN office received email from Democratic Republic of the Congo advising that the post office was on strike, and requesting response by email.

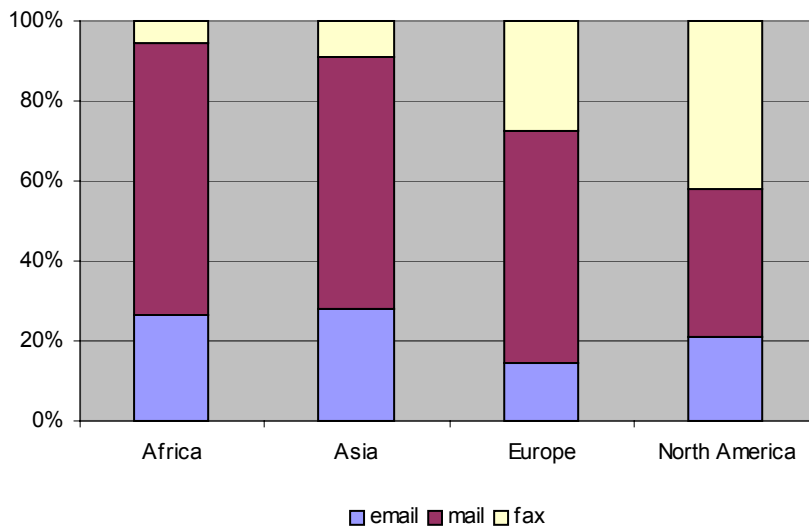


Chart 2: Percentages of responses by email, mail and fax within each region

² The low response from the other regions (Central America & the Caribbean, Middle East, Oceania and South America) does not allow us a meaningful analysis of the data.

CRIN's services

The survey assessed the use and perceived value CRIN services by its members. It also mapped information flows between CRIN and its members, and between members themselves.

Members were asked to indicate the frequency with which they use each service and to rate their performance. Respondents could specify whether they used each CRIN service daily, weekly, monthly, infrequently or never, or if they felt the question was not applicable to their specific circumstances. Additionally, members were asked to rate CRIN services' performance along a scale ranging from excellent to good to satisfactory, unsatisfactory or poor.

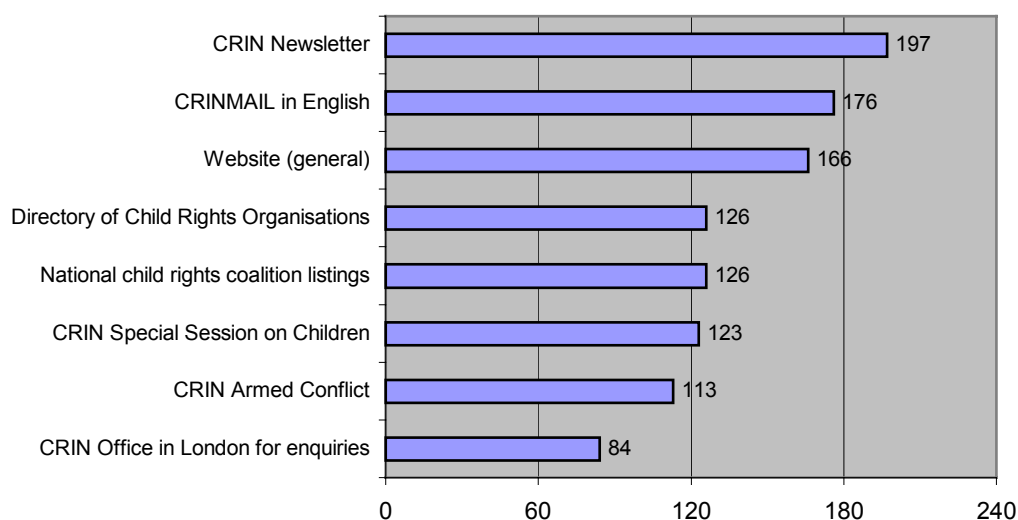


Chart 4: Total use of CRIN services

Use of CRIN services

- CRIN Newsletter is the most popular services used by 82% of respondents
- CRINMAIL English is the second most popular service, used by 176 members (73.3%)
- Website follows with 166 respondents (69%)
- Directory of Child Rights Organisations and the listing of national child rights coalitions are used by 52% of CRIN respondents
- CRINMAIL Special Session is used by 51% of respondents
- CRINMAIL Armed Conflict is used by 47% of respondents
- Coordinating Unit Office is used by 35% of respondents

CRIN Newsletter

In line with the findings of the 1999 survey, the CRIN Newsletter remains the most popular of CRIN's services: 197 respondents (82%) replied that they access this service regularly. This represents a significant increase since the 1999 survey when 75% of CRIN members used the CRIN Newsletter.

The CRIN Newsletter is used on a monthly basis more frequently than any other service. In view of the distribution frequency (i.e. it is published three times per year) this is not a surprising finding.

Chart 5 shows high usage of the CRIN Newsletter in all regions, with Europe and Asia the greatest users ahead of both Africa and North America.

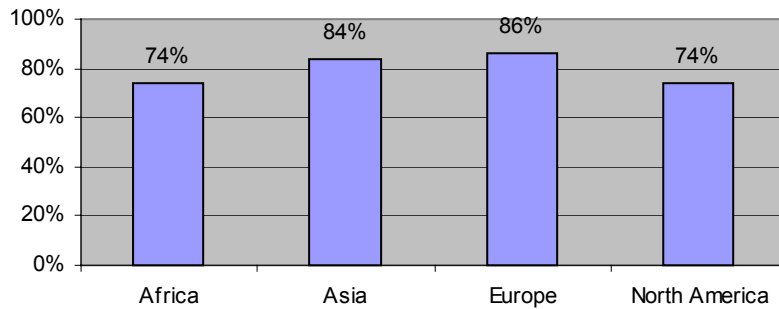


Chart 5: Percentage of use of CRIN Newsletter within each region

Rating

Members were asked to rate CRIN services' performance along a scale ranging from excellent to good to satisfactory, unsatisfactory or poor.

As mentioned previously, the CRIN Newsletter was re-launched in 1999. Chart 6 shows that the level of satisfaction with the product is high. Respondents expressed very positive comments on the CRIN Newsletter both for its new format and for the editorial choice of transforming it into a thematic publication. Thirty percent of respondents found the newsletter excellent and 34 percent good. Only 2 percent rated the newsletter either unsatisfactory or poor.

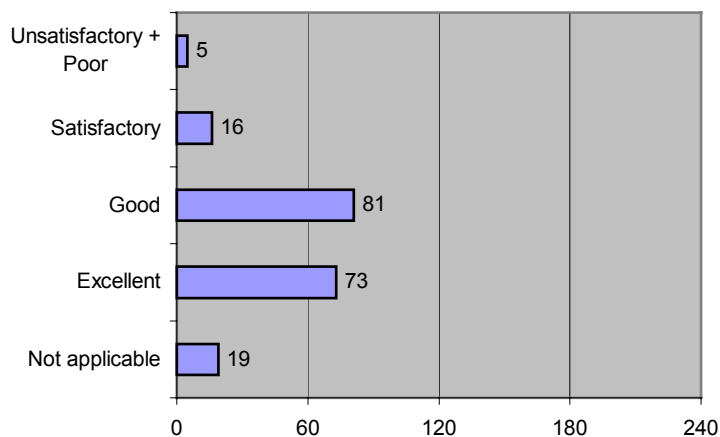


Chart 6: Rating the CRIN Newsletter

In addition to the frequency with which they use CRIN Newsletter and how they rate it, members were asked to indicate whether they actually receive the newsletter, which sections they find more relevant, and if they translate any part of the publication. The aim was to assess the efficiency of CRIN to reach its members around the world both under a distribution point of view and under a thematic and information perspective.

Results confirm that 181 respondents receive the CRIN Newsletter and 35 do not receive it. Many who do not receive the newsletter indicated a desire to receive it. The majority of respondents that don't receive the CRIN Newsletter are European (12) and North American (6).

When asked which section they found most relevant, respondents indicated the News Round-up and the Thematic articles sections as the most useful parts of the CRIN Newsletter, followed by the Publications and the Calendar of Events. However, comments indicated that some members received the newsletter too late for the event section to be relevant for them.

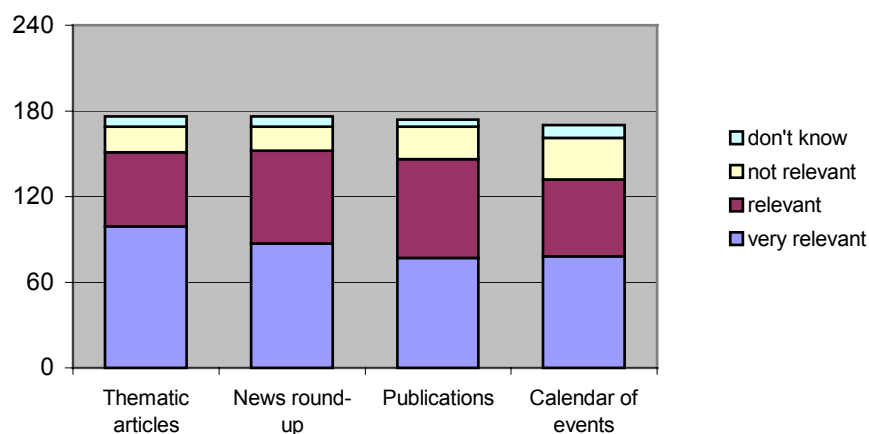


Chart 7: Relevance of the various section of the CRIN Newsletter

Previous research (CRIN, 1997 and 1999) has shown that language barriers present a serious obstacle to information flows. This issue was addressed again in this research to identify if and how this obstacle was overcome through voluntary translation of the information provided by CRIN.

Results show that of the 240 respondents, 40 respondents translate the CRIN Newsletter. Arabic appears as the most common language of translation, with five of the eight Middle Eastern respondents carrying out translation. Other languages into which translation is undertaken are German, Greek, Russian, Hebrew, Hindi, Bengali, Indonesian, Luganda and Lusoga, Nepali, Romanian, Serbian/Croatian, Swedish and Tamil.

CRINMAIL

CRINMAIL is the oldest of CRIN services dating back to 1997. It is an email list service that provides a news bulletin about child rights issues as well as up-to-date information about publications and events.

CRINMAIL is the second most popular service after CRIN Newsletter: almost two thirds of respondents indicated that they receive CRINMAIL on a regular basis.

The regional distribution of CRINMAIL (see Table 3) use sees Africa lagging behind Asia and North America and Europe. This difference cannot be explained in terms of access to email, with the number of African respondents that have access to this communications tool being equal to the number of Asian respondent who access email. African respondents use email with the same frequency as their Asian counterparts. The reason may therefore lay either in different patterns of email usage in different regions of the world or in different marketing effort by CRIN in these two regions.

Table 3: Use of CRINMAIL expressed as percentage within each region

Region	Use of CRINMAIL in English
Africa	63%
Asia	86%
Europe	83%
North America	84%

The chart compares the use of CRINMAIL as a percentage of use within each region with the access to email also expressed as a percentage of access within the region.

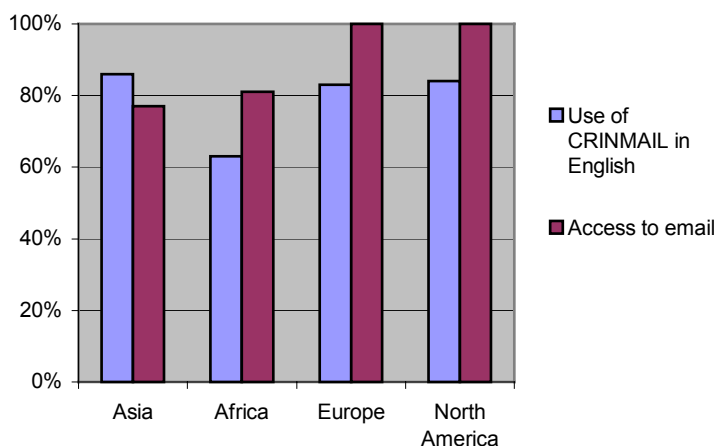


Chart 8: Use of CRINMAIL and access to email (values expressed as percentage use and access within each region)

Chart 8 shows that in Asia access to CRINMAIL appears to be greater than the effective email access for the region. This result may be an indication that the reach of CRINMAIL goes beyond the actual current mapping and reaches a wider audience thanks to local networks.

Rating

Members were asked to rate CRINMAIL and the new email list services along a scale going from excellent to poor.

In 2000 and 2001, CRIN launched new thematic and language email list services. In 2000 the Children and Armed Conflict email service and French and Spanish translated compilations of CRINMAIL were launched. CRINMAIL Special Session on Children was started in February 2001.

CRINMAIL received a high degree of appreciation among respondents. Eighty-seven percent of actual CRINMAIL users ranked the service as either good or excellent (64% of the total respondents). The thematic list on the UN Special Session was highly valued by 84% of users who ranked it at the top of the scale. CRINMAIL Armed conflict was considered good or excellent by 71% of users. The email services in French and Spanish also received a high score, with CRINMAIL Spanish slightly behind all other email lists.

Details of the ratings as a percentage of respondents who indicated they actually use each service are shown in Chart 9.

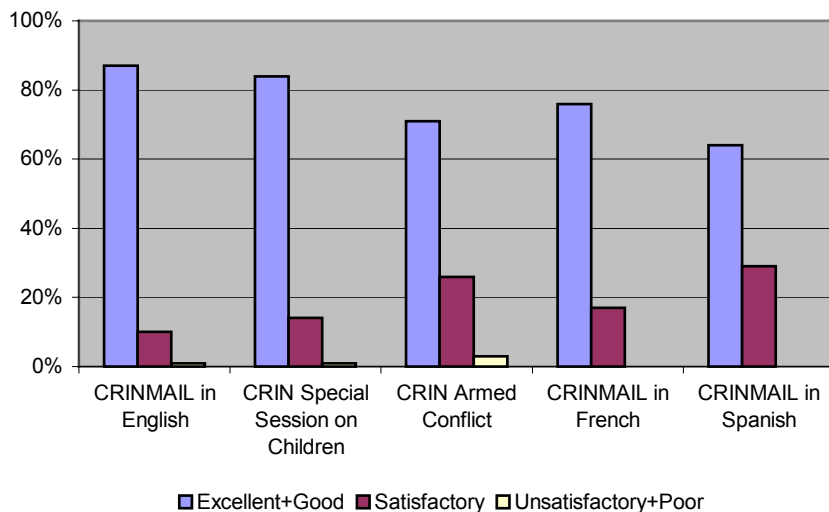


Chart 9: Ratings of CRIN email list services as a percentage of users of each service

Some comments indicated that a regional focus in the information provided by CRIN as well as a regular distribution of its services in different languages would be very important for members. This need expressed by respondents may also explain why the French and Spanish CRINMAIL services are not rated as highly as the English services. This could be an interesting development route for CRIN.

The research examined the actual reach of CRIN’s services and the networking potentials within CRIN membership, identifying how the services provided by CRIN stimulated networking in the child rights community. Members were asked if they distribute CRINMAIL within, or outside, their organisations.

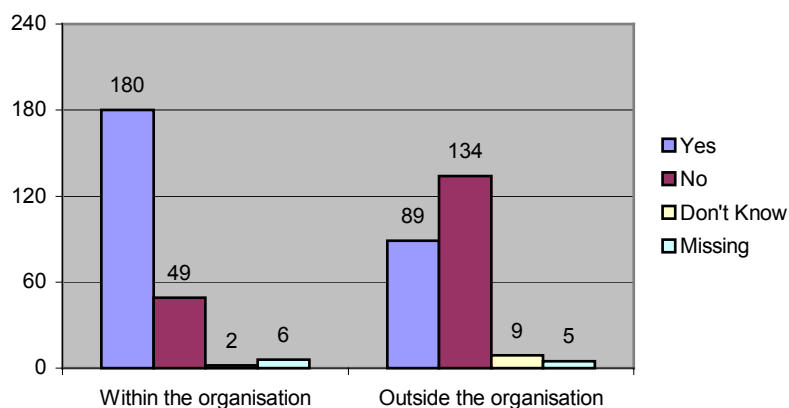


Chart 10: Distribution of CRINMAIL

The results showed that over two-thirds of respondents distribute CRINMAIL within their organisation and 37% distribute it outside the organisation (Chart 10). Regionally, while the majority of respondents from all regions do distribute CRINMAIL within their organisation, it is mostly “Southern” respondents who distribute CRINMAIL outside their organisation.

Additionally, results show that almost one third of respondents actively use CRINMAIL to contact and network with other members. Of these, 63 organisations (82%) obtained response from the members contacted. Again, it is mostly Africa and Asian respondents who appear to use CRINMAIL as a networking opportunity.

The analysis of these responses suggests that CRIN’s potential as an active networking resource is large. They provide a picture of CRIN’s reach going beyond its membership of 1,240 organisations, and indicate the potential for CRIN to develop into a network of networks.

CRIN Website

The website, re-launched in March 2001, is one of the most important information services offered by the information network. It includes sections on child rights publications, news, events, details on members organisations, sections on reports submitted by NGOs to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child through the NGO Groups for the CRC and “virtual” thematic desks.

With 166 users (69% of respondents), the CRIN website is another significantly popular service provided by CRIN.

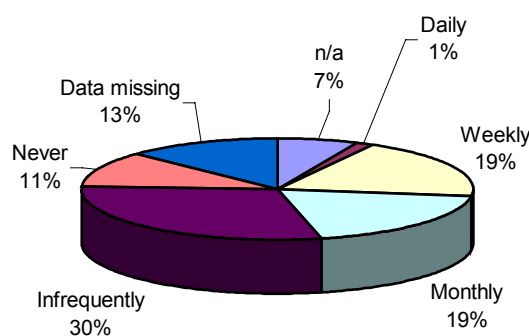


Chart 11: Frequency of use of CRIN website

A closer look at the results on the frequency of use provides a picture of how members effectively use this service. The CRIN website is mostly used on a weekly and a monthly basis. Of the total, in fact 19% of respondents indicated that they visit the site weekly and the same percentage use the site monthly. One per cent of respondents uses the website daily. Compared to the results of the previous survey, the most relevant changes relate to the considerable decrease in the percentage of respondents who declared they either visit the site infrequently or never visit it. These have gone respectively from 37.4% in 1999 to 30% in 2001 and from 26.3% in 1999 to 11% in 2001.

It appears therefore, that, since 1999, while the usage of the website has slightly decreased in absolute terms, it has increased in frequency.

The use of the various sections of the site results rather homogeneous. As Chart 12 shows, with 69% users, the Publications section is the most popular of the website pages. The Events section and the NGO Alternative Reports are both used by 65% of respondents while the section dedicated to the NGO Group for the CRC is consulted by 62% of respondents. Sixty per cent of respondents visit the Child Rights Caucus section, 57% access the Theme Desks, and more than half of respondents use the section dedicated to the Directory of Child Rights Organisations (previously referred to as the CRIN Membership Directory in the surveys).

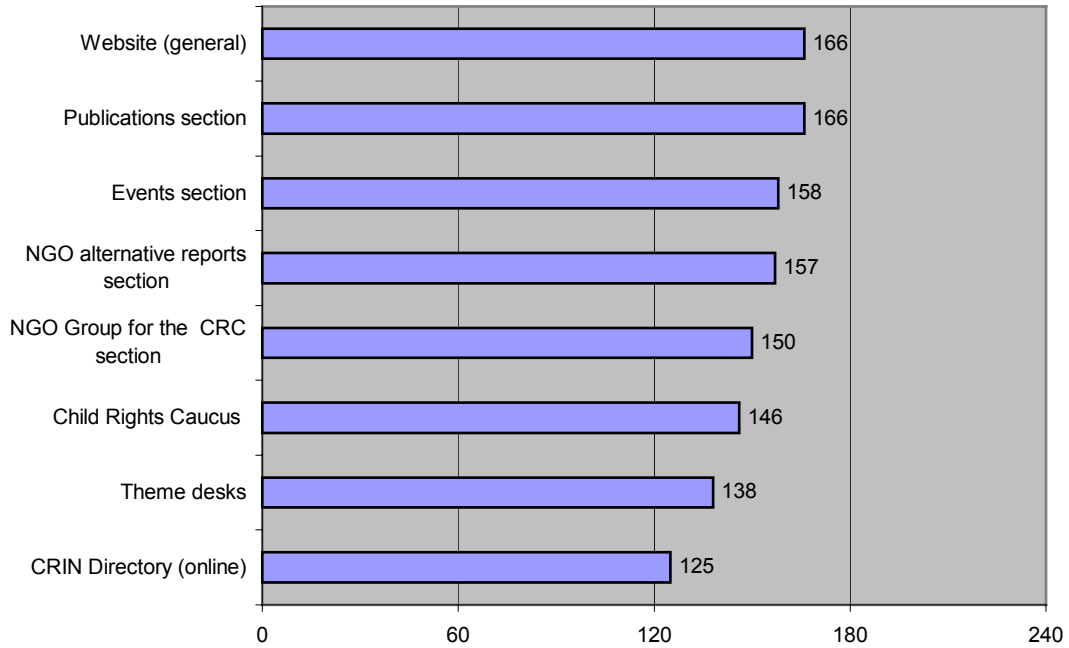


Chart 12: Use of sections of CRIN website

Rating

Respondents provided very favourable feedback on the website. Over a total of 144 users, 128 (89%) valued the site as a whole either excellent or good. Additionally, four sections of the site (NGO Group for the CRC, Child Rights Caucus, Publications, NGOs Alternative Reports) were ranked as excellent or good by a percentage of actual users ranging between 80 and 86%. Over two thirds of users of the “Events” and “Theme Desks” sections considered such sections excellent or good and 61% of users of the Directory of Child Rights Organisations valued it either excellent or good.

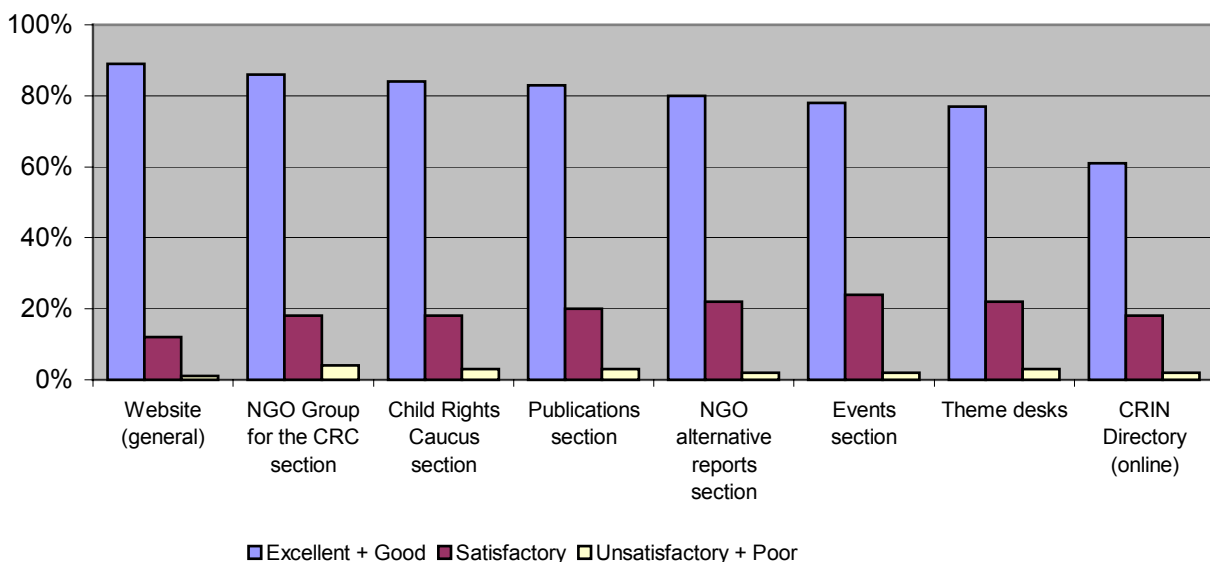


Chart 13: Rating of sections of the website as a percentage of users of each section

A second observation relates to the number of respondents who indicated that a section is either non-applicable to their specific circumstances or who simply decided not to rate the website. In all cases, the number of respondents who did not express an opinion on the website almost equals the number of respondents that did rate the site. In one case, the Directory of Child Rights Organisations, the respondents who did not express an opinion exceeded the number of respondents who rated this section of the website. This is in line with the observation made in relation to the relatively limited use of this section by respondents.

Directory of Child Rights Organisations

The Directory of Child Rights Organisations, which was the second most popular service in 1999 with 58% of users, is now used by 52% of CRIN respondents. This slight decrease could reflect the fact that this product has not been re-published since 1998. CRIN’s focus between 1999 and 2001 was on re-launching the website, the CRIN Newsletter and CRINMAIL.

Also as a result of the present research programme, CRIN has started to review its membership procedures and relations. Such a review will allow updating and re-publishing of the Directory of Child Rights Organisations. It is not surprising, therefore, to see that the use of the directory is comparatively lower than the use of other CRIN products. More meaningful results on the use of this service are expected from the next CRIN survey.

Concluding comments on CRIN services

The survey shows that the use of CRIN services has generally increased since 1999. The majority of services including the CRIN Newsletter and email list services have witnessed a marked increase in usage whilst the website and the Directory of Child Rights Organisation have witnessed a slight decrease in the number of users. In the case of the website, however, the slight decrease in total use is counterbalanced by an increase in the frequency of use of this service.

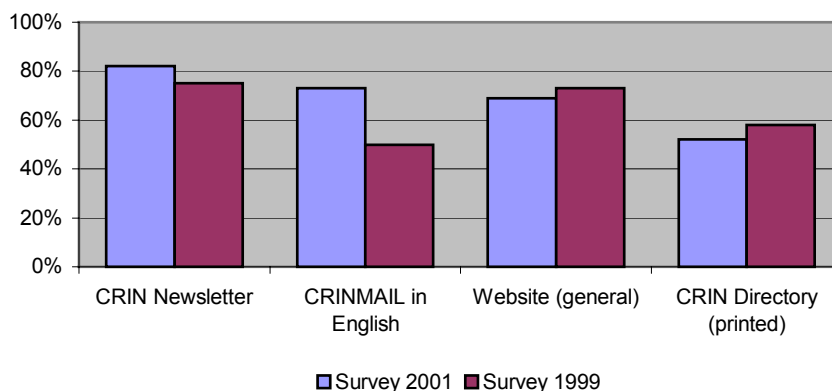


Chart 14: Use of CRIN services in 2001 compared to 1999

Looking at other factors

Use of CRIN's services by region

The regional distribution of users of CRIN services reflects the overall popularity of the CRIN Newsletter, CRINMAIL, the CRIN website and CRINMAIL Special Session. As outlined in Table 4, the CRIN Newsletter is a popular service in all regions with Asian and European respondents particularly valuing it. Similarly (with the only exception of the African region), the percentage of respondents using CRINMAIL in each region exceeds 80%.

A clear difference between 'Northern' and 'Southern' organisations is evident in the use of the website. While 44% of African and 58% of Asian respondents indicated that they use CRIN website regularly, the regional percentage in Europe and North America reaches 83% and 89% respectively.

This can be explained in terms of access to information and communications technology (the Internet) with the actual numbers of African and Asian respondents who indicated they have access to the Internet. While 100% of European and North American members responded they access both the Internet and email, only 57% of African respondents and 78% of Asian respondents indicated they access the Internet. A higher percentage of respondents from Africa and Asia, however, have access to email (81% and 76% respectively).

Table 4: Regional distribution of users of CRIN services

	CRIN Newsletter	CRINMAIL in English	CRINMAIL Special Session on Children	CRIN Armed Conflict	Website (general)	CRIN Directory (printed)	CRIN office in London for enquiries	
Africa	40	34	27	22	24	24	24	13
Asia	48	49	35	27	33	35	35	23
Europe	71	69	64	41	68	41	41	32
North America	14	16	15	10	17	12	12	8

In terms of the specific frequency of use of CRIN's services, the results show that CRINMAIL and CRINMAIL Special Session are relatively more used on a daily and weekly basis while the CRIN Newsletter and the website are the most popular services on a monthly basis. CRIN members tend to use the coordinating unit office in London as a resource less than the other services with 39.6% of respondents declaring they never contact CRIN offices. This may suggest that the other means of communications available to them meet their needs.

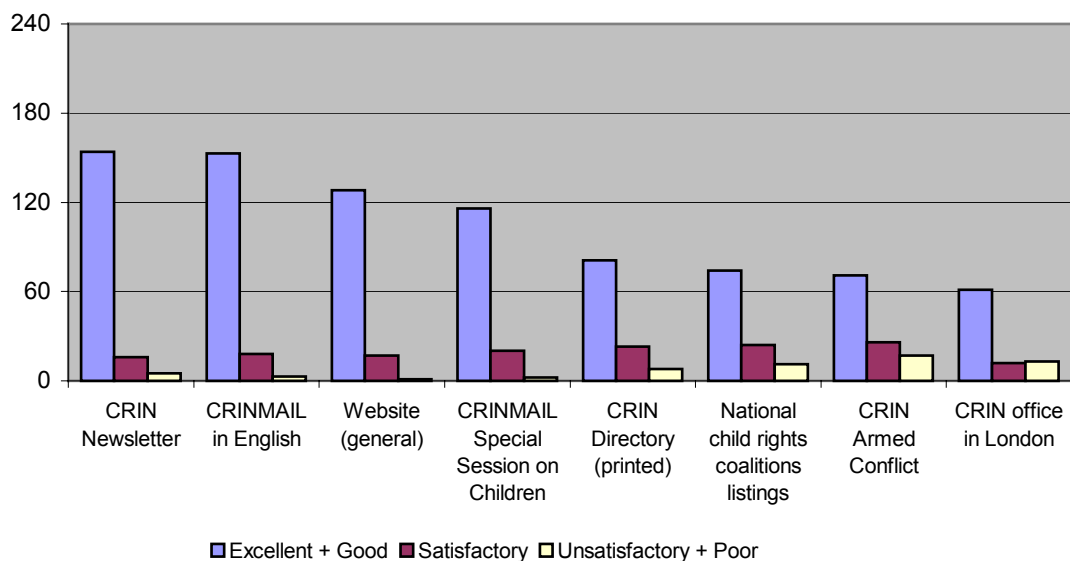


Chart 15: Ratings of CRIN services

Rating CRIN's services

The overall rating sees CRINMAIL as the most appreciated of CRIN's services followed by the CRIN Newsletter, the website and CRIN Special Session. Directory of Child Rights Organisations, CRINMAIL Children in Armed Conflict, and National Coalitions follow quite close together. The coordinating unit office, the base for all the services provided by CRIN, is the least directly contacted resource used by members.

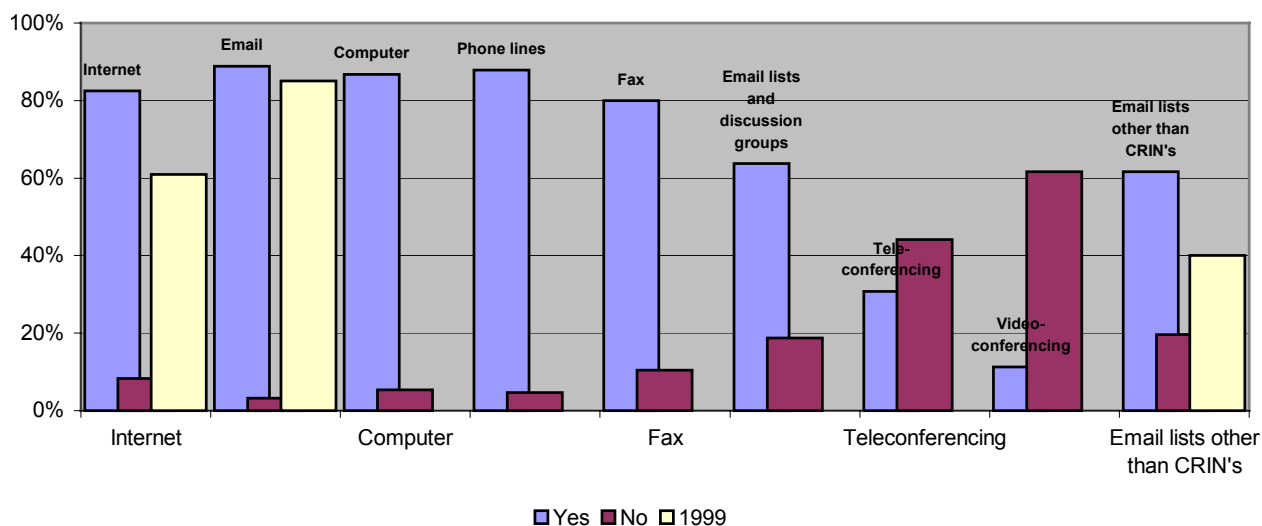


Chart 16: Access to communications methods

Access to communications methods

The survey was used to identify members' access to various forms of communications methods. The results indicated that 82% of respondents access Internet and 63% use it daily. Only 8% of respondents indicated they do not have access to the Internet. This represents a considerable increase compared to 1999 when only 61% had access to the Internet.

Access to email has also increased since 1999. The survey showed that 89% of respondents have access to email compared to 85% in 1999. In terms of the actual frequency with which members use email, results show that 72% of respondents use email on a daily basis and 10% only on a weekly basis. Email discussion lists are popular with 63% of respondents while only 30% of respondents have access to Teleconferencing and only 11% to Video conferencing and the majority of them uses these methods infrequently.

Access to phone lines is widespread: 87% of respondents access phone lines and 80% fax.

It is the geographical distribution, however, that provides the most interesting insight into the access and use of communications methods by CRIN members. The survey shows a clear divide between Northern and Southern regions. Such divide is more evident in terms of access to the internet than access to email where the difference between northern and southern organisations is less marked.

While all Northern organisations have access to Internet and email (100%) only 57% of African respondents and 73% of Asian respondents access Internet and 81% and 76% respectively access email. Approximately 66% of African and Asian respondents have access to a computer compared to 98% of European and 100% of North American organisations. Phone and fax are accessed by virtually all "Northern" organisations while 74% of African respondents have access to phone and 55% to Fax and 83% of Asian respondents access the phone and 73% the Fax. Email lists are used by 87% of European respondents and 84% of North American respondents while only 37% of African and 57% of Asian respondents use this tool. Here it is interesting to note that there has been a significant increase in the number of respondents who are accessing email lists other than CRIN's.

Table 5: Access to communications methods by region

	Africa	Asia	Europe	North America	
Internet		57%	73%	100%	100%
Email		81%	76%	100%	100%
Computer		75%	78%	98%	100%
Phone lines		74%	83%	100%	100%
Fax		55%	73%	100%	100%
Email lists and email discussion groups		37%	57%	87%	84%

Flows of Information

One of the aims of the research in general and the survey in particular related to the mapping of communications flows in the child rights community. From CRIN's perspective, it was particularly important to understand the scope of information flows between CRIN and its members and secondly amongst members.

The organisations contacted were therefore asked if they contributed information to CRIN and, if they did, with what aim.

Thirty-eight percent of respondents indicated that they actively contribute information to CRIN. Of these, 62 respondents (65%) affirmed that they did so with the aim to send information about reports and publications published by their organisation. Fifty-two respondents (55%) send information to update their profile on CRIN's website under the "CRIN Members" Section, 50 respondents (53%) send information about events, 33 respondents (34%) send news, 34 respondents (36%) contributed information to CRIN to network with other CRIN members. These results seem to confirm that CRIN is still perceived by its members more as an information resource than as a networking opportunity.

Additionally, members were asked why they used CRIN's services and responded as follows:

Table 6: Reasons for using CRIN services

	Respondents %	1999
To find out about child rights events	79%	70%
To find out about child rights publications	76%	74%
To learn from others	74%	---
To exchange ideas and experience	65%	41%
To contact other organisations	55%	68%
To request information	54%	41%
To inform their organisation's research	50%	24%
To disseminate information from their organisation	48%	41%
To inform policy discussion	46%	24%
To support lobbying	41%	21%
Other	10%	---

As Table 6 shows, members' interest for up-to-date information on child rights related events is very high. Such interest was also observed in the use of CRIN website by members. Additionally, the percentage of members who have indicated this as a reason for using CRIN has increased since 1999 going from 70% to 79%. One possible explanation relates to the expansion in the range of activities undertaken by CRIN's membership as reflected in the survey. Data from the survey show that CRIN members are now more interested than in the past in lobbying and advocacy work which relies very much on timely and accurate information on child rights events. Another reason, equally in line with the results of the survey, may be linked to the high value that members indicated they assign to meetings and personal contacts as a way of exchanging information and networking.

The interest for child rights publications shown by 76% of respondents confirms that members see CRIN as a useful and reliable source of information. Such interest appears increased in the last two years.

A decrease since 1999 can be observed in the use of CRIN as a means to contact other organisations. However, this result appears in contrast with other networking related responses. In fact, the number of respondents who indicated they use CRIN to exchange ideas and experience, learn from others, request information or disseminate information from their organisations has significantly increased since 1999. It is not clear in light of these results, why the number of respondents that contact other organisations through CRIN has decreased from 68% to 55%. It appears that members rely on CRIN to retrieve information about other organisations without taking the further step of contacting others directly and possibly relying on their traditional networking channels.

The survey shows an interesting change in CRIN's membership's activities. Members appear more inclined to conduct their own research and carry out policy and lobbying activities than it was the case in 1999. While the number of organisations conducting this type of activities is comparatively much lower than the amount of members using CRIN to retrieve or exchange information, the increase since 1999 is remarkable. Members using CRIN to inform their own research and to support lobbying and inform policy discussion almost doubled in the last two years. This relevant development opens new opportunities to CRIN and for its role in the child rights community in terms of advocacy and lobbying support and information dissemination for its members.

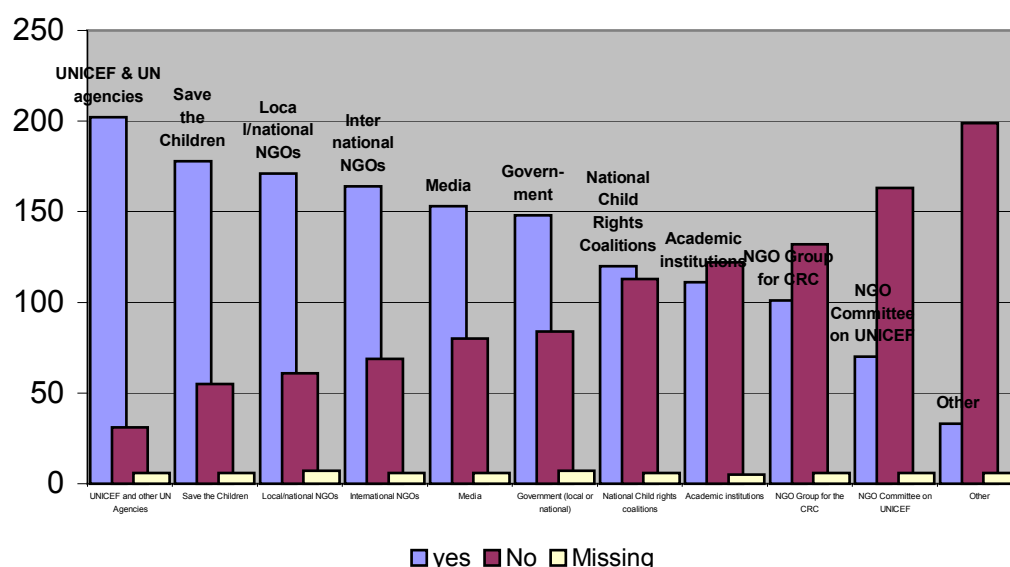


Chart 17: Sources of information

The survey was used to identify what sources of information on child rights members use regularly. Results show that CRIN members access information mainly from institutional specialised sources such as the United Nation’s Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and other UN agencies (80%), and Save the Children (71%). However, these two “traditional” sources of information are closely followed by local and national NGOs, suggesting that information flows rely heavily on local networks. As illustrated in Chart 17, a relatively high percentage of respondents have indicated that they do not look for information from academic institutions (48% versus 44%), the NGO Group for the CRC (52% versus 40%), and the NGO Committee for UNICEF (65% versus 28%).

Members were also asked to indicate how they share information with others, with the view to capturing formal and informal networks between organisations.

Workshops and training are the most popular form of information sharing with 78% of respondents affirming that they use this channel to exchange information with others. Publications and networks are used by 73% and 67% of respondents, respectively.

Table 7: Methods of information sharing.

	Yes %	No %
Workshops and training	78.3	19.2
Through own publications (reports, books, newsletters)	73.3	24.2
Networks	67.1	30.4
Public education campaigns	45.4	52.1
Resource centres	45.0	52.5
Through own website	45.0	52.5
Through own email discussion lists	23.3	74.2
Other	19.2	77.9

Websites and email discussion lists are comparatively less used by respondents. These results present a picture of networks still based on either direct contact or traditional means of information dissemination such as publications. However, even if only one-third of respondents indicated that they use email lists, somehow surprisingly it is Southern organisations that use this communications method more frequently.

The geographic distribution of the results therefore provides further insight in the structure of networks among members. In particular, while workshops and training are indicated by all regions as the most

common form of information sharing, the methods used by members to exchange information appear differentiated along a North-South divide.

What seems particularly relevant here is that information appears to be prevalently originated from northern regions. Overall, 83% of European and 89% of North American organisations indicated that they use their own publications to share information, by comparison only 61% of African and 64% of Asian respondents use their own publications for information exchange.

More traditional forms of information sharing are stronger in Southern regions. Resource Centres are used more by African (59% of users) and Asian organisations (60% of respondents) than their European or North American counterparts. In these regions, only 31% and 26% of respondents respectively use resource centres to share information. Conversely, websites are very popular with “Northern” organisations with 62% of European and 84% of North American respondents using this tool to exchange information compared to “Southern” organisations where only 18% of African and 25% of Asian respondents opt for using their website to share information with others.

Languages

In previous surveys, CRIN members identified language barriers as one of the main impediments to access up-to-date information on child rights. In line with its CRIN’s planned regionalisation programme, members were therefore asked to give information about their working language, with the aim of obtaining a map of language needs of member organisations.

In line with the regional distribution of respondents, English is the most common working language (82%), followed by French (21%) and Spanish (17%). Twenty-nine percent of respondents indicated that they also used an additional language not listed in the questionnaire.

Mapping Members’ Needs

CRIN members were asked what kind of information they would need for their daily work on child rights.

Table 8: Information needs of CRIN members

	Yes %
Information about other organisations working on children's human rights	81.7
Details of publications and reports	74.6
Thematic information about child rights	72.5
National information about child rights	67.5
Regionalised information about child rights	67.5
Reports specifically from NGO Group for the CRC	64.2
Reports specifically from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child	63.3
Information on violations and breaches of children's human rights	60.0
Other	14.2

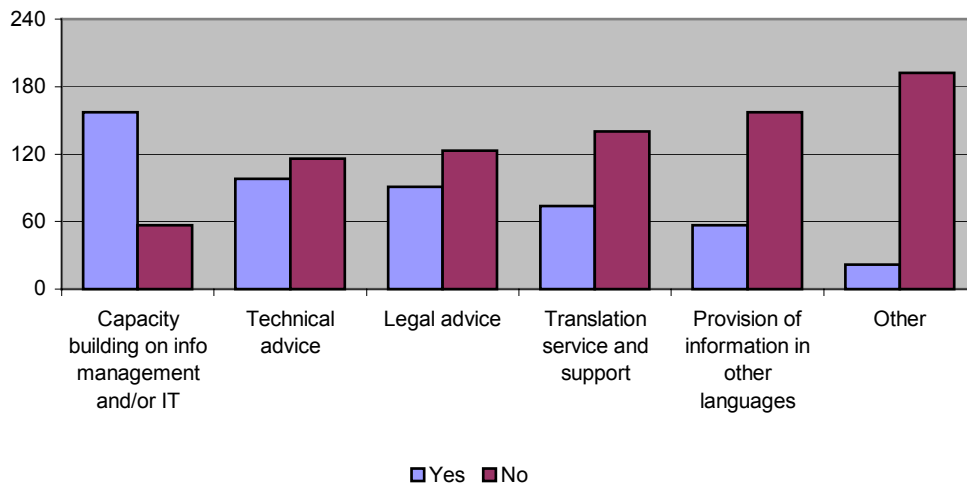


Chart 18: Services and methods of information delivery

Table 8 shows that over 81% of CRIN respondents would like to receive information about other organisations working on child rights. When compared with previous results showing the actual use of CRIN by its members, we observe that only 55% of respondents do actually use CRIN to network with others. Such discrepancy, noted also elsewhere, seems to reinforce the assumption that CRIN members are interested in finding out about the activities carried out by other organisations in the child rights community and see and use CRIN as a source to obtain such information. However, it also shows that CRIN’s membership is open to expand its networking channels.

In line with previous results, members value publications and reports highly as instruments for their work: 74.6% expressed their interest in receiving this type of information. Interestingly, over 67% of respondents expressed a need for national as well as regionalised information about child rights. A result that provides a picture of CRIN membership as a network very much relying on regional and local links.

In addition to the content of the information needed by its members, CRIN was also interested in assessing what services or methods of information delivery would help members’ work.

Responses show that members are particularly keen to receive support on methods of undertaking training and capacity building in information management and IT. Chart 18 shows responses in detail.

Chapter 2: CRIN Second Phase Survey

Introduction

The second phase of the research programme focussed on how CRIN members manage information to support their work in child rights. It aimed to situate CRIN in association with other child rights and human rights organisations. Among other results, the research aimed to work towards a model of information management for other human rights organisations.

Using analysis of the data collected in the first phase, this second survey aimed to identify how an information system within an organisation works, examining the regular and anticipated flows of information through the organisation and how this information is used. It also aimed to analyse user perceptions on the success of the systems, user needs and how they might be met.

Objectives

The overall objectives of the second phase of the research were as follows:

- To further evaluate members' information flows and how they are used by members and their associates in the child rights community. This includes information flows in the context of both formal and informal networks, including all means of communications (e.g. Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), traditional communication techniques, audiovisual means etc.) and also an analysis of the internal (within an organisation) and external information exchange.
- To use the results of this survey to improve how the CRIN coordinating unit exchanges information with its members and to improve the participation of the members in the network through effective and equal information exchange.
- To feed the results into the CRIN regionalisation programme.

The questionnaire considered five thematic areas:

- Background information about the organisation: name, mandate and objectives.
- Information content and acquisition: Content of the information and how it is received.
- Information management: managing, storing and retrieving information.
- Information dissemination: sending out and sharing information.
- Networking: formal and informal contacts.

Methodology

The second questionnaire was sent to 65 members to CRIN who took part in the first phase of the survey, providing a representative sample of 5% of the membership. Many also took part in consultations in Kenya and Nepal. The representative sample was based on the type, size and geographical location of member organisations, to match the overall profile of CRIN's membership as closely as possible. In this way, it was hoped that the varying information capacities of CRIN's diverse membership would be reflected in the research results and final recommendations.

Pilots of the questionnaire were conducted in February 2002. The survey was then sent at the beginning of March 2002. The organisations contacted were then asked to return the questionnaire by 22 March 2002 by email, mail or fax. The survey was translated into French and Spanish and sent according to the regional distribution of CRIN's membership.

In completing the second survey, members were encouraged to think about information systems and information flows in their broadest terms. This included the full range of possible communications modes extended to oral communication, letter writing, video conferencing, and publications dissemination and even informal information sharing during a meal break. Additionally, they were encouraged to consult with other members of their organisation if they felt that they would be able to input extra information to the questionnaire.

Findings

Returns

Out of the total 65 questionnaires sent out, 34 were returned which represents a 52% return rate. Overall, the vast majority of respondents returned the questionnaire via email. Only eight members returned the survey via mail and one member via fax.

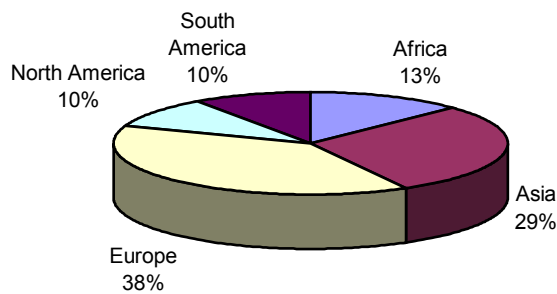


Chart 19: Regional distribution of returns of second survey

The chart below presents a snapshot of the regional distribution of returns.

Of the 34 members that returned the questionnaires:

- Small organisations, with 2-10 staff members 12
- Medium organisation, with 11-49 staff 12
- Medium/large organisation, with 50-100 staff 5
- Large international organisations, with 100+ staff 5

Background information about the organisation

Members were asked to specify whether their organisation had dedicated members of staff working specifically on information and/or communications, including media. The intention here was to verify how developed the information management system was in the child rights organisations surveyed. Over 70% of respondents indicated that they had some staff working specifically on these issues. Nine organisations do not have specific information and communications including media relations posts in place. These range from small organisations with few staff to large organisations with large staffing bodies.

More than half of the respondents indicated that their working language is English. A quarter of respondents work in English plus a second language, while five organisations work in English, French *and* Spanish. One organisation worked only in Arabic.

All respondents reported that they have a copy of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in their working language. From the answers provided, however, it is not clear if members who work both in English and a second language have access to a version of the UNCRC in both languages, or only in English.

Information content and acquisition

When asked how their work relates to the implementation or monitoring of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, organisations mentioned the following:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ▪ Awareness rising | 8 |
| ▪ Information dissemination on the UNCRC and promotion | 8 |
| ▪ Training and education on child rights | 7 |
| ▪ Writing the alternative reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child | 6 |
| ▪ Advocacy and lobbying and campaigning | 6 |

Additionally:

- Over 68% of respondents reported that their information requirements and needs relate to the process on the reporting and monitoring on the UNCRC; and on children and education
- 62% need information on issues relating to children's participation; children working and living in the streets; sexual exploitation of children
- Almost 60% of respondents are interested in the topic of child labour and working children; and children in conflict with the law
- Approximately 55% of respondents are interested in issues affecting children in care and children; and children and the media the media
- Almost half of respondents indicated they would need more information on children and health; children living with HIV/AIDS; refugee and unaccompanied children; disabled children and Children in armed conflicts
- Roughly one-third of respondents need further information on children and the environment; and on individual cases of violation

Nine members felt that they do not have sufficient information on child rights to keep them up to date on current issues at the international and national level. Of these, two were African organisations, three Asian, one South American, two European and one North American. Among the additional information needed, members listed examples of best practice, information on child poverty in developed countries, information in languages other than English, legal information, and historical data on child abuse (before 1995).

Generally, respondents rely heavily on the reputation of their sources as a means of verifying the quality of the information received. The majority of respondents assume that the information provided from established institutions like the United Nations and Save the Children are reliable. Crosschecking is mentioned by the large majority of responding organisations as a means of information verification. Some members do so by using the Internet to access alternative sources, others refer to their field offices, or their own networks. The element of trust on the reputation of the source seems, however, the most common way of dealing with information.

This finding is confirmed by the high percentage of respondents that actually refer specifically to international institutions working on child rights issues as a source of information. Almost all organisations surveyed indicated that they contact UNICEF and Save the Children to acquire information on child rights. Over two-thirds contact other sources such as academic institutions, the NGO Group for the CRC, international, national and local NGOs, national and local government authorities, and the media. Fifty-six percent of respondents contact the NGO Committee on UNICEF (56%).

In order to identify what methods of communications are used and with what regularity information is exchanged, the survey specifically asked respondents to provide information on who they contact, by what means, and how often. Results show that members contact international institutions mainly on a weekly or monthly basis with a high percentage contacting them infrequently.

Email, meetings and the website are the most used methods to acquire information from UNICEF and Save the Children, while, unsurprisingly, academic institutions are a source of information particularly through their journals and specialised literature. The kind of information provided by academic institutions probably explains the fact that organisations tend to contact them infrequently.

Email and meetings are mostly used to communicate with the NGO Group for the CRC and the NGO Committee on UNICEF with which contacts are mainly irregular.

The organisations that rely on international NGOs for gathering information on child rights contact them mainly a monthly basis. All of them use email and a very high percentage rely on their websites and on meetings.

Email appears as the most popular means of communication for obtaining information from all sources, except from local and national governments. Only half of the organisations that contact government authorities use this method while over three-quarters of them indicated they heavily rely on face-to-face meetings. One explanation is probably linked to the fact that contacts with governments are likely to be mainly directed towards lobbying activities, which implies direct communications, including telephone, also highly used. However, members reported that contact with government authorities is rather irregular and polarised between weekly communications for some organisations and infrequent contacts for others.

The extremely high use of email and meetings for contacts with other national and local NGOs shows that members tend to use means that ensure a two-way communications at the local level. This is confirmed by the popularity of phone and mail when communicating with these organisations. The frequency of contacts also reveals that members heavily rely on local networks and local organisations for their work. Members in fact appear to get in touch with their local counterparts particularly on a daily and weekly basis.

Weekly contacts are used in contacts with the media. Somewhat surprisingly, members appear to prefer email and phone to get information from the media rather than websites or journals.

Eight organisations added that they gather information through contacts with children or children's groups.

Information management: Managing, storing and retrieving information

Members were asked to provide details on how they collect published and unpublished documents. Table 9 shows responses in detail divided by region.

Only eight organisations indicated they do not have a document classification system in place. Of these three were "Northern" organisation. Five of the 22 organisations that use documentation systems classify their documents along themes and issues. Three organisations indicate they use the Dewey Decimal Classification System, two follow the articles of the UNCRC and two follow their organisational objectives. Most organisations, however, use very basic classification systems.

Table 9: How organisations collect published and unpublished documents by regions

	Library	Resource Centre	Intranet	Internet	CD ROM	Shared Drive	Personal Paper files
Africa	1	3	1	2	2	2	2
Asia	8	9	1	7	3	3	5
Europe	7	5	3	12	4	5	10
North America	1	1	6	2	1	1	2
South America	1	0	0	2	1	1	2
Total	18	18	11	25	11	12	21

Information dissemination: Sending out and sharing information

When asked what information services are offered by their organisation, the large majority of respondents indicated they provide mainly publications and printed material. Conferences, Workshops and Training follow in popularity together with Resource centres. A lower percentage of organisations actually indicated that they provide information serviced through email and their website. This result is challenged however, by the indication that the means of information dissemination are mainly email and through the website in addition to publications, meetings, conferences and the media.

Respondents are mainly contacted by other NGOs with specific information requests. Governments and students contact almost half of respondents in search for information on child rights. The media, Academic institutions and the general public also refer to the child rights organisations surveyed as a source of information. However, when asked who the target audience of their information products are, members ranked academic institutions, researchers, students and the media almost at the bottom of the list. Additionally, only six respondents indicated that children and children's groups contact them. However, the majority of members identified children and children's group, together with NGOs, governments and the general public, as a target audience for their information products.

Networking: Formal and informal contacts

The majority of the members surveyed appear to be part of networks having international and/or national character. Regional and local networks are used by a slight lower number of members. Some respondents pointed out that they are part of networks that are also parts of other networks, which implies a larger flow of communication and information.

Working with networks is highly regarded as a very effective way of accessing additional information that would not be accessible otherwise. The ability to 'speak with one voice' is considered as a great benefit of working with networks as well as the ability to effectively reach larger audiences. One benefit identified is the possibility to reach communities that would not otherwise be accessible, as in the case of the Global Movement for Children, bringing grassroots issues to the international arena. It is also believed by some members that networks improve access to examples of best practice and strengthen social movements.

Problems associated to networking included time, co-ordination, conflicting agendas of some organisations, lack of resources and lack of specialised staff.

Some of these problems represent the usual challenges encountered by most organisations in their everyday work within their communities. The lack of resources and specialised staff working on information and in IT as well as the difficulties in accessing new communications technologies and weak local infrastructure represent an obstacle to the smooth flow of information for organisations in the South. Some lamented the difficulties in sustaining contacts and links within the networks for long periods of time.

Unidirectional information provision and lack of sensitivity to local content at the regional and international level is very much felt as a major challenge. Language barriers further exacerbate this problem.

Organisations from southern countries also lamented the lack of response and feedback from northern organisations overloaded with information.

Email and Internet communications are highly appreciated for their speed of delivery and economy. One interesting indication is the differentiation between international communications where e-mail and Internet are considered as the best communications method, and local and national communications where mail and phone have a predominant role. Meetings, seminars, workshops, and face-to-face contacts at local, national or international events are preferred by a large percentage of respondents who consider them highly effective. Publications and printed material are still highly regarded to exchange information within networks.

Chapter 3: Case Study Consultative Forums in Nepal and Kenya

Introduction

As a part of the second phase of the research programme, meetings with CRIN members in Nepal and Kenya took place in order to ascertain the information needs of, and challenges facing, constituent members. The organisations chosen to be part of this process were selected as a representative sample of the information network as a whole. The organisations that participated in the two countries were as follows:

In Kathmandu, Nepal on 23 and 24 January 2002:

- Centre for Legal Research and Resource Development
- Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN)
- Children at Risk Network
- Concerned for Children and the Environment
- Save the Children UK, Nepal Office
- UNICEF Regional Office for South (UNICEF ROSA)

In Nairobi, Kenya on 29 and 30 January 2002:

- African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANNPCAN)
- Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children
- Save the Children Sweden, Kenya Office
- Save the Children UK, Kenya Office
- UNICEF Kenya

Objective

The aim was to listen and learn from the experiences of members in order to identify examples of best practice, as well as appropriate strategies for information management and dissemination.

The meetings took place at a time when there are increased calls for a partnership between development and technology, when CRIN is aiming to get a first-hand understanding of the 'digital divide' that affects its members in places such as Kenya and Nepal.

Methodology

The methodology chosen for undertaking this phase of the research programme was a group Delphi methodology that was designed to encourage the maximum participation and consultation with the organisations that were present. The consultations brought together approximately six to eight representatives of CRIN's constituent membership in each location. This included staff of community-based organisations; national child rights coalitions; as well as international organisations such as UNICEF and Save the Children.

The process allowed participants to share their views and knowledge and to share their experiences. Each participant was provided with a sheet of themes in order to assist them on reflecting upon key issues:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Child Rights Information Network

- Information usage
- Regional issues and programmes
- Global movement for children
- The future of the global child rights community

The process consisted of individual reflection, small group discussion and finally moderated discussion of the whole group. This format thereby allowed for personal space for thought and comment, shared discussion between participants and conclusions, with the same process repeated on more than one occasion to allow reflection on the opinions and views gained in the first session. The second day again allowed reflection and discussion within a structured framework ultimately leading to the collection of shared view or consensus on the major issues. The final session on the second day allowed each of the participants to make a position statement on their own organisation, the work of CRIN, the wider child rights community and how they perceive the future.

Findings

The following were identified as major issues identified as a result of the consultation process, and reflect the concerns and interests of the child rights community about information use and sharing:

- Digital divide
- Information imperialism
- Conceptual clarity
- Relevance of materials
- Importance of CRIN
- Regions and communities of interest
- Donor driven resources
- Mixed modes of delivery
- Network and network of networks
- Two-way flow and ‘multi-flow’ of information

Digital divide

In both Nepal and Kenya the digital divide was a key issue, though perhaps the definition of the digital divide should not be seen as a shared definition with the one used in the ‘North’. Whilst the issues of telecommunications infrastructure, access to computing facilities and technical support are important, there is a very clear consciousness that the digital divide is only one of many divides facing the ‘South’. The significance of relative and real poverty place issues such as sanitation, health, quality and universal education and decent housing higher on the agenda than the immediate need for the Internet society.

If the issue of the digital divide is looked at as an information issue, then the concept of an ‘information divide’ (rather than one that is simply ‘digital’ and technological in nature) is perhaps the first issue to be addressed. Participants stated clearly that ‘the widening digital divide is posing a big challenge for information dissemination and there is a need to minimise the gap’ with a two-way information sharing being vital.

Also, participants suggested that alternative means and channels of information sharing should be explored that are more culturally sensitive and rooted in local community. Examples cited were community radio and street theatre.

Information imperialism

‘Information imperialism’ was a phrase coined by local participants in both consultation meetings. Information imperialism was identified as a problem associated with governments within states, which

were perceived as unwilling to provide the technologies needed for information to flow, and also failed to provide the most important and basic of information required to support the rights of the child. This was viewed as a denial of the freedom of expression and the rights to information. This concept of information imperialism was also identified as an international problem with the advent of the Internet introducing linguistic and cultural barriers.

Participants stated that ‘there should be awareness and promotion of regional and indigenous practices’, and that ‘context, language and culture should be taken into account while addressing child rights issues’. A particular comment defined how the North uses information to maintain power: ‘they hold information as power, they don’t share with the grassroots or the stakeholders’.

Conceptual clarity

The issue of conceptual clarity was one of the strongest messages about the use of information in the work on child rights to come out of this process. The idea of conceptual clarity as outlined by the group requires that materials and documents need to have a context that is culturally aware and sensitive to the community using it. This contrast with material that is currently being deluged on developing countries via a range of media including the Internet, which produce not only an information overload but also information that is laden with Northern cultural values.

The failure to recognise community visions of issues creates cultural irrelevance. One of the wishes of the participants was that information should be ‘culturally refined’ reflective of local community and ‘not only internationalised’.

An example of cultural conceptual clarity was given to demonstrate the way in which the ‘worst forms of child labour’ can be difficult to reconcile with the realities of experience working for ‘the best interests of the child’.

One participant explained further: ‘There are some very good practices that are already being implemented locally that are relevant to this concept as it is defined internationally.’

Another participant added to this that: ‘Currently this work is floating around at a certain level but the people who really need to know about it are not in the spectrum.’

Importance of CRIN

The importance of CRIN within the global and national, as well as local landscape of child rights was generally agreed upon. This despite the fact that there were divergent views of the exact mandate, structure and limitations of the information network, with members envisioning the central team as a far larger body than it actually is and with power to act far beyond the remit it has. Some participants were surprised to hear that a small team in London of three staff plus volunteers carries out the work of CRIN, also forgetting that CRIN is a network and therefore reliant upon the members to be active participants and not simply passive recipients. Regardless of the limitations, participants urged that the team of staff continue to take on current activities as well as more challenging roles.

Some participants felt that membership to CRIN should be formalised so that it could provide added legitimacy to members. Others saw CRIN’s role at strategic global and regional conferences, such as the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children, as very important. Again here CRIN could play an important role and represent its constituent membership.

Comments included:

- ‘CRIN is a useful tool’
- ‘CRIN encourages a “culture of sharing”’
- ‘CRIN should champion:
 - * Keeping the children’s agenda as a priority
 - * Lobbying to allocate more resources for children in state budgets
 - * Protecting children by States and the international community

Relevance of materials

There was an underlying concern that while at regional and national levels sharing of information is good, at the local level information usage for programme development is limited. Participants said that documentation is very poor and, ‘the lack of centralised information management systems at country level makes it difficult to access information for effective programming. The relevance and importance of sharing best practice and learning from colleagues was viewed as important, however it appeared that the reality was somewhat different, and that information sharing was partial at best.

Mechanisms for ensuring better sharing of information and capacity building within communities were regarded as necessary and the role of CRIN in this activity discussed. The failure of local information sharing was exemplified by the reality that availability of key documents and information, whilst available and translated, was not known or shared by all participants. One participant challenged: ‘In the interests of creating movements like Education for All and a Global Movement for Children do we learn something?’

In terms of content, priorities included:

- The need for more situational analyses and gathering of baseline information on issues affecting children
- Increased scope for awareness raising at the global level on regional instruments that are adapted from the UNCRC (ie. the African Charter and SAARC Conventions on trafficking and child welfare), but also national legislations such as the Children’s Act in Kenya.
- Priority should be given to the promotion of indigenous best practices.

Regions and communities of interest

There was considerable discussion around the concept of regions and communities, in relation to the work of CRIN the idea of what form a regional programme or activity might take. The participants clearly wanted some form of regional activity, however discussion on what constituted a region or community of interest was the subject of much debate, particularly with the advent of the Internet as a means of communication.

The discussion resulted in the questioning of what a region was and who decided, with the view expressed the holders of power define regions, but are these really the ‘regions’ that communities work in. For example the United Nations tends to view regions as sub-continental in scope, but at the local level regions are often viewed as sub-national or community-based in nature. The importance of sharing learning across countries was supported, yet there was a call for a more innovative approach to the definition of ‘regions’.

One participant said that regions ‘must not only be defined by geography but also by the issue that is being addressed, such as HIV/AIDS or child labour, and even by the mode of information sharing that is being used, such as email, Internet or meetings’.

To demonstrate this point, one participant explained that his informal network includes organisations working within his local geographic area, but he also outlined a global community of contacts that extended his network to China, South America and Europe.

This suggests that the 'community of practice' or 'community of interest' is a far more critical to successful network because it allows for greater flexibility in its application.

Donor driven resources

The problem of donors-driving agendas that may not always fit with local community needs or desires was raised. Here one participant explained that they were not receiving adequate support to work with street children as the agenda of the donor had changed specifically to HIV/AIDS. They explained that ironically many of their street children have AIDS but also other problems that needed to be dealt with in addition such as housing, education, health and trafficking. In the context of information this concept is equally important, the drive towards a wired south and lack of recognition of inherent strengths was cited as an issue, one that is important in planning and developing the CRIN network.

Mixed modes of delivery

Linked to the previous issue of donor driven resources discussion centred on the best approach that CRIN could take to working with the participants in the network. This was not a critical comment about CRIN, rather a valuing of the approach taken by CRIN in its participative approach and welcoming the sort of consultation that was being undertaken. The move by CRIN to use a wide variety of mediums of communication was welcomed, rather than an over-reliance on the use of the Internet. Participants also made a wide range of suggestions about the future communication modes that they would wish to see used.

There were calls to expand the use of CRINMAIL. Balanced with this was the recognition that there are limitations to getting access to the Internet because 'connections are expensive and unreliable, and then there is the issue of the skills required to run email and computers, which is a particular concern in field offices'.

Here there is evidence that users adapt existing products to suit their own needs. CRINMAIL, for example, is being 'repackaged' so that relevant news reaches those to whom it will be of interest. This is being done by 'cutting and pasting' only relevant items and forwarding these by email, or by printing out the CRINMAILs and sharing them with individuals who do not have email.

Network and network of networks

The perception of CRIN as global network and a main point of contact for child rights were reinforced. Participants commented that, in addition to acting globally the CRIN network is capable of taking on an increased role locally. Participants called for increased means for participation in the network, by community-based and national NGO organisations that are members to CRIN.

As examples, the idea was raised of focal points that would be active for the CRIN in country and within the community. These focal points could be tasked with the repackaging of information and the dissemination of products and services. This idea was tested in Nepal where participants informed on the recent development of a SAARC Conventions on trafficking and child welfare, and then supported the compilation of a CRINMAIL on this topic.

The reality that each participant was in fact a node in the network and already had networks of their own, which were routes for dissemination of information provided by the CRIN co-ordinating unit in London,

but also opportunities for bringing greater strength to the larger community by the sharing of the knowledge and information that these networks hold.

Two-way flow and 'multi-flow' of information

Discussions of two-way communications quickly moved beyond this to a multi-flow communication. CRIN provides one network and a means to disseminate and share information. Many organisations are part of other networks both formal and informal which provides a wider opportunity for dissemination and sharing of information and best practice. This concept is heavily linked to a number of others identified within this consultation, with the reality that CRIN is both the clearly identified membership, but also constituted and informed by the networks in which the members operate and through which information flows.

Conclusions and recommendations

The surveys and consultations shows that CRIN is perceived by its members as a very useful provider of information on child rights. CRINMAIL in English, CRIN Newsletter and the website at www.crin.org are the most popular services overall. In Southern countries CRINMAIL Special Session on Children replaces the website as the third most used service. The CRIN Newsletter remains the first point of contact and promotional tool.

Despite an increase in the access to electronic communications methods, it is interesting to note that members still express their interest and need for publications and hardcopies: the publications section in the website is the most used; a high percentage of respondents (74%) use CRIN to find out about child rights publications and 74.6% identified publications on child rights as the kind of information that would help their work. While CRIN seems to respond well to this need of its constituency, there appears to be room for improvement for the coordinating unit.

Respondents also expressed the need to access thematic information about child rights. CRIN has started to address this information need by re-launching its CRIN Newsletter as a thematic publication and creating Theme Desks on its website. The CRIN Newsletter in the new format has received an excellent feedback. The thematic desks a second channel to address this need of CRIN's membership could be expanded to respond adequately to the request of 74% of respondents.

Interestingly, and in line with the new regionalisation programme planned by CRIN (of which the consultations with members in Nepal and Kenya are a part) 67% of respondents identified national and regional information on child rights as the kind of information that would help their work. Such need was re-iterated in the comments section. There, some respondents suggested that the CRIN Newsletter have a section specifically dedicated to Southern voices.

In line with the conclusions of the 1999 Survey, CRIN members appear more focussed on retrieving information about child rights than actively providing information to CRIN. Sixteen percent of respondents, in fact, indicated that they contribute information to CRIN. However, 81% of respondents indicated that information on other organisations working on child rights would help their work. Similarly, while only 31% of respondents indicated that they used CRINMAIL to network with other members, and when they did contact others through CRIN, 82% obtained response, showing that CRIN membership would potentially be responsive to use CRIN more for networking. Quite interestingly, it is mostly Southern organisations that use CRINMAIL as a networking tool. These results seem to indicate that an important development path for CRIN goes in the direction of expanding its networking character.

Results also provide an interesting picture of information flows and sources. Respondents indicated that they access information mainly from institutional specialised sources such as UNICEF and Save the Children. However, respondents also indicated that they heavily rely on national and local NGOs for accessing information, showing that information flows mainly use local networks. This conclusion seems to be confirmed by the indication that face-to-face meetings, specifically workshops and training, represent the most popular form of information sharing. Interestingly, electronic forms such as websites and email lists were ranked last, especially by "Southern" respondents.

The survey sought to find out what are the information exchange methods that members use in their normal working environment. Since 1999, the percentage of members accessing Internet has dramatically increased going from 61 to 82 percent. Of these 57% are African members and 76% Asian. Overall, 69% of respondents visit the CRIN website. Email is now used by 89% of respondents and 72% use it on a daily basis. A higher percentage of African and Asian respondents have access to email than to the Internet. This probably explains in part the higher popularity of CRINMAIL among members. However, in returning the present survey, African and Asian respondents have opted for the use of email comparatively more often than European and North American organisations.

Both in the 1997 and the 1999 surveys language barriers emerged as a major obstacle for retrieving information. Efforts to address these barriers have been made since then through offering periodical CRINMAIL services in French and Spanish. The survey helped identify and map the language needs of CRIN constituency.

Generally, the survey indicates a satisfaction with CRIN, its services and products. Comments from members clearly reveal a high level of appreciation for the Child Rights Information Network. The survey, however, also shows that there is a need to move towards a more interactive and participatory model of communications between CRIN and its members and between members themselves. Results show that the potential for such shift exists in the network. For such model to become a reality CRIN will need to invest in enhancing relationship with its members and actively promote itself as a network as well as an information resource.

A selection of comments from members who responded to the CRIN Membership Survey 2001

General comments

CRIN's reputation is excellent: information is abundant, accurate and up-to-date. No other organisation seems to provide it. Never when contacting CRIN has this been in vain.

Angus Social Work Department, United Kingdom – Member No 40

*

I keep CRINMAIL in a separate folder when it arrives and copy parts to relevant people in house. I always draw the attention of visitors on CRIN.

Bernard van Leer Foundation, Netherlands – Member No 111

*

I am the only one in the org that uses CRINMAIL. It is very useful in informing policy discussions In the organisation and to encourage a shift towards a child rights focus within the health services we provide.

Southwark Primary Health Care Trust, United Kingdom – Member No 323

*

You offer an excellent service, thank you

Centre for Early Childhood Development, South Africa – Member No 162

*

Focus attention and discussion on what steps might be taken to strengthen and accelerate the reporting/monitoring of theUNCRC.

Children's Rights Alliance, Ireland – Member No 257

*

CRINMAIL is very informative. However create a corner for children's ideas. Need for more events from developing countries (Africa); Cover conferences on participation.

Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children (KAARC), Kenya – Member No 614

*

I believe that CRIN is doing the most commendable work and we do all we can to promulgate it. Your recent document for the special session which was cancelled, is an excellent document and will be of great use to many people I am full of praise for your activities.

Antarctica University, USA – Member No1599

*

CRIN provides info that we could not access otherwise.

Center for Child Rights, United Arab Emirates – Member No 921

Excellent material. Good content, which allows having a wide view of some of the issues relating to children at the global level. Sometimes I think the Newsletter should come out more often and articles should be longer.

Fundacion Creciendo Unidos, Colombia – Member No 468

*

Would like to receive CRINMAIL and newsletter more regularly. Would like to contribute to Newsletter.

Human Rights Development Project – Satkhira, Bangladesh – Member No 524

*

Website design to be improved to make it easier to consult.

UNICEF Philippines – Member No 1001

*

We would like to be part of CRINMAIL list and to receive the newsletter regularly. We would like also to get in touch with other organisations working with children to protect the environment.

Alliance des Enfants pour la Protection de l'Environnement, Cameroon – Member No 1605

*

Excellent job! Some additional suggestions: 1. Have a "best practice" database at the end of each thematic section on the website. 2. More sort options for search results on the website.

Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Human Rights, Austria – Member No 651

*

Support the participation of Members from 3rd world to Int'l conferences. Members training

Club UNESCO Ku Ntwala, Democratic Republic of the Congo – Member No 310

*

Both CRINMAIL and CRIN Newsletter tend to arrive too late, therefore we miss conferences and events we would like to attend

Children's Foundation, Ghana – Member No 245

*

We are very happy to receive CRIN's newsletter, but unfortunately it always arrives too late, leaving us with information out of date regarding events, publications and other CRIN related topics and issues

Conseil National pour la Protection de l'Enfance, Democratic Republic of the Congo – Member No 328

To know about events taking place ; Information about events should be sent early enough to allow time to take action.

Defence for Children International, Ghana – Member No 360

Comments on language barriers and regional content

It would be good to have a Spanish version of the website. Very often English represents an obstacle because of the translation work it involves

Comit de los Derechos del Nino Y Adolescente, Uruguay – Member No 317

*

There is little information about Latin America in general and its countries in particular

Fundacion Procal, Costa Rica – Member No 473

*

We consider the material very informative. More info would be good on the UNCRC in the Asia region, particularly on Afghanistan as a consequence of the war.

Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs, Bangladesh – Member No 971

*

CRINMAIL: the French version is very irregular and this makes it more difficult for us because we need to translate it from English into French. We have never received the Newsletter, which is an important tool to increase information flows. The website: it would be good to have a French version of the site. This would allow francophone visitors to better understand the information posted in the website.

Reseau Estudiantin pour les Droits de l'Homme, Democratic Republic of the Congo – Member No 824

*

Language is a great limitation to our work. There are few people who speak English.

Centros Comunitarios de Aprendizaje, Venezuela – Member No 197

*

There are no publications on Latin America in your Publication list

Fundación de Protección de la Infancia Danada por los Estados de Emergencia, Chile – Member No 472

*

Need for more news on regional events. A separate page supplement on India would be useful

Youth Council for Development Alternatives, India – Member No 1075

We use CRIN info to disseminate in Arab world. Language is important. ARC available to assist CRIN in this.

Arab Resource Collective (ARC), Cyprus – Member No 48

Comments on the CRIN Newsletter

Allot a page of the Newsletter for publishing the opinion of children from different countries

Human Development and Research Organisation, Bangladesh – Member № 1363

*

The Newsletter is very useful. We circulate it within our organisation. Have a page in Newsletter to introduce a member or introduce a donor organisation.

National Integrated Rural Development Agency, India – Member № 701

*

I wish to express our appreciation for availing your very informative newsletter, which helps to broaden knowledge about children issues globally. World Vision is proud to have been associated with this very enriching network.

World Vision, Kenya – Member № 1065

*

I found particularly interesting one of CRIN's latest newsletter (number 13 - Nov 2000), which covered the topic of children and macroeconomics – usually a theme for which one doesn't find much information. This opinion was shared by the Observatorio de Niñez de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia

Fundacion Rafael Pombo, Colombia – Member № 474

Comments on access to communications methods

We don't have a computer or a phone. We access our email at an Internet café and use a private phone line of a friend.

Droits de l'Homme sans Frontieres, Chad – Member № 640

*

CRINMAIL and the Newsletter need to reach also people with no email. Need for information from grassroots organisations to Newsletter and the website. The Newsletter needs to be more regular and hard copy distribution more effective.

Save the Children UK Nepal Office, Nepal – Member № 869

CRIN services are of most use to our organisation; CRIN should offer support to its members, on ICT, information, communication technology training, and have a coordinating office traditionally or locally in every country where CRIN members are based. Computers are also a major problem for CRIN members, particularly for those based in Africa.

We need traditional mechanisms like a co-ordinator in every CRIN membership country, and he/she should be trained on IT technology and on how to disseminate information and scholarship schemes.

We need computers at most of CRIN member offices, especially in Africa - even used computers would be of most use;

Need to look into more detail on information regarding: children and armed conflicts (child-soldiers and arms); sexual abuse of children (child rape cases); female circumcision; and HIV/AIDS in the African continent

Lixbey Environment Foundation, Ghana – Member No 648

*

CRIN useful for resource sharing and exploiting ICTs. Due to digital divide, CRIN role is to reach wider organisations and population and that communications tools are used for enhancing child rights. CRINMAIL should make more clarity on key issues to be applied in the field.

Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN), Nepal – Member No 233

*

CRIN Newsletter is the only tool for our work on facilitating the monitoring of the implementation of the UNCRC. We need more Newsletters and assistance from CRIN for ICT, e.g. through assigning a volunteer to work with us in Zambia for 1 to 2 years to facilitate the service.

Care for Children in Need, Zambia – Member No 140

Comments on networking

Good to keep us in contact with other organisations.

Foundation 'Raza Soarelui', Romania – Member No 459

*

Apart from exchanging information through web site, etc, CRIN can also organise workshops/meetings where members can share experiences and child rights advocacy approaches

Kuleana Centre for Children's Rights, Tanzania – Member No 624

*

Annexes

Attached are copies of materials sent to CRIN members, which were made available in English, French and Spanish. These included the following:

- CRIN Membership Survey
- CRIN Second phase survey
- Reminder card



c/o Save the Children 17 Grove Lane London SE5 8RD United Kingdom
Tel +44.(0)20.7716.2240 Fax +44.(0)20.7793.7628 Email info@crin.org
Visit our website at www.crin.org

TO: ALL CRIN MEMBERS

RE: MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

DATE: 5 OCTOBER 2001

Dear 'Main CRIN Contact'

Greetings from the Coordinating Unit of CRIN in London.

We are contacting you today in the hope that you will take the time to complete CRIN's Membership Survey. Our records indicate that you are the Main CRIN Contact with your office, which among other things means that we look to you to keep your organisation's information up to date.

The last time membership survey was conducted in 1999, and we feel it is time to ensure that we are still meeting your information needs. The survey will be sent to all members, which now numbers nearly 1,200 organisations and individuals working for child rights all around the world.

The Membership Survey is available in English, French and Spanish. We apologise if it has not been sent to you in the correct language. Please contact us if you prefer to get it in another language, and we will resent the materials.

◆

Le étude des membres de CRIN est disponible en anglais, en français et en espagnol. Nous regrettons si ce document n'ait pas été distribué dans la langue correcte. Nous vous prions de nous contacter si vous préféreriez le recevoir dans une autre langue. Dans ce cas, nous vous renverrons ces matériaux.

◆

El estudio de los miembros se puede conseguir en inglés, francés y español. Nos disculpamos si no se envió en el idioma correcto. Si los prefieren en otro idioma, por favor contactenos y le reenviaremos los documentos.

Here are instructions for completing and returning the survey:

1. Print out the Membership Survey and complete it.
 - a. The survey should be completed by the main CRIN contact at your organisation.
 - b. Only one Membership Survey per organisational member should be completed.

2. Return the completed survey, **no later than 16 November 2001**.



By mail: Daniela Reale
Child Rights Information Network (CRIN)
c/o Save the Children
17 Grove Lane London
SE5 8RD United Kingdom



By fax: +44.(0)20.7793.7628

If you have questions, please contact Daniela Reale at the CRIN office. Alternatively, either Laura Greenwood or Andrea Khan should be able to assist. Our email address is info@crin.org, and our phone number is +44.(0)20.7716.2240.

Sincerely thanks,

Andrea Khan, *Coordinator*
Child Rights Information Network

Eddie Halpin, *Reader in Information Management*
School of Information Management
Leeds Metropolitan University

Section A. Introduction

The following survey has been developed as part of a larger research programme undertaken by the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) and Leeds Metropolitan University. Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board, our organisations are currently asking the following questions:

1. What are the information management needs of CRIN and constituent members; and how are these needs best addressed using traditional mechanisms and new technologies?
2. What information systems and methods of information exchange are most suitable for a global, diverse and specialist children's human rights organisation to adopt and use in meeting specific goals and responding to disparate requirements of members?

The overall objectives of the research includes the following:

- To identify information needs of CRIN and constituent members
- To examine current information systems and information exchange methods
- To evaluate information flow and usage by CRIN; between CRIN and members; and by members and their associates in the child rights community
- To analyse perceived success of CRIN in meeting goals
- To identify possible strategies for future information management with CRIN

The research is expected to produce a series of relationship diagrams situating CRIN in association with other child rights and human rights organisations. The success of CRIN in meetings key objectives will be examined and recommendations on future strategies will be provided. Additionally the research will provide a model of information management for other human rights organisations.

Findings of the Second User Survey: March 1999.

- The second annual user survey was sent to 700 members and 193 surveys were returned (27 percent return rate).
- The CRIN Newsletter is the most widely used and known product, followed by Membership Directory and CRINMAIL.
- CRIN members prefer to access information that is sent to them rather than seek information from the Web.
- User preferences underlined the value of CRINMAIL as a means of disseminating information and as a promotional tool for the website.
- There is a continued need for hardcopy material as well as further development of electronic production and dissemination.
- Two products have particularly good reach in the South: CRINMAIL (delivered by email); and CRIN Newsletter.
- When asked to comment on the most effective methods of exchanging information: 61 percent ranked face-to-face meetings, conferences and workshops as the most effective method of exchanging information followed by mail, telephone and fax.
- Southern organisations relied more heavily on mail in comparison with Northern organisations that relied heavily on fax.
- Only 7 percent identified email as the most effective means of communication and there was no difference between Northern and Southern organisations.
- A significant number of organisations are investigating or introducing email and the linkages with the Internet.

Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) Membership Survey, August 2001

Section B. Your contact details

Name of person completing form

Date

Name of organisation:

Organisation ID (for internal use only)

Acronym/abbreviation:

Postal address (include country):

Tel (include country codes):

Fax (include country codes):

Email address for general enquiries:

Website address:

Name of main CRIN contact
in your organisation:

Email address
of main CRIN contact:

Question 3: Does your organisation contribute information to CRIN?

- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No, go to question 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know, go to question 5 |
|--|

Question 4: If you answered 'Yes', then please place an X in the relevant box below to show how you contribute information to CRIN. *Please tick as many as apply.*

- To update your organisational profile that is displayed on CRIN's website under "CRIN members".
- To send information about reports and publications by your organisation.
- To send information about events (workshops, training courses, conferences etc).
- To send news.
- To send information in order to 'contact'/network with other CRIN members.
- Other (please explain): _____

Question 5: Which languages are used by your organisation? *Indicate this by placing an X in relevant box. Please tick as many as apply.*

- Spanish
- French
- English
- Other (please specify): _____

Question 6: Please indicate if your organisation obtains information about child rights from the following. *Indicate this by placing an X in the relevant box. Please tick as many as apply.*

- UNICEF and other UN agencies
- Save the Children
- Academic institutions
- National child rights coalitions
- NGO Group for the CRC
- NGO Committee on UNICEF
- International NGOs
- Government (local or national);
- Local/national NGOs;
- Media;
- Other (please explain): _____

Question 7: How do you share information with others? *Please indicate by placing an X in the relevant box. Please tick as many as apply.*

- Workshops/trainings
- Resource centres
- Through our own publications (reports, books, newsletters).
- Through our own website
- Through our own email discussion lists
- Networks
- Public education campaigns
- Other (please explain): _____

Question 8: What sort of information would help your work? *Please indicate needs by placing an X in the relevant box. Please tick as many as apply.*

- Details of publications and reports
- Information about other organisations working on children's human rights
- Information on violations and breaches of children's human rights
- National information about child rights
- Regionalised information about child rights
- IReports specifically from NGO Group for the Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Reports specifically from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Thematic information about child rights
- Other (please specify): _____

Question 9: What services or methods of information delivery would help your work? *Please indicate needs by placing an X in the relevant box. Please tick as many as apply.*

- Capacity building and training in information management and/or IT
- Legal advice
- Provision of information in other languages
- Technical advice
- Translation service and support
- Other (please specify): _____

Question 10: What are your organisation's reasons for using CRIN's services? *Please mark all boxes that apply.*

- To contact other organisations
- To disseminate information from my organisation
- To exchange ideas and experience
- To find out about child rights events
- To find out about publications and research
- To inform my organisation's research
- To inform policy discussions
- To learn from others
- To request information
- To support lobbying
- Other (please specify): _____

Question 11: Please indicate if your organisation has access to the following, and indicate frequency of use.

	Access		Frequency of use				
	Yes	No	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Infrequently	Never
Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phone lines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fax	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email lists, and email discussion groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teleconferencing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Videoconferencing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronic mailing lists or email lists other than CRIN's email list services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 12: CRIN encourages information sharing. Does your organisation distribute CRINMAIL **within** your organisation?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
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Question 13: Does your organisation distribute CRINMAIL **outside** your organisation?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
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Sections D to Section F of the questionnaire will concentrate specifically on individual information services provided by CRIN.

Section D. About CRINMAIL

Question 14: Have you used CRINMAIL to 'contact'/network with other CRIN members?

Yes No, go to question 16 Don't know, go to question 16

Question 15: If you answer 'yes' above, then did you receive response?

Yes No Don't know

Section E. About the CRIN Newsletter

Question 16: Do you receive the CRIN Newsletter? (Note the last issue was CRIN Newsletter: Special Session on Children (Edition 14))

Yes No, go to question 18 Don't know, go to question 18

Question 17: Which sections do you find relevant? *Please indicate using the numbers 1, 2 or 3 where 1 indicates 'very relevant', 2 indicates 'relevant' and 3 indicates 'not relevant'.*

	Relevance	Don't know
Thematic articles	1 / 2 / 3	<input type="checkbox"/>
News round-up	1 / 2 / 3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publications	1 / 2 / 3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Calendar of events	1 / 2 / 3	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 18: Do you translate any part of the CRIN Newsletter?

Yes No Don't know

Section F. Other

Question 19: Please make any additional comments about CRINMAIL, the CRIN Newsletter, the CRIN website or any other service here.

Section G. How to return the survey

Thank you for completing this survey. Your views are extremely important to the further development of CRIN services.

*Please return the completed survey, **no later than 16 November 2001:***

*By mail: Daniela Reale
Child Rights Information Network (CRIN)
c/o Save the Children
17 Grove Lane London
SE5 8RD United Kingdom*

By fax: +44.(0)20.7793.7628

For more information about this survey, you may phone us at +44.(0)207.716.2240 or email us at dreale@crin.org or info@crin.org

Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) Survey Second Phase

Dear CRIN member,

We are writing to you in relation to the programme of research that the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) is currently conducting on information management in the child rights community. Enclosed with this letter is a survey, which we would like you to complete and return to us by **22 March 2002**.

This survey represents the **second stage** of a research programme undertaken by CRIN and Leeds Metropolitan University, which is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board [AHRB].

The research, which focuses on how CRIN members manage information to support their work in child rights, is expected to produce a series of relationship diagrams situating CRIN in association with other child rights and human rights organisations. The success of CRIN in meeting key objectives will be examined, and recommendations on future strategies will be provided. Additionally the research will provide a model of information management for other human rights organisations.

The first phase of the research saw over 1,200 questionnaires sent to all CRIN members. To date, over 250 questionnaires have been returned (21% return rate), providing important insight into our members' information needs, the information flow and usage between CRIN, its members and their associates in the child rights community.

This second questionnaire is being sent to **65 CRIN members** who took part in the first phase of the survey, providing a representative sample of 5% of CRIN members. Many also took part in consultations in Kenya and Nepal. The representative sample is based on the type, size and geographical location of member organisations, to match the overall profile of CRIN's membership as closely as possible. In this way, it is hoped that the varying information capacities of CRIN's diverse membership will be reflected in the research results and final recommendations.

Using analysis of the data collected in phase 1, this second survey aims to identify how an information system within an organisation works, examining the regular and anticipated flows of information through the organisation and how this information is used. It also aims to examine user perceptions on the success of the systems, user needs and how they might be met.

In completing this survey, we would encourage you to think about information systems and information flows in their broadest terms, from oral communication to letter writing to video conferencing from sharing information during a meal break to disseminating a newsletter.

If you feel that other members of your organisation would be able to input extra information to the questionnaire, we would encourage you to consult with them to complete this Second Survey.

The overall objectives of this phase of the research are as follows:

- * To further evaluate members' information flows and how they are used by members and their associates in the child rights community. This will include information flows in the

context of both formal and informal networks, including all means of communications (e.g. Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), traditional communication techniques, audiovisual means etc.) and will also encourage analysis about internal (within an organisation) and external information exchange.

- * To use the results of this survey to improve how the CRIN Coordinating Unit exchanges information with its members and to improve the participation of the members in the network through effective and equal information exchange.
- * To feed the results into the CRIN regionalisation programme

The following questionnaire considers 5 thematic areas:

1. **Background information about the organisation:** Name, mandate and objectives.
2. **Information content and acquisition:** Content of the information and how it is received.
3. **Information management:** Managing, storing and retrieving information.
4. **Information dissemination:** Sending out and sharing information.
5. **Networking:** Formal and informal contacts.

We encourage you to participate in the second phase of the research project by completing and returning this survey by **22 March 2002**. Your input at this stage is critical, as this research will have a considerable impact on the future direction of Child Rights Information Network.

You can return your completed questionnaires by e-mail, fax or post to:



By e-mail: dreale@crin.org

Or

info@crin.org



By fax: +44.(0)20.7793.7628



By mail: **Daniela Reale**
Child Rights Information Network (CRIN)
c/o Save the Children
17 Grove Lane London
SE5 8RD United Kingdom

With warm regards
CRIN

1. Background information about organisation

1.1 Name of your organisation

.....

1.2 How many staff members are there in your organisation?

1.3 Please outline the mandate and objectives of your organisation, including key areas of specialisation.

.....
.....
.....

1.4 What year was your organisation established?

1.5 Are there dedicated members of staff/department work specifically on information/communication issues including media relations?

- Yes
- No, go to question 1.7

1.6 If replied yes to question 1.5, please tell us who deals with the following:

Job Title(s)

Publishing
Retrieving Information
Storing Information
Disseminating Information
Media
Communications

1.8 What is your working language?

1.9 Do you have a copy of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in your working language?

- Yes
- No

2. Content and acquisition of information

2.1 How does your work relate to the implementation or monitoring of the Convention on the rights of the child?

.....
.....
.....

2.2 Does your organisation have information requirements in any of the following themes?

Indicate this by placing an X in the relevant box. Please tick as many as apply

- Children in care, fostering and adoption
- Child labour and working children
- Children in armed conflict
- Reporting and monitoring on the CRC
- Children with disabilities
- Children and education
- Environment and habitat
- Children and health
- Children living with HIV/AIDS
- Individual cases of violations
- Children in conflict with the law
- Children and the media
- Participation of children in decision making
- Refugee and unaccompanied children
- Sexual exploitation of children
- Children working and living on the street

2.4 Do you feel that you have sufficient information on child rights to keep you up to date on current issues at the international and national level?

- Yes, go to question 2.6
- No

2.5 If you answered NO to question 2.4, what information do you need that you are currently **unable** to access?

.....
.....
.....

2.6 Who do you contact for information and through what means do you acquire that information?
 (Indicate this by specifying your contact in the first column and then placing an X in the relevant box. Please tick as many as apply)

Contacts	Email	Phone	Fax	Mail	Website	Meetings	E-groups	Specialised Literature	Journals	Other (please specify)
UNICEF and other UN agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Save the Children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academic Institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National child rights coalitions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NGO Group for the CRC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NGO Committee on UNICEF	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
International NGOs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Government (local or national)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local/national NGOs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.7 How often do you contact your sources of information? (Please indicate frequency for each source listed in 2.6)

Contacts	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Infrequently	Never	Not Applicable
UNICEF and other UN agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Save the Children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academic Institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National child rights coalitions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NGO Group for the CRC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NGO Committee on UNICEF	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

International NGOs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Government (local or national)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local/national NGOs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.8 How do you verify that the info you receive is accurate and reliable?

.....

.....

.....

3. Information Management

3.1 How does your organisation collect published and unpublished documents?

	Yes	No	Number of users per month
Library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Resource Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intranet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronic filing system: CD Roms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronic filing system: Shared drive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paper filing system: personal files	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paper filing system: files at organisational level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.2 Does your office have a classification system in place? *Please explain*

.....

.....

4. Information Dissemination

4.1 What information services are offered by your organisation?

.....
.....
.....

4.2 How do you disseminate information? *Please explain*

.....
.....
.....

4.3 Who contacts your organisation with specific information requests?

.....
.....
.....

4.4 Who are the target audiences of your products and services?

.....
.....
.....

4.5 In your experience, what are the best systems in exchanging information?

.....
.....
.....

4.6 What problems do you encounter in exchanging information?

.....
.....
.....

4.7 Do you disseminate information in other languages? If yes, in which other language(s) and what response did you expect/receive?

.....
.....
.....

5. Networking and communities

5.1 Is your organisation part of any networks (not including CRIN) or communities and at which level do these networks/ communities operate? *Please give details*

.....
.....
.....

5.2 What are the benefits and the disadvantages of interacting with these networks/ communities?

.....
.....
.....

5.3 Does your organisation specifically link with information professionals or networks to share knowledge about communications practices?

.....
.....
.....

5.4 What challenges does your organisation experience in networking or in working in your community?

.....
.....
.....

5.5 In your experience, which are the communications methods that best help you network and why?

.....
.....
.....

Dear CRIN Member

We are contacting you to ensure that you have received the Membership Survey. The survey will enable us to find out about the information management needs of our members so it is important that we hear from you. Please complete and return the survey to us.

Deadline: 30 November 2001

To receive a new copy of the survey, please contact the CRIN Office. The survey is available in English, French and Spanish, and it can be found as a pdf under: www.crin.org/docs/resources/crin-survey-en.pdf

Reminder

CRIN Membership Survey



c/o Save the Children UK
17 Grove Lane
London SE5 8RD
United Kingdom

Phone: +44.(0)207.716.2240
Fax: +44.(0)207.793.7628
Email: info@crin.org
Website: www.crin.org





**Child Rights Information
Network (CRIN)**

c/o Save the Children
17 Grove Lane
London SE5 8RD
United Kingdom

