

# Mid-Term Review of ChildHub





# MID-TERM REVIEW OF CHILDHUB

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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ChildHub ordered a mid-term review on September 2016, which was conducted in the following 3 months. The study applied mixed method, which combines quantitative (survey) and qualitative research (narrative interviews and a focus group). Moreover, participatory approach has been taken, thus, stakeholders of ChildHub actively participated in forming the design, collecting empirical data and understanding the results.

The study aimed to understand how the project objectives can be transformed in activities and processes which will empower the ChildHub members, will strengthen their ownership of the project and will lead to increasing sustainability. The study observed to what extent ChildHub fulfils its goals, the user experiences of the members, the strengths and weaknesses of the ChildHub, the barriers and opportunities for further development.

First and foremost, the study has found that ChildHub is highly valued among the members. On average, every goal of ChildHub was rated above 8 points in 10-points scale. Thus ChildHub is able to fulfil its goals, namely, it successfully manages to foster knowledge, connect professionals and promote regional expertise. However, there are still ways to improve the program to achieve these goals to a higher extent.

The effect of online approach is twofold. On the one hand it enables quick and easy way to connect, learn and find information. Flexibility gains further importance as ChildHub members face the problem of finding a work-life-ChildHub balance. In certain cases the workplaces do not support the use of the Hub, so ChildHub should make it available after work. In other cases, people have no time after work due to family duties. 43% of the respondents said that the lack of time hinders their participation. Recognising the needs for flexibility is highly important and the online platform provides a great solution for this.

On the other hand, members said that the online platform created a community, where the members were relatively unknown for each other, and thus *"there is not an atmosphere of trust"*. Even though networking was possible, it creates rather weak ties. These weak ties sometimes are not sufficient for developing good working peer

to peer support system. There were several suggestions how to deepen the relationships. First and foremost, online discussion should be supported by offline meetings as well. In general, interviewees wished to have more face-to-face meetings. Besides the recent offline meetings, several interviewees suggested having study visits as well. This findings support the fact the recently introduced study visit program should be continued and promoted. Furthermore, peer to peer support could be strengthened by a mentorship program and members should be more visible on the webpage.

The regional approach is also twofold. On the one hand it gives an opportunity for English speaking members to connect foreign professionals and promote regional expertise. On the other hand, considerable number of child protection professionals do not speak English. Language barriers are especially pronounced for older users, social workers and those professionals who are not that active on ChildHub. As ChildHub has recognized it even before this study, non-English speaker professionals should be also involved. As one interviewee pointed out *"it would not work that we would have only English speakers because it would not be democratic enough"*. However, this goal requires much more effort than it was recently done. First of all, ChildHub needs to translate more documents. Secondly, they should make certain online learning tools available in other languages as well. For example, one suggested putting subtitles on webinars, similarly to TED videos. Thirdly, the webpage should be translated to Russian as well, since the older generation in the region speaks Russian more than English. Finally, it would be very important to emphasize that the webpage is not only in English as it is not clear for a lot of professionals.


In general, increasing the knowledge about the ChildHub still requires more effort. People said this program is so complex that it can be difficult for some to use it. ChildHub should educate the professionals who might consider to join the Hub, however, even recent members need motivation and further education of the use of the ChildHub. There are widespread misbeliefs about ChildHub. First, some professionals think that the Hub is only in English. Second, others think that the webinars are only live streamed and audience cannot watch the broadcast latter on. Third, some believed that there is no mapping of participants on the website, however, indeed there is. Moreover, there are others who find the webpage too difficult. As a result, more promotion and education about the program should solve a lot of barriers. For example, one suggested putting a video on the front page about the webpage and ChildHub. Finally, ChildHub should promote the program among

the heads of child protection institutes, because certain institutes do not support their employees who try to participate in the ChildHub.

The review has pointed out that online resources and library are the most important part of ChildHub. Approximately 80% of the respondent found these activities very important. People said that this activity contributed the most to their professional development. They would further go this way and upload more and more documents in order to obtain everything in one place. However, they would improve the search engine to make it easier to find required information. This would be very important as searching for particular documents was one of the main activities on the website. Other online activities received a lot of criticism, especially those exposed to the language barriers as they are not translated to the local language. The online learning opportunities often experience technical problems, which hinder active participation. Moreover, they are mostly during the working time, when some members have no access to videos. Finally, the forum does not work well as people are not responding to posed questions. This could be improved with a notification system.

Several other suggestions were proposed how to develop ChildHub. Some suggested developing a mobile application to make it more flexible. Others emphasized that ChildHub should be linked more to Facebook or even copy some elements of Facebook (i.e. notifications). Besides Facebook, other websites or organizations in the field of child protection should be more connected to ChildHub. ChildHub should collect information from other websites. Moreover, it could also initiate some projects on what members could work on together. Finally, ChildHub should start to make research about what topics the members are interested in.

Most of the members think that the website would be sustainable, however, they were concerned that without the ChildHub staff the webpage would not be updated. *"It is like a blog. If you post the people will read it. But if you do not post anything they are not going to read the blog. You need someone who post continuously or it dies".* Therefore, it is crucial to create an active community that is not only reading the news, but also sharing updates. Also as it was emphasized, the online meetings without offline meetings cannot guarantee an environment for peer-to-peer support. As offline meeting is not sustainable without the staff the visibility and trust should be enhanced in the online part as well. Finally, translations will not be done probably without the ChildHub staff's contribution, which would also hinder sustainability.



The members not only support the goals of ChildHub, but they also feel empowered in the ChildHub community. 70% of the respondent felt empowered. However, doctors and primary or secondary school teachers were lagging behind in feeling of empowerment, since only 30% of these people felt empowered. Giving this latter group a voice would be important as they are also in the front line in child protection.

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## 2. METHODOLOGY

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Mixed method has been used for evaluating the ChildHub project. In other words, our research design combined both quantitative and qualitative data sources. Traditionally, these two methods are divided into a more positivist and a more interpretivist approach. While quantitative data is considered to provide numeric and generalizable conclusions, qualitative analysis can offer rich observational details. Despite the initial reluctance of some researchers, an increasing number of studies are considering the combination of these two methods beneficial for investigation (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). By and large, the present paper applies convergent parallel design for the empirical analysis. This means that the quantitative and the qualitative phrase are conducted at the same time, independently from each other. This design appears to be the most suitable choice over the various possible mixed method types because of the time constraints and the validity of each phrase was ensured by participatory approach rather than making any phrase superior over the other (Király et al., 2014; Creswell, Plano & Clark, 2011).

This research takes a participatory approach as each step was supervised by the stakeholder of the ChildHub community. By and large, the stakeholders were involved in three stages of this research. First, the stakeholders were asked to discuss and modify the research questions, the survey and the interview guide. This step enhanced the validity of the questions and draw the focus on relevant questions. Second, the stakeholders have conducted some of the interviews. This made it possible to interview even the hard to reach community members, who, for example, does not speak English. Finally, the stakeholders were asked to reflect and modify the first draft of this report. By that we were able to improve accuracy and relevance of the report. In general, the goal of this approach was to empower to participants and give a voice to the community members. (Campilan, 2000; Chambers, 2009; Guijt & Gaventa 1998; Guijt, 2014; Zukoski & Luluquisen 2002)

All together three methodologies have been applied: (1) quantitative survey results, (2) qualitative interviews and (3) a focus group discussion lead by



stakeholders in a resource persons' meeting. The field work was carried out between September and November in 2016.

Together 179 ChildHub members answered the survey, which was sent to all ChildHub members. The survey was available in English and it was translated to all ChildHub languages (Albanian, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croat-Bosnian, Romanian). Thanks to translation, everyone from the participant countries had a chance to express their opinion. Although, we need to emphasise that a self-selection probably played a major role. Therefore, it is expected that rather those filled out the questionnaires who were already more engaged in the ChildHub community. (See the survey questions in the Appendix)

All together 23 interviews were conducted. 13 of them were carried out by selected resource people in their home country in their own language (one Albanian made an interview with a Bulgarian colleague as well) and the rest were made by the lead researcher in English. The resource people made interviews in Albania, Romania and Bulgaria, whereas the lead researcher conducted 2-2 interviews in the rest of the ChildHub countries. One interview was approximately between 30 to 45 minutes. (See the interview guide in the Appendix).

The focus group discussion took place in the framework of the Sub-regional meeting of resource persons from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia in Belgrade. The focus group discussion was attended by 11 participants (Resource Persons from the three countries). This discussion was the last segment of their two-day meeting. In 90 minutes the group discussed about their thoughts, experiences and recommendations for the project.

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## 3. ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTION

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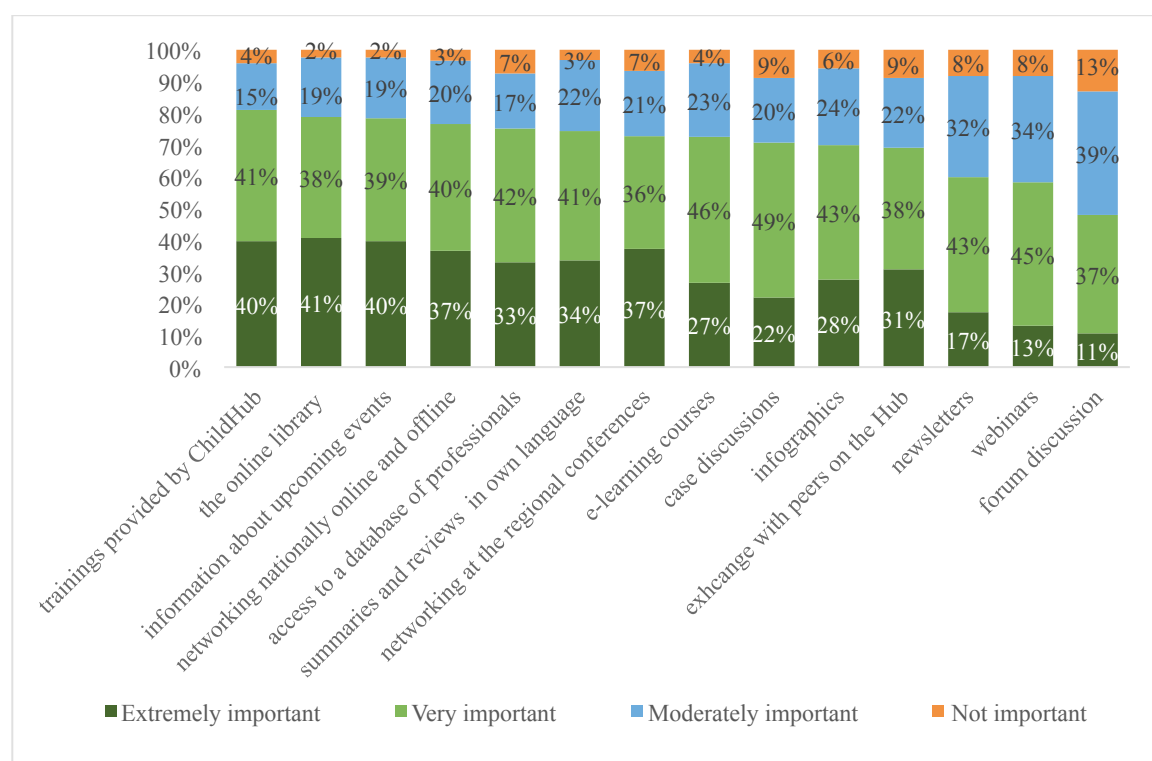
### 3.1 Quantitative results

First of all, participants were asked to rate ChildHub activities in terms of contribution to their professional development (See in Figure 1.). Among all activities the trainings (81% found it very important), online library (79% found it very important) and information about the upcoming events (79% found it very important) were the most popular activities. The high rating of online library is an important finding as this activity can be sustained even after the program stops. Moreover, high rate of people expressed that they need summaries and reviews translated to their own language.

There is a strong need for having a national ChildHub besides international cooperation. Respondents have found the national networking slightly more important than the international one.. However, considerable percentage of respondent, 37 % of them, have emphasized that international networking is extremely important.

Surprisingly, online learning interactive applications are somewhat underrated compared to other activities. Case discussions, webinars and forum discussions seem to play a minor role in the participants' development. To unfold the reason of this, we need to rely on the qualitative part of the study, so virtual learning opportunities are further investigated in the next chapter.

*Figure 1: Rating ChildHub activities in terms of their contribution to professional development*



The popularity of some activities highly depends on the respondent's age. One would assume that young people appreciate more the online applications, however, it seems like that the youngest group is rather not interested in these options. However, the middle age (34-44 years old) and the older participants (45 years old or older) benefit the most from the online applications. 37.5% of the 55 y.o. or older said that webinars were extremely important for their professional development. This can be due to the fact that offline courses are more available for young people (i.e. university), whereas older participants have limited access to learning opportunities.

Translation of the documents are required mostly by the middle age group (34-44 years old) and older respondents (45 or older), whereas young people underrated the importance of having translated documents. At the same time older people (45-64 years old) are less interested in networking in regional conferences, whereas younger people are extremely interested in these options.

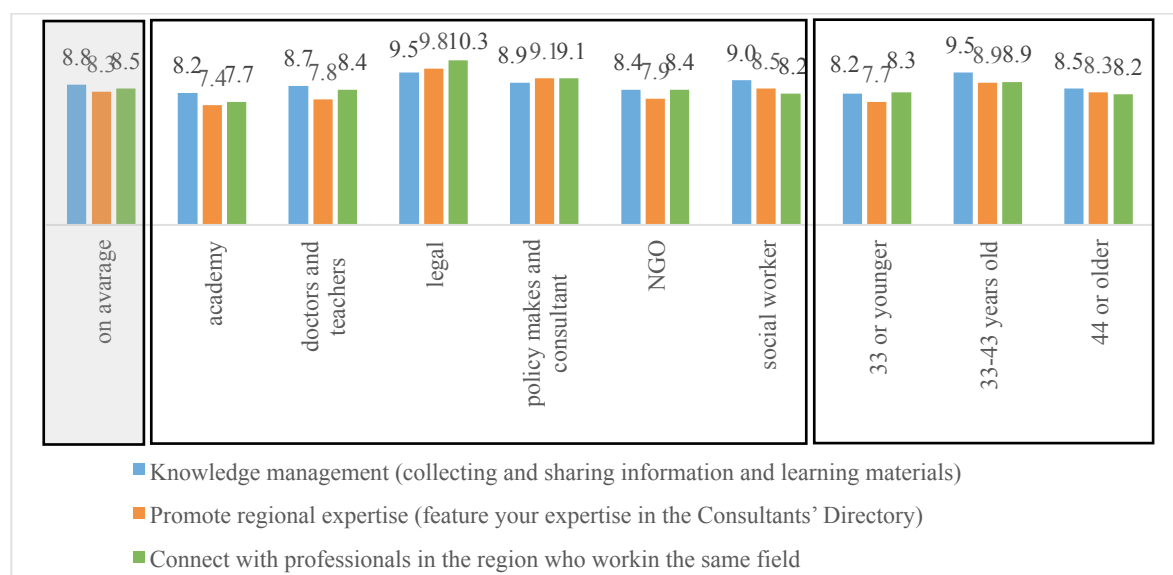
These two findings can be explained by the fact that older population has relatively low level of English proficiency in the region.

Activities are rated differently among professionals. For example, case discussions are particularly important for social workers as 79% of them said that this activity was extremely or very important for their professional development. Whereas people working at NGOs are highly interested in having access to the open library.

Finally, the ratings of activities differ among activity status. Those who are not that active, meaning they did not visit ChildHub in the last month, consider online library, case discussions and reports in own languages as the most important activities. This results shows that case discussion can truly attract not active members. Moreover, high request for translation shows that not active members might participate less due to language problems.

In the next question we asked the respondents to evaluate how much ChildHub meets certain goals (See in Figure 2.). On average, there is a widespread belief that ChildHub lives up to all of its goals; it successfully manages knowledge, promotes regional expertise and connects professionals in the region.

Figure 2: Rating how much ChildHub meets with its goals?



In all categories the most satisfied are legal professionals, and the less satisfied are people from the academy. Therefore, ChildHub should strengthen its academic background. Moreover, in certain occupations the review of connecting professionals are relatively low. For example, social workers were not satisfied with the networking opportunities, but they rated all other goals quite well.

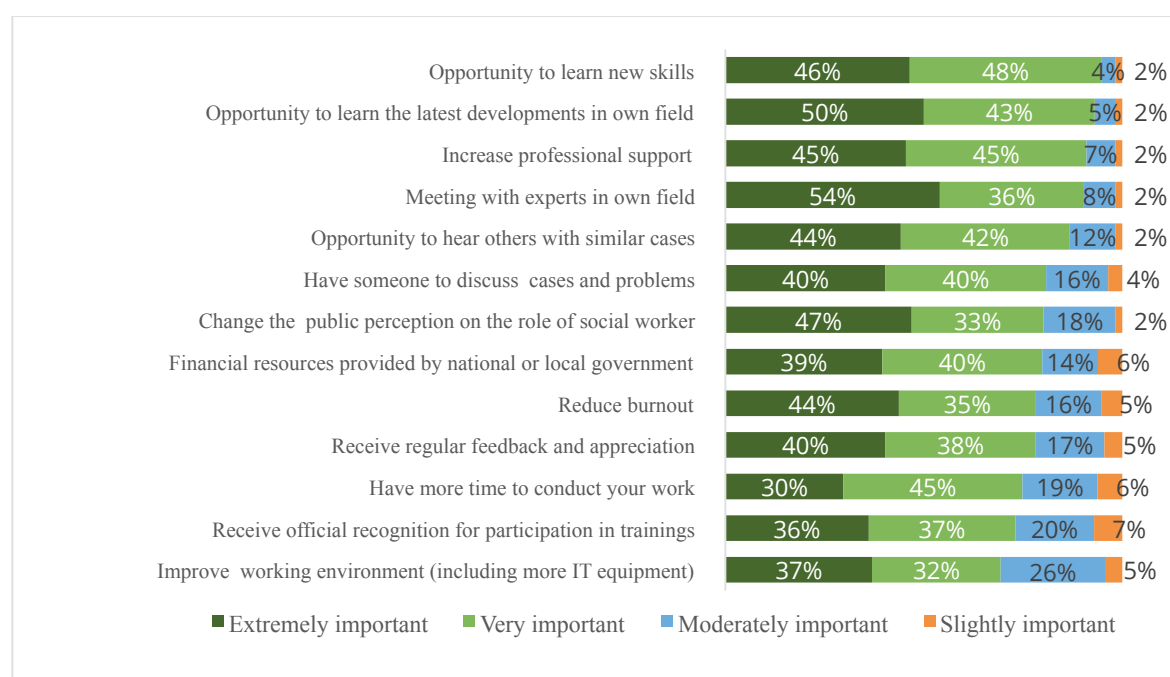
Age also influences the review of ChildHub. The middle age population feels the most satisfied in terms of the given goals. Young people are the less satisfied with knowledge management and promoting regional expertise. The reason of this is again, that they might have access other channels at the university.

In the mid-term review the professional needs were also mapped. There is a high demand for learning and networking. These are exactly the main goals of ChildHub. Fortunately, these professional needs are considered to be more important than those which are out of the scope of ChildHub (such as having more time to work or improve working environment). This result also highlights the fact that ChildHub goals are indeed demanded among the child protection professionals.

The top two needs relate to knowledge management and only after that comes networking. However, the difference between these two types of needs is only

moderate. 94% of the respondents wish to have an opportunity to learn new skills, whereas 90% of the respondents would like to increase professional support. Therefore, one can conclude that networking is almost as demanded as knowledge management.

*Figure 3: Importance of professional needs*

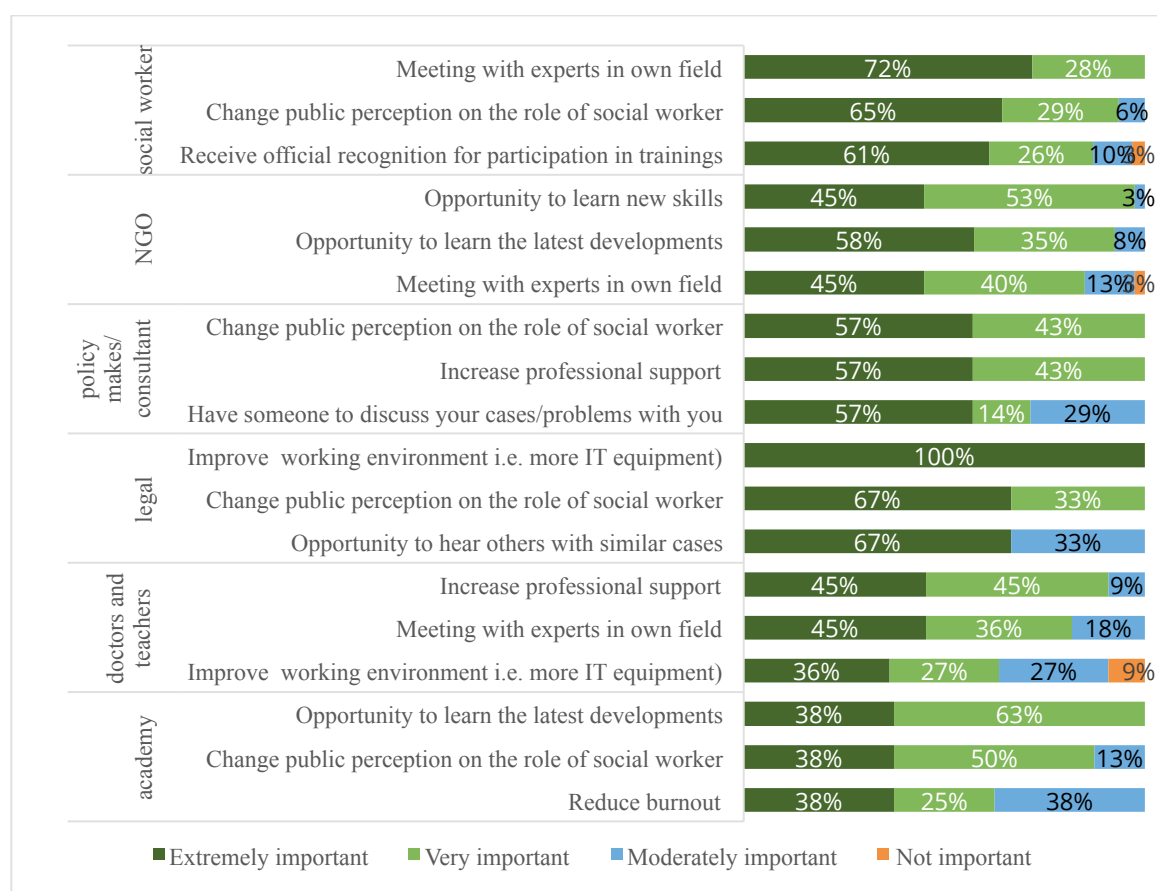


It is especially young people that are interested in networking. 64% of the respondents under 33 years think that meeting with experts are extremely important. In contrast, this measure is only 55% for 34 to 43 years old people and 37% for 44 or older respondents. However, there is no age difference in terms of needs for learning new skills or latest development in their field. Also needs differ among activity status in ChildHub. Those who are less active said that they needed to have opportunity to learn about the latest development and meet with experts.

At the same time, the most important needs are highly occupation specific. For example, academic people are not that interested in networking, but in developing themselves. Whereas, policy-makers, consultants, doctors, teachers and legal professionals are rather looking for networking. Social workers and

NGO professionals are equally interested in learning and networking. Furthermore, social workers are very much looking for trainings which provide official recognition.

Figure 4: Top 3 needs by occupation



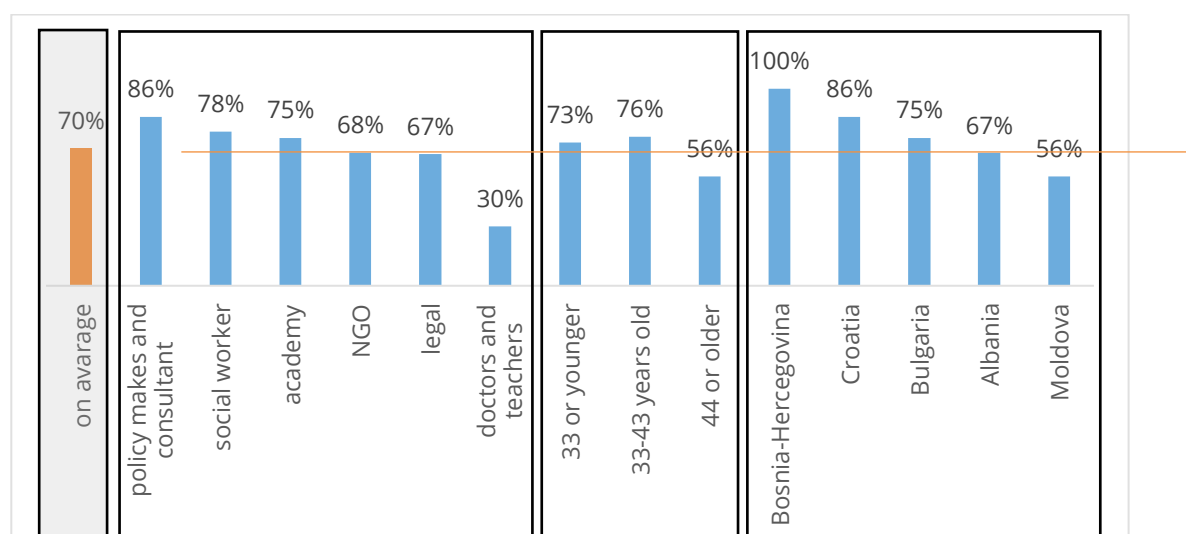
After mapping the professional needs, respondent were asked to evaluate how much these needs were fulfilled by ChildHub (See in Figure 4.). In general, ChildHub achieved a very good review for knowledge management. However, respondents were not that satisfied with peer-to-peer support. Despite the fact that increasing professional support was one of the most important need. The reasons why peer to peer support works relatively poorly is unfolded on the qualitative part.

Figure 5: How much ChildHub fulfil needs



ChildHub was also interested to what extent members felt empowered (See in Figure 6.). This objective was measured by the following question: “How much do you feel that you can influence what happens in the ChildHub community?”. Figure 6 shows that incidence rate of those who have answered the above question with “completely able” or “very much able”. This result supports that ChildHub members feel highly empowered, as 70% of them give a very positive answer.

Figure 6. Feeling of empowerment by occupation, age and country





However, the feeling of empowerment were different among occupation, age and even countries. On average, policy makers/ consultants and social workers felt the most empowered, whereas doctors and primary or secondary school teachers were lagging behind. Giving this latter group a voice would be important as they are also in the front line in child protection.

In terms of age we can also detect a group whose feeling of empowerment is also well below the average: the 44-year-old or older. This is paradoxical situation as one of the main goal of ChildHub to involve practicing child protection workers (University students are targeted by another program). However, at the same time, the technology and the used language of ChildHub is unusual for this age group. Probably that is why they feel they have a hard time to express their opinion and influence ChildHub.

Finally, there are huge differences among countries as well. Unfortunately, this figure can show only some selected countries, where the respondent rate was sufficiently high. It is important to note that most probably the turnout<sup>1</sup> is also highly connected with the feeling of empowerment. Namely, those tend to respond for such a survey, who feel like that their opinion matters. As a result it would be a smart step to examines why there are not enough answers from the countries which are not shown in Figure 6. Moreover, Figure 6 shows that Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Bulgaria is somewhat above the average in terms of feeling of empowerment, whereas Albania slightly and Moldova well below the average. This result shows that Moldova should receive higher attention besides those countries which has low turnout rate.

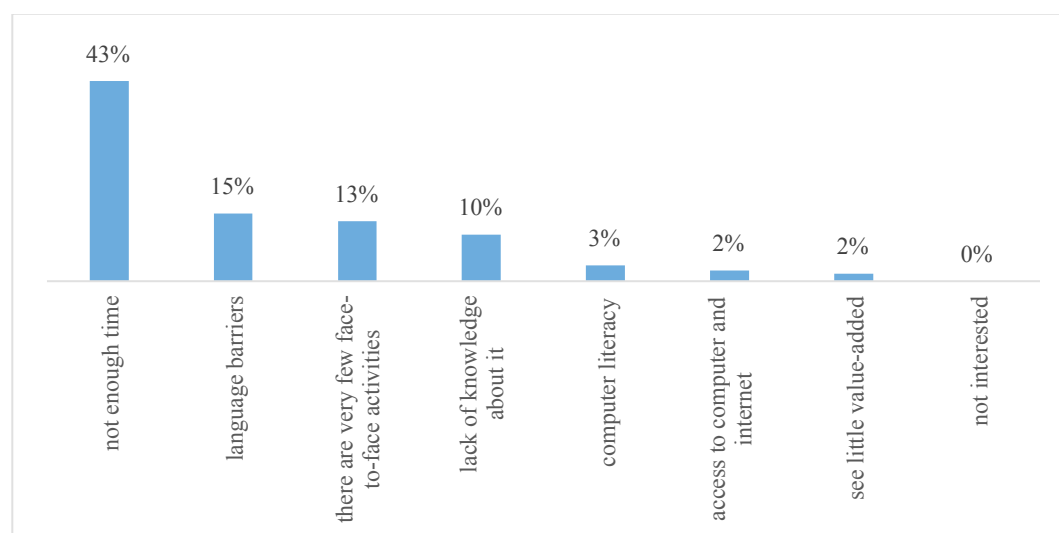
One of the major concerns of this mid-term review has been to detect the barriers of participation (See in Figure 7.). As Figure 7 shows the most important reason of not participating in ChildHub was the lack of time. There will be some suggestions how to handle time related problems in the qualitative part of this study. However, we will see that this issue is hardly a problem that ChildHub can solve. Therefore, we need to turn to the other problems. Considerable rate (15%) of the respondents name language barrier as an important obstacle. Further, low

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<sup>1</sup> Total number of valid answers as a propotion of the total number of ChildHub members.

number of face-to-face activities and lack of knowledge about ChildHub is also a frequently mentioned problem.

*Figure 7. Barriers of participating in ChildHub*



Different occupations face other barriers. Certain groups are having problems to find time in their schedule to participate in ChildHub. More than 60% of academic employees, policy makers/consultant and NGO people mentioned lack of time as a barrier to participate. Whereas others named the language barrier frequently. 20% of social workers said that language was an important obstacle. Moreover, social workers mentioned computer literacy (8% of them) the most and few face-to-face activity (18% of them) as a barrier. Finally, lack of knowledge (about ChildHub) is mentioned by doctors and teachers the most frequently (18 % of them).

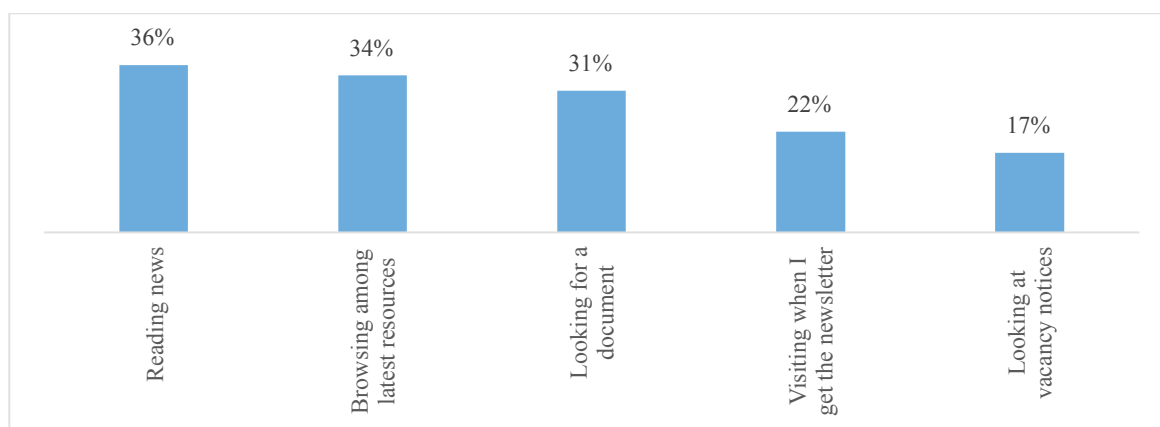
In terms of age groups we can see also differences. Typically, the older population faces more challenges. This age group mentioned the lack of time and the language barrier were problems for them most frequently. Whereas the younger and middle age group miss face-to-face activities more.

There are little differences between countries. However, lack of knowledge about ChildHub is considerably high in Croatia (25%). Whereas language barrier was especially pronounced problem among Bulgarians (30%). And finally face-to face meetings were missed in Moldova the most (25%).

The barriers also vary among activity in ChildHub. Those who were less active underrated the importance of having less time, but overrate the importance of language barrier (22% of them named it as a problem) and having little knowledge about ChildHub (20% of them said that it was a problem). Firstly, this result supports the above mentioned findings, that activating those who are not that often participating would require more translation. Secondly, high incidence of little knowledge as a barrier among non-active members shows that ChildHub should further continue to educate even the members about the goal and tools of the program. Finally, the fact that non-active participants named lack of time less often than active members shows that the former group indeed has a capacity to be more engaged.

Finally, we asked the respondents what they typically did when they logged in ChildHub (See in Figure 8.). The most popular activities were reading news and browsing among the latest resources. However, these activities were only slightly more important than looking for a concrete document. To sum up, ChildHub is a great forum to get familiar with the latest development in child protection, however, there is a considerable need to search for concrete information. This shows that ChildHub needs to have a very accurate search engine as well.

*Figure 8: Typical activity on ChildHub website*



Very active members of ChildHub are looking for concrete documents more often than inactive members. Whereas less active members are more interested in browsing among resources than looking for concrete documents. Occupation also determines the general activity of the ChildHub members. Social workers

mentioned that they looking for a document at the highest rate, compared to other activities. While Academics choose to browse among all resources the most often. Finally each age group behaves slightly differently. Older and younger respondents rarely browse among the resources, they rather just read the news or look for documents. However, middle age respondents tend to rather browse among the resources.

## 3.2 Qualitative results

### 3.2.1 General feedback

The qualitative part of the research has revealed that the goals of ChildHub were very clear for the participants. Respondents could name the main goals of the ChildHub. One respondent said that *“ChildHub gives you the networking, resources, news part, namely what you need”*. Others emphasized the advantage of having a regional platform. This person said that *“our country has the same problems and this can be a motivation to ask for best practices, the things from the region is better than the western know-how ‘cause they have similar problems and you can use their know-how”*. Moreover, the interviewees understand for whom the ChildHub would be beneficial. Some named all the professionals in the child protection field. Others added that this platform was mainly good for children since it promote child protection. And finally, some people named the whole society as the main beneficiary of this program.

ChildHub plays a key role in the child protection field. Some respondents admitted that they always wanted to have something like ChildHub. *“I was in one project in which we wanted to have this, but we did not afford it. Especially not to involve so many countries.”* Moreover, ChildHub received very positive initial reactions. *“It was really a good idea to create ChildHub: you can share information. If you do not have an answer to some problem in your home country you can ask other experts from different countries. Mind-blowing.”*

Majority of the respondents consider the website sustainable. They said that the website could work even after the ChildHub project stops. However, they think

that if the staff behind ChildHub disappeared then the website would be less updated. *"I am going to use it but it's not going to be the same, because the information will be old, but there are still good stuff what I will be able to use"*. Some said that the reason why it could be maintained was that there was already a strong community behind it. In contrast, others were concerned that 2 years was too early to stop the program since there was a huge amount of information that still needed to be uploaded. Some said that the main challenge was to have someone who continuously post and update the website even after the program stops: *"It is like a blog. If you post the people will read it. But if you do not post anything they are not going to read the blog. You need someone who post continuously or it dies"*. To sum up, building community and empowering the community is a key issue to maintain ChildHub. Moreover, it is crucial to create an active community, which is not only reading, but also sharing on the website.

### 3.2.2 Strength of ChildHub

This study has tried to map the strength of the program as well. Here basically similar things came up as in the quantitative part. However, there were pre-defined options provided in the quantitative part while this part required spontaneous answers. First and foremost, people named the library and the resources as the main advantages of the program. One respondent said that the best in ChildHub was that it has a *"great library, full of information and it is regularly updated"*. Also considerable amount of respondents highlighted the international or regional approach of the program. *"I had a chance to look from a global perspective what are these problems, because we all sees the problems from our own profession but in this project it starts from a foundation and a base, and that is very important"*. Moreover, ChildHub was also appreciated since it connected professionals. Furthermore, several people said that the online part was an advantage, because it made it easier to connect, learn and find information. Finally, respondents valued the interdisciplinary nature of ChildHub. One respondent said that *"To seeing the same thing, in fact we are all in the same area of protection of children and yet each of us is looking at it from specific angles and from the position of professional operation"*. Figure 9 shows the world cloud of the mentioned strengths of ChildHub. The cloud gives greater prominence to words that were more frequently mentioned.

Figure 9: The strength of ChildHub



### 3.2.3 Weaknesses of ChildHub and solution for these problems

After reviewing the strengths of ChildHub, the weaknesses have been also mapped. Almost everyone mentioned the language barrier as the main challenge of ChildHub. Several respondents know someone who works in child protection and could potentially benefit from such a platform, but do not speak English. Some said *"I was talking with some of my friends but they are not so good in English...they would be more active if they were fluent in English"*. At the same time, respondents were strongly against leaving out professionals just because they do not speak English. *"It would not work that we would have only English speakers because it would not be democratic enough. We need to involve those as well, who do not speak English somehow."* Others added that *"it is especially those who cannot speak English who are in the front line, I mean like social workers and so on (...) and this platform is for them"*.

The solution for language barriers is quite obvious: ChildHub should pay more attention on translation. *"The materials are translated very slowly. It should be more translation and faster. Otherwise it's not updated."* These translations could be

done by students, who have good language skills and probably willing to do it for free or for low amount of money. Furthermore, ChildHub should include more languages, especially Russian was found to be useful for this purpose. *"I would imagine that if the second official working language of ChildHub were Russian, then I and other colleagues from my generation would have been able to fully benefit from the materials on the website."*

Besides, the language barriers several people emphasized the problem of Work-Life-ChildHub balance. In modern societies, reconciling work and life itself can be challenging, but the participants need to fit even ChildHub to their schedule. Therefore, several interviewees admitted that they could not spend as much time on ChildHub as they wanted. Some of the interviewees complained that their workplace does not support them to use Child, even though it would be important to their work. In several cases the respondents do not even have a proper access to the platform, since all kind of videos are blocked at their workplace. One said that *"I wanted to be much more active, but we have limitations. We cannot view videos."* When ChildHub is not supported at the work, the respondents try to catch up at home. But using ChildHub at home interferes to the private life of the respondent. *"So since ChildHub is not reachable at the work, I try to connect at home. However, it is also hard. You know I have kids...I need to cook or bathe them. It is simply hard to find time for it"*. Moreover, even if they would make time for watching videos at home, they cannot do that as webinars are usually organized during the workhours. *"Webinars take place during working hours, and I find it difficult to follow them."*

To ensure Work-Life-ChildHub balance several suggestions were made. Firstly, some recommended that ChildHub should reach out to the head of institutions and explain to them that ChildHub would be beneficial for them. The head of the institution can introduce incentives (some even said that they could make it obligatory) or just simply provide the opportunity for it (i.e. make it possible to watch videos). One expert argued that *"It might help to advocate managers of the Institutions, to see the Child Hub as the need for professional trainings of workers in their institutions. They (manager or director) need to recognize it; I think at that point they would become a little more aware of the needs of their workers, to provide them space, technology, computers and so on"*. Moreover, ChildHub should become



more flexible. Provide training after work hour as well or promote that videos can be re-watched after working hours.

The third biggest obstacle of ChildHub is the insufficient promotion. Some suggested making flyers and presenting it in different occasions or different institutions. They think that ChildHub should not only present the idea, but also immediately educate people how to use it. Moreover, one said that *"professionals need a 'push' to open new websites and register. May be some registration could happen immediately during such meetings."* In general, raising the awareness of ChildHub would be an important step, which could solve other issues as well, for example, language barriers. There are people, who did not even know that ChildHub was available in other languages than English. Spreading the information that ChildHub is multilingual would be extremely important to reach out to non-English speakers.

Several members mentioned groups which were not reached by ChildHub. In each country people living in a rural part or smaller settlements tend to be hidden and not covered by ChildHub. Moreover, interviewees from Bosnia and Kosovo mentioned that ministry people should have been more involved. Whereas in Bulgaria and Serbia Academics should have been more involved in ChildHub activities.

Others highlighted that instead of trying to reach out to more people, ChildHub should focus on those who are already aware of the program and motivate them to participate more. One participant said that *"The weakness of ChildHub is the weakness of the people who use it"*. This person meant that ChildHub's main problem was that the members sometimes were not motivated to use the website enough. By this logic the most important obstacle ChildHub faces is how to motivate people. Several answers were received to this question as well. First of all, members highlighted that people needed to be reminded of ChildHub. Members need to be encouraged to open the website. All respondent agreed on that newsletter played a crucial role in motivation. Newsletters could provide an overview about what was new at the ChildHub and could attract readers. Some respondents however, highlighted that more personal messages would have been more encouraging. One participant suggested that *"we need message from ChildHub like (...) do you have anything to share with us. They could send messages*



*instead of newsletters, which ask you to participate more."* Finally, gratification was also considered as a good solution for motivating members.

Interviewees are in general satisfied with the networking opportunities. However, the peer-to-peer support suffers from the fact that ChildHub relationships are mainly online connections. Online connections are considered rather weak, sometimes not enough for contribution. One participant said that preparing for a case discussion was hard since *"there is not an atmosphere of trust, so basically you have no idea who's the audience"*. We have received solutions for this matter as well. First and foremost, respondents advocated for face-to-face meeting as it would have provided an opportunity to *"put face behind a name, which adds up to the quality"*. Secondly it was suggested mapping the participants in the website. Indeed there is such a mapping on the website, but the fact that it was suggested means that such a mapping could be more promoted. As one respondent has pointed out *"Basically, the platform is used anonymously, it does not necessarily facilitate a knowledge of the specialists in the field that say "Help, I need ... Which one of you works at ANPDC? Or which one of you is a psychologist on this matter?"* Moreover, interviewees made suggestions to further develop peer to peer support. They suggested that a mentorship program could be developed. *"A mentorship or a coach would be nice. I can use my friend but professionally I do not have a coach but it would be nice."*

### 3.2.4 Evaluation of ChildHub activities

After a general feedback on ChildHub, interviewees were asked to evaluate each ChildHub activity separately. Firstly, the website was assessed. Several people pointed out that initially it was way too complicated, however, there were changes which made it much simpler. Some respondents were still concerned that the website was a bit too complicated, but most of them agree that this is because it contains so many functions. *"In other circumstances I would say that it should be a simpler page where people have easy access, but I appreciate the participation of professionals and the structure of the site for professionals, therefore for the moment I do not have any suggestions."* Other also highlighted that the website was so informative that it was sometimes too complicated. *"But the thing that hinders me is that the information is very large and it takes time to find the information I'm interested in."* Although it would be easier to use the website if the

cover page contained some mapping of the functions or a video about the website. Others were concerned that the website sometimes link to an error message. At the same time, respondents were in general satisfied with the design of the website.

During the review special attention was paid to the library. According to the respondents, this is one of the most important functions of ChildHub. However, they wished that the library would be more extensive. The goal should be to have every document on one website. Moreover, the search engine of the library was widely criticized. Respondents said that ChildHub library had a very poor search mechanism compared to Google. They suggested improving the structure of the library or develop a keyword search function.

The forum has received very serious criticism. One said that *"The forums and group discussions do not function well, there is no response to questions raised (I created a forum a few weeks ago and got no response)."* Some respondents said that ChildHub should have developed notification system, similarly to Facebook, which would have notified the members when someone reacted to their post. In general a lot of tricks can be copied from Facebook as the respondent know that website very well. *"Technically, I think that it would be useful to consider the benefits/success of online media, such as Facebook and imitate similar ways of keeping in touch, such as desktop notifications, etc."*

Virtual learning opportunities were also highly criticized. Most of the people complained that these sessions were most of the time during the working hours, which was not a good timing for them. Also there is a widespread misunderstanding that you can only watch the webinars when it happens. Some even made a suggestion that webinars should have been recorded in order to be watchable anytime after the session. For example one said that *"I would like to have to listen webinars not live but later on because I cannot be all the time there"*. However, indeed such an option exists. As a result, it would be important to promote more that members can watch the videos anytime. Moreover, several interviewees were concerned that the virtual learning sessions often struggled with technical problem. *"Moreover, in situations where we tried to access the webinars they did not always function, there were some technical issues, or I was not able to access it at all or I accessed it, but at some point the connection was lost or I do not know exactly what kind of technical problem existed at that time."* The

technical problems can also hinder active participation. As one person said *"sometimes I just register and do minimal moves, because I do not want to slow it down"*. One said that the technical problems were related to poor internet connection or too many participants thus, this person suggested minimalizing the number of participants. Moreover, webinars and case discussions also suffer from language barriers. Therefore, some interviewees suggested making national online meetings as well. Finally, the idea to have online meetings with only two countries was also popular. In contrast, others advocated the webinars as it could enable more flexible time management than an offline meeting. One said that *"The specialist who participate in these meetings can do this without to be out of the daily working process at work."* This shows that there is a huge potential in webinars.

The language barrier especially plays a key role in the relatively low participation in the online meetings and discussions. Therefore, some members suggested that not only the library should be translated, but the virtual learning activities as well. For example, one suggested that webinars could have some sort of subtitles, similarly to TED presentations. Others would organize webinars and case discussions in other languages than English. They also pointed out that this solution would not necessary weaken the international approach of ChildHub. For example, one said that *"in Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia we are very much connected by the language and we have similar problems, so they should put together us only"*.

Offline meetings were generally very successful among ChildHub members. Almost everyone who participated in such a meeting was very satisfied with it. They enjoyed both the learning materials and the opportunity to network. *"TOT for Leadership in Budapest, which was a great experience in terms of creating contacts with colleagues in the region and feeling part of a bigger group of professionals"*. Offline meetings also supplement the online ones as members can get to know each other better. In general, people wished to have more of these offline meetings. One said that it should have been more periodic. *"Also, for me the ideal version would allow periodic face-to-face meetings among different participants in ChildHub, to report and share good practices and achievements in work."* Besides the international meetings the national meetings could be also more frequent in certain countries. For example, both Bulgarian resource

persons highlighted that there were not enough meetings in their country. Finally, some participants mentioned that it would have been useful to receive scholarships for such a visit.

### 3.2.5 Additional suggestions

Some other suggestions were made, which are not related to existing problems, but they could further improve ChildHub. Firstly, a mobile application was suggested. This would make it possible to use ChildHub facilities on a mobile phone. As a lot of child protection professionals are not sitting in front of the computer all the time, they could really benefit from having such a flexible arrangement.

Making ChildHub more similar to a social media platform was also widely recommended. A lot of people suggested having similar solutions like Facebook has, because people are familiar with this social media. Therefore, ChildHub could imitate Facebook communication. For example, ChildHub could create *"profiles which can post statuses"* and make it possible that *"ChildHub leaders can post news/materials, in the same newsfeed page"*. Desktop notifications were also very frequently mentioned for solving the problem of group discussions and forums. Others suggested that ChildHub should have been more linked to Facebook.

Moreover, a lot of respondents found that this research was extremely important and it should have been done more often. *"Obtaining feedback from the participants and with the quality of the work from the people who manage the website."* Some suggested that ChildHub should also make a research on what people were interested in, because *"topics proposed come as a result of consultations with the real needs of the target audience"*. This was especially emphasized for the development of webinars. Revealing interesting topics was outside the scope of this study, however, it is highly recommended to review this from time to time.

Several respondents suggested that ChildHub provide first-hand experience as well. Firstly, ChildHub could initiate projects for ChildHub members. This would bring people together and they could even learn during the project from each

other. One said that ChildHub *"should give real tasks to solve"*. Secondly, study visits should be introduced. One suggested that *"They could visit other people at their workplace or their institutions. Use as a model other countries. It could be some kind of interactive opportunity."* In general respondents would extend more the offline part of ChildHub.

Finally, a lot of professionals suggested that ChildHub improve its relationship with other child protection organizations or groups. For example, one Albanian said that they had a similar group on Facebook, which worked very well. Therefore, ChildHub should be connected to this other group somehow. Moreover, ChildHub should contain all information at one place and gather information from other organizations as well. One said that *"I just heard from other places that there are more opportunities out there. ChildHub should (in)corporate all information like that"*. Moreover, ChildHub could help other institutions with the technology to organize online meetings. One applicant said that they had an online conference and *"instead of holding it through Skype, we held it through ChildHub and we had a bigger audience for those presentations. It can be kept. Not every institution has an online platform to be used simultaneously at a time by people from different parts of the world."*

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## 4. MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

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As the analysis part contains several recommendations, this chapter aims to grasp to most important ones. However, we need to highlight that the following list does not indent to grasp all the recommendation or provide a full summary (for a summary look at the executive summary), only to highlight the steps which are necessary to be taken.

1. Translate as much material as it is possible. The translation can be extended to other activities as well than the library. Moreover, alternatively national platform should be strengthen a bit as several ChildHub user mentioned the language barrier as the main obstacle to participate.
2. Promote and educate about the existing activities. There are some misbelief in the ChildHub community about certain activities. For example, it is widely spread that one can watch webinars only on live.
3. Strengthen peer to peer support as online platform is sometimes not enough to create strong ties automatically. This can be done with a mentoring system or more offline meetings.
4. Motivate people to share information. Building community and empowering the community is a key issue to create a sustainable ChildHub.
5. Imitate some elements of Facebook. For example, develop a notification system, which can further activate the forum.

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## 7. APPENDIX

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### Survey questions

1. When was the last time you visited the ChildHub homepage?
  - a. this week
  - b. this month
  - c. this semester
  - d. this year
  - e. more than one year ago
2. Your gender?
  - a. female
  - b. male
3. How old are you?
  - a. younger than 24
  - b. 24-35
  - c. 34-44
  - d. 44-55
  - e. 54-65
  - f. f older than 65
4. How long have you been working in the child protection sector?
  - a. 0-5years
  - b. 6-10years
  - c. 11-15years
  - d. More than 15 years
  - e. I am a student

5. Your residence

- a. Albania
- b. Bosnia-Hercegovina
- c. Croatia
- d. Hungary
- e. Kosovo
- f. Macedonia
- g. Moldova
- h. Romania
- i. Slovenia
- j. Serbia
- k. Romania
- l. other

6. Your main occupation (if more, please choose the most significant)

- a. In University – teaching and/or research
- b. In health care
- c. In primary/secondary education
- d. In justice system (judge, prosecutor...)
- e. In NGO
- f. Social worker/child protection worker
- g. Police
- h. Legal professional
- i. Policy-maker (in Ministry)
- j. Consultant, specialist
- k. Other

7. Please, rate the following ChildHub activities in terms of their contribution to your professional development. Rate it in a five-point scale system.

- 1. Not at all important
- 2. Slightly important
- 3. Moderately important

- 4. Very important
- 5. Extremely important

Activities:

- a. Webinars
- b. case discussions
- c. newsletters
- d. forum discussion
- e. e-learning courses
- f. the online library – and its documents
- g. infographics (abstract or easy to read materials)
- h. summaries and reviews of the recent research and reports in your language
- i. networking at the regional conferences
- j. trainings provided by ChildHub
- k. access to a database of professionals from the region
- l. opportunity to exchange with peers on the Hub
- m. information about upcoming events, and face-to-face learning opportunities
- n. opportunity for networking nationally online and offline

8. Please, tell us to what extent ChildHub meets the following objectives?

Rate it in from 0 to 10, where 0 means that ChildHub does not meet the goals at all and 10 means that ChildHub fulfils its goals completely.

- a. Knowledge management (collecting and sharing information and learning materials)
- b. Promote regional expertise (feature your expertise in the Consultants' Directory)
- c. connect with professionals in the region who working the same field

9. Please, rate how much the following needs are important for you to be effective in your field?

- 6. Not at all important

- 7. Slightly important
- 8. Moderately important
- 9. Very important
- 10. Extremely important

- a. Financial resources provided by national or local government (for services and social assistance)
- b. Opportunity to learn new skills
- c. Opportunity to learn about the latest developments in your field
- d. Opportunity to hear how others are managing similar cases as yours
- e. Meeting with experts in your field
- f. Have someone to discuss your cases/problems with you
- g. Have more time to conduct your work
- h. Change the general public perception on the role of social worker
- i. Receive accreditation/official recognition for participation in trainings
- j. Improve working environment (including more IT equipment)
- k. Increase professional support
- l. Reduce burnout
- m. receive regular feedback and appreciation

10. Please, rate in a five-point scale how much the following needs are fulfilled by the ChildHub?

- 1. Not at all fulfilled
- 2. Slightly not fulfilled
- 3. Moderately fulfilled
- 4. Very much fulfilled
- 5. Extremely fulfilled

- a. access to a large library of resources on issues related to my work
- b. Opportunity to learn new skills
- c. Opportunity to learn the latest developments in my field
- d. Opportunity to hear similar cases as yours
- e. Discussions with experts in your field

- f. Have someone who discuss your cases with you
  - g. Learning about upcoming events, learning opportunities
11. How much do you feel that you can influence what happens in the ChildHub community?
- 1. Not at all
  - 2. Slightly able
  - 3. Moderately able
  - 4. Very much able
  - 5. Completely able
12. What makes it difficult for you to participate in ChildHub (both on- and offline)? You may choose zero, one or more than one answers.
- a. not enough time
  - b. not interested
  - c. see little value-added
  - d. have little knowledge about what it is
13. What are aspects about ChildHub that makes it difficult to participate? You may choose zero, one or more than one answers.
- a. language barriers
  - b. computer literacy
  - c. access to computer and internet
  - d. there are very few face-to-face activities
  - e. lack of knowledge about it
  - f. lack of motivation to try it
14. What do you typically do when you log into ChildHub? You may choose zero, one or more than one answers.
- a. I read news
  - b. I look for a document
  - c. I go when I get the newsletter

- d. I browse among latest resources
- e. I look at vacancy notices
- f. Other

*If all of the statements are true than let consider the respondent as **active**. If at least one of the above mention statements are not true than let consider the respondent as **inactive**.*

*Those who are active in ChildHub*

1. How long have you been associated with the hub?
2. How did you first hear about the hub?
3. When you first went to the website, what did you do or look at?
4. What was your first impressions? Were there things you did not like or which you did not find on the ChildHub?
5. In what ways has the Child Hub been useful for you in your work or professional development? Can you please share a story that demonstrates how ChildHub has had an effect on you or your work?
6. What are three strengths of the ChildHub?
7. What are three weaknesses you see in the ChildHub?
8. How would you address these problems if you were the head of ChildHub?
9. What do you see as the principle challenge of the structure that keeps people from participating in the following aspects of the program?
  - a. Website:
  - b. Face to Face Activities:
  - c. Online Resources
  - d. Online Meetings:


10. Are there possible types of Child Protection stakeholders in your country who have not been connected to the ChildHub?
11. What might be ways to reach out and connect them to the ChildHub network?
12. What would make it easier to be more engaged in the following learning opportunities that the hub provides?
  - e. Knowledge Resources:
  - f. Virtual Learning Events:
  - g. Regional Networking:
  - h. Peer-to-Peer Support:
13. As you know, ChildHub provides learning and knowledge resources, opportunities for networking regionally, for peer-to-peer support. Within this framework, what are the aspects of ChildHub that most help you in your work?
14. Has the ChildHub strengthened your access to a network of professionals you can rely on for support and information?
15. Would you likely still have access to this professional network if the ChildHub project finished?
16. What suggestions do you have to improve the ChildHub?
17. What are some suggestions for new opportunities the ChildHub could explore and develop?

*Those who are rather inactive in ChildHub\**

1. How and when did you first hear about the hub?
2. When you first went to the website, what did you do or look at?



3. What was your first impressions? Were there things you did not like or which you did not find on the ChildHub?
4. What do you like about the ChildHub?
5. What are three strengths of the ChildHub?
6. What are three weaknesses you see in the ChildHub?
7. Who do you think could potentially benefit from ChildHub programs? Do you think you could?
8. How much do you feel engaged in the child hub?
9. What are some things that have deterred you from participating more in ChildHub programs? (Ask especially those which the respondent said NO in the filter question)
  - a. Website
  - b. Face to Face Activities:
  - c. Online Resources
  - d. Online Meetings:
  - e. Networking in general
10. What do you see as the principle challenge that keeps other people from participating in the ChildHub programs?
  - a. Website:
  - b. Face to Face Activities:
  - c. Online Resources
  - d. Online Meetings:

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11. What are some of your professional needs that could be addressed by a project like ChildHub?
  12. What suggestions do you have to improve the ChildHub?
  13. Can you think of what the ideal ChildHub would look like, in which you would like to be an active member?

