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Restoring Family Links Strategy
for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
(2008-2018)

Progress report for 2012-2015

**Document prepared by the Central Tracing Agency
of the International Committee of the Red Cross
in consultation with the RFL Strategy Implementation Group and representatives
from National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

Geneva, October 2015

Pictures of refugees from South Sudan are published online and in photo books to help them find missing relatives in South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda or elsewhere in the world.
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List of Abbreviations

familylinks.icrc.org	Family links website
Federation	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
FL Answers	Family Links Application for National Societies for Worldwide Enquiry and RFL Services
FLN	Family Links Network
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
Movement	International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
NS	National Society(-ies)
RFL Strategy	Restoring Family Links Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, 2008-2018
RFL	Restoring Family Links

Executive summary

1. This progress report on the implementation of the Restoring Family Links Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, 2008-2018 (RFL Strategy) has been prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in cooperation with the other members of the RFL Strategy Implementation Group and is hereby submitted to the 2015 Council of Delegates. It takes stock of the achievements in implementing the RFL Strategy and the challenges encountered.

2. In the vast majority of countries worldwide, there is a significant need for assistance in terms of separated family members seeking news of missing relatives as a consequence of armed conflict, violence, disasters, migration and other situations.

3. The Restoring Family Links (RFL) needs of migrants are the primary source of concern for the Family Links Network (FLN) given the complexity of the associated humanitarian problems, leading to a significant increase in the FLN's operational commitment. New, promising initiatives have emerged to address the needs of migrants through a multi-disciplinary and supra-regional approach and the use of online tools. These initiatives and tools need to be further developed along migratory routes worldwide and require active support from leaders of all components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) and intensified networking and collaboration inside and outside the Movement.

4. RFL services of various kinds are provided by the vast majority of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (NS) and by the ICRC through their global network, which transcends borders and is rooted in communities. RFL workloads have increased in the past few years, and it has been recognized that casework exchanges, operational cooperation and coordination efforts within the FLN have grown.

5. The FLN has demonstrated the ability to react rapidly in order to provide RFL services in emergencies and to mobilize its international mechanisms such as the RFL pool of specialists to support domestic responses. Preparedness measures, however, appear to have been relatively weak and need to be intensified. Better RFL integration into emergency preparedness and response plans must be achieved through enhanced internal coordination between services, the provision of adequate guidelines, tools and training for RFL practitioners, as well as an increased focus on concluding agreements with public authorities on the role of NS in restoring family links in emergencies.

6. Information technology tools for RFL have greatly developed in the past few years, in particular through the creation of the family links website (familylinks.icrc.org) and the new Family Links Answers case management system for NS. These tools give beneficiaries better access to RFL service information and are a means for them to make enquiries, and also allow the identities of sought persons and enquirers to be securely published online. They also offer new means of raising awareness of RFL services amongst external stakeholders and ways for the FLN to exchange individual data as well as share experiences, guidelines and practices. At present, however, these new digital means are not yet sufficiently well known and taken advantage of; they need to be exploited further.

7. The FLN needs to respond to the challenges posed by emerging data protection regulations, revise its working methods and regulations to align them with these requirements and to the new Code of Conduct on Data Protection for the FLN, and ensure that relevant issues are integrated into its internal training systems.

8. Despite the evident humanitarian need for RFL services, the positive trend towards inclusion of RFL in NS's regulatory frameworks, and the fact that public communication on RFL has become significantly stronger, no progress has been observed regarding resource mobilization and allocation for RFL services, and RFL awareness appears to be the lowest amongst donors, of all external stakeholders. RFL services provided by NS remain largely dependent on the financial support of the ICRC, and partnerships between NS beyond casework exchanges are very limited. Efforts need to be reinforced to ensure that resources are systematically allocated to RFL services in NS's core budgets, establish partnerships between NS and exploit the inherent human-interest value of RFL for resource mobilization.

> 9. All components of the Movement are called upon to renew their commitment to helping attain the RFL Strategy's objectives through 2018, when the RFL Strategy comes to an end. At the same time, work already needs to commence on developing the Movement's strategic orientations for the future in the field of RFL and avoiding a policy gap after 2018. For the Council of Delegates in 2017, an updated global mapping of RFL capacities will be undertaken in 2016 and 2017. The RFL Strategy Implementation Group will engage in the elaboration of a new RFL policy and strategic framework, seeking support and commitment from the FLN and leaders of all components of the Movement, and in consultation with relevant external actors (e.g. authorities, providers of services related to RFL).

Introduction

Not knowing the fate of their loved ones causes large numbers of people throughout the world to live in the anguish of uncertainty. Called upon to respond to these needs, the Movement in 2007 adopted the RFL Strategy, the ambition of which has been to improve the ability of the FLN to help individuals separated from their loved ones as a result of armed conflict, violence, disaster, migration or other situations requiring humanitarian action.

As an accountability measure, the RFL Strategy provided for the establishment of an RFL Strategy Implementation Group[1] to support the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency in overseeing the realization of the Strategy and reporting on it to the Council of Delegates. As a result, in 2011 a first progress report was submitted, covering the 2008-2011 period. Based on its findings and key recommendations, the RFL Strategy Implementation Group decided to prioritize the monitoring of three key areas of the RFL Strategy to guide the structure of this new progress report, which covers the 2012-2015 period. They are:

1) Integration of RFL into emergency preparedness and response plans;
2) communication, promotion and positioning of RFL;
3) resources and partnerships for RFL.

This progress report takes stock of the important achievements made in the implementation of the RFL Strategy and the challenges encountered, and proposes recommendations. All members of the Movement are called upon to remain committed to the RFL Strategy's ambition and to renew their support for the successful achievement of its objectives. The report also encourages members of the Movement to remain mobilized until the end of the current RFL Strategy in 2018 and concludes with a reflection on the need for a new RFL policy framework for the Movement after 2018.

Two online monitoring surveys of NS were conducted in 2014 and 2015, focusing in particular on progress made within the FLN in the three above-mentioned priority areas. An impressive number of NS responded to the surveys (157 and 143 respectively),[2] confirming the steady and continuous improvement in the interaction within the network. Where possible, a comparative analysis with the previous surveys[3] is included in the report, but it is more limited in the case of RFL communication, promotion and positioning, since this domain was not specifically assessed previously.

Whilst the results of the surveys only express the perception of its respondents, they generally confirm the disturbing reality that family separation is a very serious humanitarian problem affecting people in almost all countries in the world.

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[1] The RFL Strategy Implementation Group for the 2012-2015 period comprised representatives from the NS of Australia, Canada, China, China/Hong-Kong, Colombia, the DRC, Côte d'Ivoire, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Mexico, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sweden, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States, and from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the ICRC. It provides guidance and support in the process of implementing the RFL Strategy and develops the criteria for the RFL Strategy's success and indicators to measure that success (Resolution 4, para. 8 of the 2007 Council of Delegates).

[2] See Annex A.

[3] These include the 2005-2006 global mapping of RFL capacities of the Movement and the 2011 monitoring survey on the implementation of the RFL Strategy.

With 51% of NS confirming they had conducted RFL needs assessments since 2011, the positive trend in their use observed before 2011 has continued, allowing the FLN to be increasingly engaged in addressing changing needs and risks. Knowledge about RFL needs, which must be updated regularly, is at the heart of any operational response or strategy and ensures more relevant and effective provision of RFL services. The vision drawn from the 2008-2018 RFL Strategy has resulted in a real transformation of the Movement's RFL actions, particularly evidenced by:

> *The Movement's FLN has made progress in aligning its actions with the vision of the RFL Strategy, and that progress must continue.*

- greater awareness of the extent of RFL needs in relation to migration;
- increased readiness to intervene in emergencies;
- strengthened action in areas where conflicts and violence have broken out or intensified in recent years; and
- the emergence of new RFL services and methods.

Without a comprehensive system of data collection on RFL activities by each member of the FLN, it is difficult to assess the quantitative and qualitative changes in services offered to separated families. Nevertheless, the figures for the ICRC's activities, which include those related to numerous operational partnerships with NS, indicate very clear growth in the provision of RFL services since 2011.[4] The majority of NS (53%) have confirmed an increase in casework exchanges with other members of the FLN, indicating a further rise in cross-border cooperation already noticed in the previous period.

> *Since 2011, the provision of RFL services has risen sharply, especially telephone services to re-establish family contact and opening tracing requests for missing persons.*

With these results, the Movement should be proud of the RFL services provided by its vibrant and committed network, and encouraged to continue and intensify the efforts that have already been undertaken.

> *Major challenges remain and more commitment and corrective measures are required to ensure the internal and external support necessary for the development of the Movement's action in favour of separated families, notably in terms of understanding the humanitarian consequences, strategic positioning of RFL action and allocation of resources.*

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[4] See Annex B, Figures 3 and 4.

1 Integration of RFL into emergency preparedness and response plans

The fact that RFL was not integrated into emergency preparedness and response plans was identified as a serious shortcoming during the 2006 global mapping exercise. Since 2011, additional steps have been taken that show clear and continuous progress. Nevertheless, some of the challenges mentioned in the 2011 progress report persist and need to be further addressed both internally (within the Movement) and externally (with other actors).

The FLN adapts to changing environments and emergencies

Somali Red Crescent volunteers help Zeynab, a Somali returnee who fled the violence in Yemen with her children, re-establish contact with her husband.

The outbreak of armed conflict and violence often generates emergencies for thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees. The FLN strives to address the many cases of family separations (loss of contact, unaccompanied children, disappearances, etc.).

CC BY-NC-ND / ICRC / Miraj Mohamud / July 2015

One very important element that emerged from the surveys was the realization by the FLN that emergencies could include new scenarios – beyond the "traditional" situations of armed conflict, violence and natural or man-made disasters – that may involve serious risks of family separation. Migration, mass gatherings, demonstrations and pilgrimages have been identified as potential emergencies of varying magnitudes, in which people may be killed, injured, disoriented, separated or go missing, requiring a prompt response by RFL services. The emphasis put on such situations since 2011 shows the changing mindset within the Movement and the commitment by more RFL services (fully in line with the vision of the RFL Strategy) to better assess, document and address RFL needs (which all emergencies entail), regardless of the nature and scope of the emergency and without discrimination. In line with the migration policy of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (the Federation), more attention is now paid to the RFL needs of migrants, particularly arising from shipwrecks, accidents, violence or disasters (see box: Addressing the RFL challenges of migration together).

Recent emergencies have demonstrated better responsiveness on the part of the Movement in terms of providing RFL services. Field practices have also clearly shifted – adapting to changes in the way people communicate and the availability of telecommunications and other technologies. The need for family contact is still acute in emergencies, but now RFL services include much greater provision of phone services than in 2011, while the more traditional exchanges of Red Cross Messages continue to decline, unless no other faster means of communication are available. The integration of other digital means (e.g. online tracing, etc.) into RFL services is another example of important ongoing changes (see below). Such changes are needed for RFL services to remain relevant and effective, whilst upholding our responsibility to safeguard essential working principles of the FLN and the Movement.

> *The leadership and managers of RFL, disaster management and other relevant departments in the Movement must increase their understanding of the risks of family separation in emergencies and include RFL as a priority in early-response plans.*

The framework for RFL intervention in emergencies and the means of intervening have undergone profound changes with very encouraging results

The 2011 progress report highlighted the investment made in new guidelines, mechanisms and tools supporting the domestic and international rapid-responses of the FLN. This effort has been pursued at an increasing pace, leading to the availability and continued development of modern and effective means for conducting RFL interventions in emergencies.

In addition to the 2009 *RFL in Disasters: Field Manual* and the RFL pool of specialists (see box below), particular attention was paid to integrating digital means into operational strategies, especially in emergencies. The family links website (see chart: RFL web-based 'ecosystem') has become an important platform providing support for RFL teams in affected zones and RFL services worldwide, in terms of public communication (e.g. posting alert banners to guide potential enquirers, interacting with other websites and social media) and online tracing services for beneficiaries (e.g. online registration of inquiries and directing beneficiaries to the relevant RFL services; publication of lists of sought persons). The FLN is more systematically informed about ongoing emergency operations through electronic RFL Updates, whose aim is, in particular, to enhance coordination of cross-border services when an emergency in one place affects countries and communities elsewhere. Members of the FLN may also decide to establish joint data sharing platforms for collecting and managing common data.

> *Members of the FLN need to familiarize themselves with resources of the Movement supporting interventions in emergencies, to integrate them in operating procedures and to use them.*

In 2014, almost two-thirds of the NS indicated that they had limited or no knowledge of the availability and purpose of these tools and mechanisms, which are at their disposal for use in any emergency requiring a domestic or international RFL response. Further dissemination, training and integration are required to optimize their operational use.

Important efforts have also been made together with the Federation to establish more effective links with its mechanisms and tools for disaster management. RFL is now explicitly referenced in the *guidelines for the use of the disaster relief emergency fund (DREF)*, and RFL has now received funding from the fund on several occasions. Field reports from the Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) include RFL, as does the *Contingency planning guide* (2012). After the April 2015 earthquake in Nepal, a member of the RFL pool of specialists was for the first time fully integrated into a field assessment and coordination team (FACT) deployed by the Federation.

The inclusion of RFL in NS emergency plans and agreements with public authorities is key for effective preparedness

A total of 66% of NS have now included RFL in their national disaster/emergency preparedness and response plans. This marks good progress since 2006 (40%) and 2011 (64%, with fewer NS providing feedback at that time), and should be continued. This should be a particular priority in countries most prone to disasters and emergencies. Nevertheless, it is also to be underlined that a majority of NS (56%) do not have internal tools, procedures and equipment specifically designed for RFL response in emergencies – most NS (54%) have no procedures for the administration of individual cases and the secure management of personal data in emergencies.

> *Despite significant progress in the positioning of RFL in emergency preparedness and response plans, important gaps need to be addressed to secure effective operational capacity.*

More attention still needs to be paid to achieving better inclusion of RFL in national emergency response plans established by public authorities. Only 42% of NS now say they have an agreement in place with public authorities that recognizes their role in restoring family links in emergencies. Too little visibility and understanding among public authorities of RFL issues and the role that NS can play – if necessary with international support from the FLN and the RFL pool of specialists – can seriously affect the effectiveness of the operational response when an emergency occurs. The FLN should take stock of the experience of those NS with agreements in place with their authorities in order to document and evaluate their practices, in particular the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder potentially involved in the prevention and treatment of family separations, and the established coordination mechanisms.

> *Particular focus should be put on strengthening NS dialogue with their public authorities to ensure that family separations are recognized as a risk in national emergency plans.*

Prevention of family separations in emergencies requires further development

Most of the new tools and mechanisms developed have focused on the response to new situations of family separation in emergencies. Little has been done to prevent and reduce the risk of separation, despite the

growing awareness of the lack of preventive work and the emergence of some notable practices. RFL services have an important role to play in the identification of these risks of separation and the establishment of effective preventive measures. This could include communication campaigns targeting specific territories or communities at risk, participating in early warning systems put in place by the authorities, the Movement or others, registering and tracking vulnerable people (e.g. children, evacuees), coordinating and sharing information with stakeholders that could inadvertently cause secondary separations when managing mass displacements, shelters, medical evacuations, mortal remains, etc.

More cooperation is needed with disaster management actors in the Movement

The Movement has the personnel and the means of intervention in many areas (e.g. health, psychosocial support (PSS), protection, construction and management of shelters, water and sanitation) to address the consequences of disasters and emergencies. Operational collaboration must be continued and intensified within the FLN wherever it usefully contributes to preventing family separation, facilitating RFL interventions or allowing cross-referrals of beneficiaries.

> *Interest in RFL remains uneven across the regions of the Federation and deserves more harmonized and sustained commitment from the leadership of the Secretariat and regions.*

Opportunities exist at the regional level to create exchanges with those responsible for disaster management, participate in the organization of simulation exercises, facilitate peer-to-peer support among NS and ensure the inclusion of RFL in operating procedures and standard training sessions for global, regional and national emergency response teams.

Recent emergencies have helped the Movement realize the importance of RFL practitioners coordinating with other teams of first responders, particularly emergency response units (ERU) and other teams involved in medical care and PSS, supporting for instance the potential prevention of family separation and the cross-referral of cases. An RFL training module has been included in the training for members of PSS-ERU, and a joint RFL-PSS e-learning module is now available to all volunteers and staff.[5]

RFL pool of specialists for emergencies

The RFL pool of specialists was created in 2009 as part of the measures for implementing the RFL Strategy and under the broader initiatives to strengthen the Movement's RFL rapid deployment capacity in emergencies. The pool comprises 65 ICRC and NS staff members from the Americas, Asia, Africa and Europe. The members of the pool have been trained and are available for deployment in emergencies within 24 to 48 hours.

The RFL pool of specialists is managed and deployed by the Central Tracing Agency. It is a resource made available to the Movement to support any emergency operation led by a NS, the ICRC or the Federation when confronted with overwhelming RFL needs. It may be included in the wider Movement system of emergency mechanisms and tools (e.g. the Federation's FACT or the ICRC's rapid deployment mechanism).

An RFL specialist from the Hong Kong branch of the Red Cross Society of China helping the Philippine Red Cross in Eastern Samar after Typhoon Haiyan. After her worried granddaughter filed an enquiry, this woman was located and offered satellite phone service to re-establish contact.

©Hong Kong Red Cross / 2013

Besides the 2009 *RFL in Disasters: Field Manual* and other relevant guidelines developed for the FLN, the pool is also equipped with all the necessary material to support the provision of services: computing and telecommunications equipment (satellite and mobile phones, satellite connections, radios, laptops), portable energy solutions (batteries, solar panels), stationery and office furniture. Once deployed, the pool can get support from online services in particular (see box: RFL web-based 'ecosystem') to direct, register and follow-up on beneficiaries, coordinate with the FLN and manage individual data.

Since 2009, 40 members of the RFL pool of specialists have been deployed in 19 emergencies.[6]

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[5] The RFL-PSS e-learning module is available on the ICRC's online campus and the Federation's learning platform.
[6] List of deployments of the RFL pool of specialists: Sumatra earthquake – October 2009, Haiti earthquake – January 2010, Chile earthquake – March 2010, tropical storm in Guatemala – June 2010, ethnic clashes in Kyrgyzstan – June 2010, Pakistan floods –

In April 2015, an RFL pool specialist joined the FACT for the first time. It was deployed by the Federation in Kathmandu for the assessment and set-up of the Movement response following the devastating earthquake in Nepal. The lessons learnt from this experience will contribute to the reflection towards a more consistent integration of the RFL pool of specialists in the FACT in future deployments.

- **The RFL pool of specialists can be deployed at the request of an ICRC delegation (Nigeria 2015), a National Society (Malta 2013) or the Federation (FACT Nepal 2015).**

2 Communication, promotion & positioning of RFL

Following the 2011 progress report, RFL communication, promotion and positioning was identified as a priority area of the RFL Strategy to be monitored in the 2012-2015 period. In general, considerable progress has been made in the past four years, at least by parts of the FLN. However, results of the survey show that raising internal and external awareness on RFL still remains a challenge for the FLN. Those NS who have invested in RFL-focused communication plans and activities often achieved higher degrees of internal awareness, leading to recognition of RFL in internal operational and strategic frameworks and statutes.

Furthermore, the development of RFL activities depends heavily on how familiar beneficiaries and external stakeholders are with the service. At the forefront, of course, are the beneficiaries themselves, who need to know about the services to use them. In order to receive operational support from the authorities, reach RFL-related agreements with them (e.g. on the inclusion of RFL in national emergency response plans) and obtain public funding, sustained dialogue, sharing of documented information and attractive RFL communication

> *As a matter of priority, efforts to raise awareness amongst key National Society staff, potential beneficiaries and main external stakeholders need to be maintained and reinforced.*

products are needed. This also applies in varying degrees to donors, media and other influential entities.

Achieving progress with communication efforts is likely to pay off only when they are undertaken in a persistent, systematic and targeted way, with support of NS leadership and through a collaborative approach, particularly between communication and RFL services.

New digital doors are now open, creating new means for the FLN to reach beneficiaries and key audiences and enhance internal communication flows

In recent decades, the way people communicate and look for information has changed radically. Important provisions of the RFL Strategy called for an ambitious modernization of the working methods of the FLN, in particular through better use of telecommunication and the internet.[7] The responsibility for protecting data managed by the FLN, in particular data concerning beneficiaries, which are at the heart of RFL activities, was a key concern when designing new technological tools for RFL (see box: Committed to protecting beneficiaries' data). What were described in the 2011 progress report as projects under development have today become a reality. A true RFL web-based 'ecosystem' has emerged (see chart) that now provides the

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July 2010, Post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire – December 2010, Libya crisis (Tunisia, Egypt) – February 2011, influx of migrants and refugees into southern Europe (Malta, Italy) – February 2011, drought in the Horn of Africa (Kenya) – August 2011, Mali crisis (Mauritania) – April 2013, inter-ethnic violence in Jonglei South Sudan – July 2013, influx of migrants and refugees in Malta – October 2013, Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines – November 2013, ongoing crisis in Ukraine – April/August 2014, Typhoon Hagupit in the Philippines – December 2014, Nigeria crisis – March 2015, influx of refugees and migrants into Djibouti following the crisis in Yemen – May 2015, Nepal earthquake – May/June 2015.

[7] See Strategic Objective 1, Action 4: Build the capacity to assess, adapt and incorporate technology for greater RFL programme efficiency; and Strategic Objective 2, Action 2: Strengthen coordination within the Family Links Network.

FLN with new opportunities for public communication, online services to beneficiaries, internal exchanges on work and secure management and sharing of data.

> The new **FLN website (**familylinks.icrc.org**)**, a measure implementing the RFL Strategy, was launched in English in 2012, and in French, Spanish and Arabic later on. Its aim is to enhance the reach of RFL to beneficiaries and other stakeholders. The site provides up-to-date RFL service information for 161 countries, including contact details for NS and ICRC delegations, and electronic contact forms. In specific crises, online tracing services to register people as "alive" or "missing" are activated. A total of 13 such sites[8] were active between 2011 and 2015. The site also contains real-life examples of RFL with news pieces and videos from around the world and thematic pages explaining RFL services.

The RFL web-based 'ecosystem'

familylinks.icrc.org is the FLN's public RFL website, managed by the ICRC in cooperation with the NS. It provides information and services to separated families and the general public. It can be linked to the Movement's other public websites and to social media.

Family Links Extranet is the FLN internal online platform for sharing RFL criteria, guidelines and best practices. It also provides community and work spaces. It is scheduled to be launched in late 2015.

Family Links Answers is the NS' case management system, where NS record all actions taken for RFL cases and follow-up. As of 31 August 2015, 20 NS use FL Answers.

RESTORING FAMILY LINKS web-based 'ecosystem'

For beneficiaries & the public
- familylinks.icrc.org
- Online Tracing

For the Family Links Network
- Family Links Extranet
- Data Sharing
- Secure File Exchange

For individual RFL services
- Family Links Answers
- Prot6

RFL data management

Online Tracing allows users to publish and/or collect data (through familylinks.icrc.org) related to RFL cases in connection with a specific situation.

Data Sharing is a platform for aggregating and sharing data within the FLN on RFL cases connected to a specific situation.

Secure File Exchange is in development. It will allow documents related to RFL cases to be exchanged securely within the FLN.

Prot6 is the ICRC's case management system, where it records all actions taken for RFL cases and follow-up. As of 31 August 2015, 58 ICRC delegations use Prot6.

With more than 22,000 individual records published since mid-2014, over 3,000 tracing requests received online and over 1.3 million pages viewed since the launch of the website in late 2012, familylinks.icrc.org has significantly increased beneficiary outreach and stakeholders' RFL awareness. Over 41% of NS indicated an increase in RFL-related contacts through the website.

90% of NS have institutional websites or social media accounts, of which 68% include information on RFL and only 36% contain links to familylinks.icrc.org. These digital resources should be utilized more, and there is strong potential for their further integration into operational strategies (e.g. guidance and services for victims of disasters to strengthen access to RFL services, cross-border data sharing on tracing cases along migration routes) and for enhanced communication synergies and collaborative work among members of the FLN (e.g. sharing experiences in an interactive way, joint

> *The development of tools for online communication and data management greatly increases work efficiency and expands the reach of RFL to target audiences.*
>
> *These tools cannot, however, replace RFL practitioners in the field or the production of other promotional materials and tools, which must be continued as needed.*

RFL communication/fundraising campaigns). The ability to combine these digital resources with RFL practitioners in the field is a key strength of the FLN that other internet actors do not share.

Access to the internet may remain a serious obstacle for the use of these tools. Access is generally considered easy only in major cities and for RFL staff at headquarters. For potential beneficiaries, people in

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[8] Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Somalia, Nepal, migrants in Europe, Côte d'Ivoire, Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, Typhoon Hagupit in the Philippines, Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu, northern Chile floods, Nepal earthquake, South Sudan.

rural areas and small towns, and RFL staff at branch level, access is reported to be partial or difficult. This also underlines the need to continue traditional means of promotion and information sharing based on the reality in the field. At the same time, use of the mobile version of <u>familylinks.icrc.org</u>, which is currently in development, will increase due to mobile phone coverage being considered significantly higher than other, traditional means of accessing the internet.

Awareness of RFL within the FLN is a key prerequisite to strengthening the Movement's RFL response

Progress has been made on coordination and information sharing within the FLN. A majority of NS (76%) coordinate regularly or occasionally with other components of the Movement. Over the last couple of years, the Central Tracing Agency has seen the amount of contact increase continuously and the exchanges grow more dynamic, for instance through the regular RFL Updates to members of the FLN about the response in specific emergencies or the high level of participation in the latest RFL surveys in 2014 and 2015.

Of the NS surveyed, 57% have produced RFL communication products addressing an internal audience and 38% have implemented communication plans containing elements of RFL that also target their own staff and volunteers.

Such efforts to enhance internal awareness of RFL can be seen as a prerequisite for the inclusion of RFL in NS operational and strategic plans, since a clear correlation exists between such inclusion and the perceived level of RFL awareness.

Scrutinizing different levels within NS reveals important differences. Following the 2011 recommendations, it is interesting to note that the disaster management departments now head the list of the most knowledgeable departments on RFL (judged as having a good or average level of awareness by 74% of the NS), although challenges remain to achieve better integration of RFL in emergency preparedness and response plans (see Part 1). RFL awareness amongst central leadership and senior management is viewed as good or average by 68% of the NS, but by 29% as only basic or non-existent. Support from leadership and senior management is key in achieving better strategic development and positioning

> The **2013 statutory meetings** in Sydney were the scene of a range of important RFL promotional initiatives organized by Australian Red Cross, with a client providing a testimony at the Humanitarian Forum, an RFL stall set-up within the Humanitarian village displaying the work of the FLN through videos, photos and printed material, and a lunchtime forum on RFL and migration focusing on boat disasters.

of RFL, which indeed has progressed, although with significant resource limitations (see Part 3). Results regarding communication departments are very similar, requiring further attention and collaboration with RFL services, specifically to create meaningful communications plans targeting influential internal and external audiences (see below).

Awareness amongst branch leadership and social welfare, health, fundraising and human resources departments is perceived by a majority as no more than basic. It may often deprive RFL services of new chances to reach beneficiaries, who are already in contact with the aforementioned services, or to mobilize more resources.

Beneficiaries must be made aware of the existence of RFL services – otherwise the service is meaningless

Actual and potential beneficiaries among separated families must be aware of the existence of RFL services. However, awareness amongst those beneficiaries is rated by 34% of NS as either basic or non-existent. Presumably due to lack of resources or internal support, only 12% of the RFL services consider themselves as very efficient in reaching potential beneficiaries, while 26% rate their efficiency as unsatisfactory.

Wherever beneficiaries are, more effective outreach strategies and activities focusing on RFL should be more systematically implemented. Their implementation in the framework of RFL communication plans (see box on the right), with the fullest possible support from other NS services (communication, migration services, disaster management, etc.), can significantly improve the dissemination of information and knowledge on RFL among beneficiaries. Where such plans have been developed and implemented, beneficiaries' awareness rated as good or average rose from 51% to 81%.

> The development of a **Guide for RFL Communication Plans for National Societies** is a major achievement of the RFL Strategy Implementation Group. It has been shared in English, French, Spanish and Arabic with the whole FLN.
>
> The Guide emphasizes that RFL communication plans need to be tailored to the specific objectives of a communication initiative, the intended target audiences, the key messages and the chosen communication means and tools (e.g. it is important to differentiate between promotion of services to potential beneficiaries and communication for fundraising purposes targeting donors), and each of these aspects needs to be included in the plans.

> *NS are strongly encouraged to develop and continuously implement a communication plan related to RFL and use the guide as support.*

A sizeable number of NS (43%) have developed and implemented an RFL communication plan – either a broad one on all their activities or a specific one relating to RFL – covering to various degrees all major audiences. Still, more than half of NS have not yet developed and implemented communication plans. It has already been noted that awareness of RFL is perceived as significantly higher within NS, and amongst external target stakeholders, in particular other organizations, as well as the media and donors, when an RFL related communication plan is in place.

Additionally, RFL needs and capacity assessments that have continued to multiply within the FLN since 2011[9] have often been a very effective means of strengthening contacts and interaction between RFL services, potential beneficiaries and other targeted stakeholders inside or outside the NS.

Awareness amongst other stakeholders can greatly support and facilitate RFL services in multiple ways

A broad range and variety of communication products on RFL have been produced by 71% of NS, covering various target audiences. Yet 29% of NS indicate that they have not produced any such products. Many important promotion activities related to RFL were organized between 2012 and 2015 by NS and the ICRC, including large scale campaigns. Special anniversaries of RFL services and specific international days, such as the International Day of the Disappeared, were also taken advantage of to that end. Numerous audiovisual, audio and printed productions were developed, many of which are accessible via familylinks.icrc.org.

Awareness of RFL services amongst other stakeholders is nevertheless rated rather low. Amongst government authorities, international organizations and NGOs, and in particular the media, donors and the general public, awareness is largely considered only basic or non-existent. Low awareness can also be seen as a result of rather limited coordination and information sharing with public authorities, international organizations and NGOs (only 44% of NS indicate regular or occasional coordination with them). Yet, the effectiveness of RFL services may depend on each achieving a better understanding of the others' roles and responsibilities, with a view to increasing access to and information for beneficiaries; establishing operational agreements, partnerships and synergies; and seeking resources and funding for RFL.

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[9] See Introduction and Annex B, Figure 5

Committed to protecting beneficiaries' data

A code of conduct on data protection for the FLN[10]

In recent years, the Movement has made very good progress on developing and implementing information management tools across the FLN. These tools have enabled a quicker response to the needs of beneficiaries and enhanced the quality of the services provided to them. Whilst communication and the transmission of information is made easier by these tools, their adoption involves additional **risks to the protection of personal information**.

The FLN reaffirms its long standing commitment to protecting **beneficiaries' fundamental rights to privacy and confidentiality**,[11] and to place importance on having **direct contact** with them. For it is this **unique way of working face to face** that helps preserve the trust of beneficiaries, authorities and stakeholders alike and sets RFL services apart from the increasing number of competitors that have emerged in the virtual world in recent years.

The ***RFL Code of Conduct on Data Protection*** has been drafted with this in mind, and in response to an increasingly complex and stringent regulatory environment in terms of data protection both on the national and regional level.

It sets out the basic principles and procedures that members of the FLN should follow to ensure that the information they receive from beneficiaries is protected and used in beneficiaries' best interest. It seeks to respond to questions such as: How do we protect minors from abuse when publishing their photos online? How do we comply with data protection principles when handling the personal data of sought persons without their consent? How do we follow the principle of "do no harm" when transferring beneficiaries' personal data to third parties?

It is recognized, however, that the implementation of the principles contained in the code of conduct represents a major challenge, hence:

- **An Application Group for the RFL Code of Conduct on Data Protection will be set up to ensure proper implementation of the Code worldwide through dissemination, benchmarking, training and sharing of best practices.**
- **All FLN managers and NS leaders concerned need to familiarize themselves with the contents of the Code of Conduct.**
- **All staff and volunteers who handle personal data must receive training on the Code and data protection principles in general.**
- **All NS and ICRC delegations must take the necessary steps to ensure the application of the Code and its integration into RFL practice.**

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[10] Consult the RFL Update on the release of the *RFL Code of Conduct on Data Protection* shared with the FLN.

[11] The protection of personal data and confidentiality in relation to the emergence of new technologies was identified as a challenge and mentioned in Action 4 of the Strategic Objective 1 of the RFL Strategy (2008-2018). The fundamental right to privacy is enshrined in both universal (UDHR48, ICCPR66) and regional legal instruments (ECHR50, the CoE Convention 1981, CFREU 2000).

3 Resources & partnerships for RFL

Progress in the strategic positioning of RFL services has not been matched with an increase in the resources available for their development

The expansion and strengthening of RFL action and the modernization of tools and methods in use are bearing fruit, with very encouraging results in terms of the increase in services provided to families and casework exchanges within the FLN.[12] However, the FLN remains fragile due to a lack of commitment within the Movement in securing sufficient human and financial resources to develop and sometimes even maintain services at an adequate level for the identified and potential needs of separated families.

> **The lack of additional resources for RFL services remains largely unfavourable to the implementation of ambitious investment strategies for the development of operational actions in line with changing needs.**

RFL has been confirmed to be integrated into the strategic and development plans of 76% of NS, indicating the continuation of a positive and significant increase since 2006 (less than 40%) and through 2011 (67%). However, the inclusion of RFL in annual operational and budgetary plans marks a relative slowdown when compared to 2011.

As in the previous period, RFL budgets have generally remained stagnant (52% of NS) and even declined (17% of NS) since 2011. Almost two-thirds of the observed decreases and increases (31% of NS) in resources relate to RFL services being heavily dependent on ICRC funding, which shifts with the ICRC's commitment and operational priorities in the different contexts concerned. Only a dozen NS have managed to independently mobilize additional human and financial resources for their RFL services.

In general, many of the Movement's components face economic constraints when financing their activities. However, specific obstacles remain for RFL services, further reducing their chances of benefiting from additional resources.

The targets for increased resource mobilization and funding diversification for RFL have not been achieved

Despite a sharp increase in communication tools and products dedicated to RFL (see Part 2), they remain underutilized when looking for donors and funds. Donors are perceived as being the least informed about RFL among external audiences, while even within the NS, those responsible for fundraising are also identified as less aware of RFL issues.[13] The general weakness of many NS[14] in the field of fundraising also results in a minimal number of NS (less than twenty) having taken into account RFL in resource mobilization strategies and activities. As part of the Federation-wide Resource Mobilization Strategy of 2011, networks of fundraising practitioners have been set up in the Movement and new opportunities to help NS have been created (tools, training, exchange of practices, etc.). However, these initiatives, and more generally

> **Efforts to secure more financial autonomy or diversification of funding have remained insufficient and without convincing results.**
>
> **Developing more effective strategies of fundraising and diversification of sources of financing for RFL calls for more resolute internal collaborations.**

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[12] See Annex B, Figures 2, 3 and 4. 53% of NS have observed an increase in casework exchanges with other RFL services in the FLN since 2011.

[13] See Annex B, Figures 16 and 17.

[14] In preparation for the Federation-wide Resource Mobilization Strategy of 2011, 56% of NS were rated as having a low capacity for resource mobilization; only 26% of NS had national resource mobilization strategies, and 36% had trained personnel for fundraising.

the priorities and work regarding fundraising, are mostly unknown to the FLN. Interactions between RFL services and fundraisers have remained minimal. Yet opportunities do exist to better profile RFL to donors as a core activity of the Movement's humanitarian action.

Although a majority of financially autonomous RFL services have managed to be integrated in the regular budget of their NS, funding specifically assigned to RFL from stakeholders external to the Movement (e.g. private donors, corporate sector, other organizations) has remained rare (with hardly a dozen concerned NS), modest and short-lived.

The ICRC covers 50% to 100% of the RFL budgets of about 41% of NS.[15] In fact, the ICRC remains the most notable source of funding for many RFL services; its budget and ability to raise funds guarantee the operation and continuity of a large part of the activities of the FLN. Despite lower funding and more limited periods of engagement, several NS have already seized on the possibility of including their RFL response to emergencies in their requests for funding from the Federation's disaster relief emergency fund (DREF).[16]This is to be welcomed as a positive evolution.

Although 34% of NS report having agreements with public authorities recognizing their role in RFL,[17] only 13 RFL services currently benefit from public funds to cover significant parts of their budgets.[18] The conclusion of such agreements is in line with the recommendations of the RFL Strategy[19] and should be encouraged, in particular to formalize the integration of RFL services into the role entrusted to NS by the authorities (for example, reception of migrants, emergency preparedness, rescue services at public gatherings, services for victims of conflict and violence, the National Information Bureau mandate, etc.). Additional explanatory and promotional efforts with public authorities are required to better raise their awareness about the relevance and specificity of RFL services within such missions, and also to increase funding.

> **NS must better exploit opportunities to integrate RFL services in their role as auxiliary to public authorities, including the possibility of obtaining public funding.**

The FLN is strengthened by intensified exchanges among its members

The ICRC remains committed to its operational partnerships with more than 80 NS. They involve taking coordinated action in the field of RFL and providing financial and technical support in their respective countries. Operational partnerships emphasize the responsibility of the partners to build their coordination and cooperation on mutual trust, understanding and respect, and to strive for increased transparency and accountability.

Furthermore, as in 2011, less than five NS were able to commit international financial and human resources in support of durable RFL partnerships with sister NS. Three main obstacles were observed: very few RFL services manage to maintain a sufficient internal set-up enabling mid- to long-term secondment of RFL experts; international departments rarely identify RFL as a priority area for international cooperation, despite recognized expertise within their own NS; finally, potential recipients of such international support (NS or ICRC delegations) have great difficulty in formalizing, planning and operationalizing partnerships open to other NS.

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[15] RFL services for 25% of NS are fully funded by the ICRC; see Annex B, in the comments for Figures 30 and 31.

[16] The regulations of the Federation's disaster relief emergency fund explicitly refer to RFL as an area of action it may support. For example, the NS of Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Malta were lately granted funds from the disaster relief emergency fund covering emergency interventions for migrants, including RFL.

[17] More NS even confirmed that their RFL role is recognized in national laws or regulations (43%) or in agreements and plans related to interventions in emergencies (42%); see Annex B, Figures 8 and 15.

[18] In these cases, contributions covering more than half of their RFL budgets. Only 8 other NS indicated some lower amount of public funding.

[19] This recommendation appears in particular in Objective 2, Action 4 of the RFL Strategy on increasing interaction with the authorities and with other organizations, and was repeated in the progress report of 2011.

Despite these constraints, a dozen NS have nevertheless managed to provide more limited but very appreciated support to sister NS (e.g. participation in assessments, organizing training, etc.) or contribute effectively to the development of new collaborative tools (e.g. the "Trace the Face" project for migrants in Europe[20] and the new *RFL Code of Conduct on Data Protection* for the FLN).

RFL services' exposure to international exchanges is clearly and steadily progressing. Regional and trans-regional working platforms dedicated to RFL have multiplied and greatly contributed to the emergence of a more inclusive and interactive global FLN.[21] This facilitates discussions about regional operational challenges and practices, as well as better cohesion and coordinated response strategies for facing more complex phenomena regarding the separation of families. With few exceptions,[22] these platforms have been established and maintained under the leadership and with the means of the ICRC and where regional and continental RFL focal points have been appointed. Some platforms are still fragile and entire regions are not covered, often due to the ICRC's changing priorities and limited resources.

> **Regional and trans-regional platforms, which bring together RFL services from the NS, the ICRC and the Federation, should be maintained and further developed.**
>
> **It is essential for the ICRC, with the support of the FLN, to maintain and reinforce the network of regional and continental RFL focal points.**

The development of the RFL web-based ecosystem (see chart in Part 2) also supports more effective interactions in terms of public communication, services for separated families, sharing methodological and operational information and handling beneficiaries' enquiries and records.

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[20] See http://familylinks.icrc.org/europe/en
[21] In line in particular with Strategic Objective 2, Action 2 of the RFL Strategy.
[22] For example, sub-regional RFL groups in Nordic countries, German-speaking countries and North America.

Addressing the RFL challenges of migration together

Wars, violence, climate change and the hope of escaping misery fuel migration and the tragedies that have come to be associated with it. No day goes by without news about shipwrecks, arrests, deportations, disappearances, xenophobic violence or human trafficking – from the Mediterranean and southern Africa, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean to the Americas. The Movement is committed[23] to better understanding the humanitarian consequences of migration and to proposing more appropriate responses.

Migrants at Bayeun Shelter, East Aceh, Indonesia, call their families to let them know that they're alive and safe, with the support of the Indonesian Red Cross Society and the ICRC.

CC BY-NC-ND / ICRC / Fitri Adi Anugrah / June 2015

Helping families cope with the anguish when their relatives disappear on distant and uncertain roads; finding people on the move, who are often in hiding, and helping them; overcoming the political, legal and administrative constraints migrants face and providing them with RFL services without discrimination and irrespective of their legal status; giving the thousands of migrants who have died back their dignity, identity and family – all of these are pressing humanitarian needs to which the FLN is well placed to respond. For the FLN, the proliferation and complexity of migrant-related family separations are a major collective challenge and are now perceived by RFL services as the principal need to be addressed.[24] Preparing for new emergencies related to migration (e.g. migrants who are direct victims of shipwrecks, accidents or catastrophes; diaspora communities affected by the disappearance of loved ones due to disasters or violence in their countries of origin) has also been identified as a priority for NS and regional coordination.

Several members of the FLN in Europe take part in the Trace the Face service. It gives migrants and their families another way to look for their loved ones – publishing pictures on the internet and on posters.

In recent years, a growing number of RFL initiatives, sometimes experimental, have been developed on behalf of migrants. A distinguishing feature of the FLN is its presence in most countries of origin, of transit and of destination of migrants and their families. This represents an opportunity to provide services along migratory routes in response to the RFL needs of vulnerable migrants. Considerable difficulties such as the disappearances of migrants and the complexity of working with people in transit is reflected by both the gradual increase in tracing requests and the very modest rate of success. This joint effort therefore needs to be reinforced to meet the needs of migrants and their families.

- **Given the magnitude of the RFL needs of migrants and their families and despite the difficulties, it is imperative to continue building a more coherent and effective collective response from the FLN.**

- **Common and coordinated operational strategies need to be developed on a scale commensurate with that of the main migration routes and especially in regional and trans-regional working platforms.**

- **Weak links of the FLN must be strengthened along migratory routes and a stronger commitment is required by all components of the Movement concerned in order to improve their response capabilities.**

- **Developing innovative partnerships, methods and tools for the tracing of missing migrants is a priority and must be encouraged.**

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[23] See the 2009 Policy on Migration of the Federation and the Movement and the Resolution on migration of the 31st International Conference in 2011.
[24] See Annex B, Figure 6.

Conclusion The way forward

This second intermediate report marks the final phase of the RFL Strategy's plan of action. Reflecting on the past eight years, the FLN continues to endorse and support the vision and the strategic direction that the RFL Strategy initially proposed and has made considerable progress in implementing the actions foreseen therein. A more collaborative mindset now characterizes interactions within the FLN, allowing members to gain a broader understanding of family separations and progressively enlarge their areas of work and methods of intervention.

Important advances outlined by the RFL Strategy have been achieved. Other, more nuanced progress has also been made by components of the Movement in their individual areas of responsibility within the RFL Strategy and in response to the particular RFL needs in their respective countries and within the limits of existing capacities. Some delays, setbacks, and obstacles have also been observed. Some measures from the Strategy's implementation plan have been abandoned[25] or postponed.[26] The recommendations of this report encourage those responsible for RFL services and their leaders to further pursue efforts and overcome those obstacles deemed detrimental to the development of activities in favour of separated families.

> **The common heritage of the FLN has been considerably enriched by the development of modernized methods and communication tools, and of new mechanisms for operational coordination and synergy.**
>
> **RFL services have a duty to familiarize themselves with and take advantage of these resources, and to integrate them into their operational and development plans in favour of separated families.**

Some within the FLN have highlighted the fact that the RFL Strategy has allowed many RFL services to escape from isolation and unite around a common project and vision. It is likely that ten years will not be sufficient to achieve all objectives, particularly when a number of their provisions require long-term, or even permanent, commitments. The RFL Strategy nevertheless constitutes a comprehensive and ambitious roadmap in which each component has been able to find inspiration and guidance to develop its own operational priorities.

The current RFL Strategy will come to an end in 2018. The RFL Strategy Implementation Group and the various RFL actors that have been consulted agree on the importance of ensuring the elaboration of new strategic orientations for the future of the FLN. To this end, they also agree that a working process should be undertaken in 2016-2017 requiring support and commitment from the FLN and leaders of all components of the Movement.

- **All those responsible for RFL services as well as the leadership of concerned NS, of the ICRC and of the Federation will pursue the necessary efforts for the implementation of the 2008-2018 RFL Strategy by taking into account the recommendations of this report and the global and individual results of the surveys.**

- **The Central Tracing Agency and the RFL Strategy Implementation Group[27] will evaluate the impact of the RFL Strategy on the FLN as part of the Movement's updated global mapping of**

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[25] For example, due to lack of planning and development of international contributions and partnerships within the FLN, the contributions assessment, which was supposed to take place every three years (Strategic Objective 1, Actions 1.5.5 and 1.5.8) was not organized.

[26] Mainly the framework for RFL performance management for the totality of the FLN (Strategic Objective 1, Action 3).

[27] The group will resume its work in 2016 with a new composition and a mandate adjusted to the 2016-2018 priorities.

RFL capacities,[28] to be conducted in 2016-2017. Its findings will inform the future policy and strategic framework of the Movement on RFL.

- It will be essential to ensure the participation of the leadership of concerned NS, of the ICRC and of the Federation in the process of developing and adopting the future policy and strategic framework of the Movement on RFL.

- It will also be key for all members of the FLN to engage actively in the development of the future policy and strategic framework on RFL, ensuring that consultations take place with relevant actors within the Movement and outside it, particularly those contributing to enhanced effectiveness and coordination of RFL action (such as actors involved in disaster management, migration services, child protection, health, etc.). As a complementary measure, the FLN should draft an implementation plan to further develop its RFL action at the global and regional levels from 2018 onwards.

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[28] In preparation for the RFL Strategy, a global mapping of RFL capacities was also carried out in 2005-2006. It will serve as a basis for comparison.

Annex A: Participation in the 2014 and 2015 surveys on the RFL Strategy (as of 15 July 2015)

2011
129 NS
68%

2014
157 NS
81.5%

2015
143 NS
75.6%

Ease of completing the survey
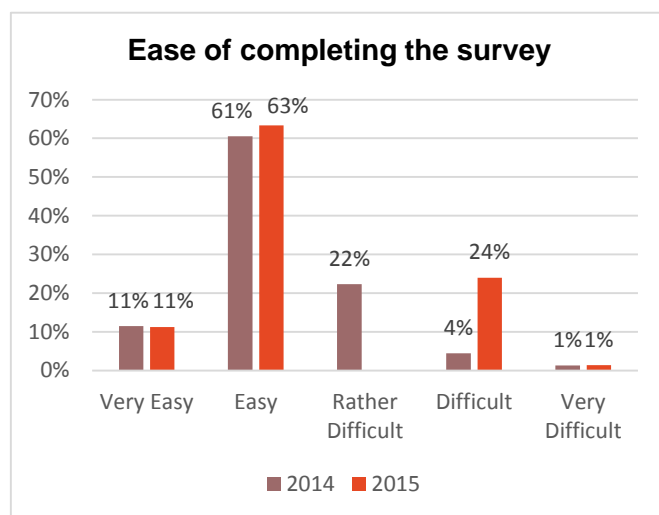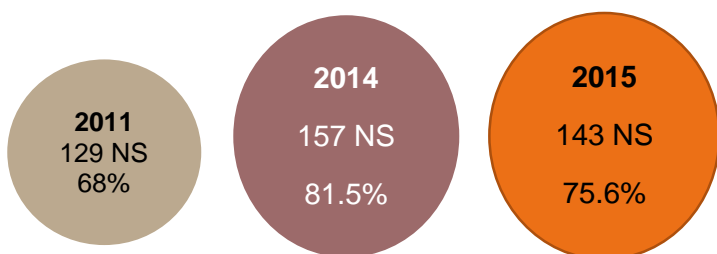
- Online surveys made available through familylinks.icrc.org are effective: there is a high rate of participation and satisfaction.

- Comments about the difficulty of completing the surveys related to the length of the 2015 survey and confusion due to the phrasing of some questions.

	2014 Survey	2015 Survey
Afghanistan	✓	✓
Albania	✓	✓
Algeria		✓
Andorra		
Angola		✓
Antigua and Barbuda		
Argentina	✓	✓
Armenia	✓	✓
Australia	✓	✓
Austria	✓	✓
Azerbaijan	✓	✓
Bahamas	✓	
Bahrain		✓
Bangladesh	✓	✓
Barbados		
Belarus	✓	✓
Belgium (Flemish-speaking)	✓	✓
Belgium (French-speaking)	✓	✓
Belize	✓	✓
Benin	✓	✓
Bolivia	✓	✓
Bosnia and Herzegovina	✓	✓
Botswana	✓	✓
Brazil	✓	✓
Brunei Darussalam		
Bulgaria	✓	✓
Burkina Faso	✓	✓
Burundi	✓	✓

	2014 Survey	2015 Survey
Cambodia	✓	✓
Cameroon	✓	✓
Canada		✓
Cape Verde		
Central African Republic	✓	✓
Chad	✓	✓
Chile	✓	
China	✓	✓
China (Hong Kong branch)	✓	✓
China (Macau branch)	✓	
Colombia	✓	✓
Comoros	✓	✓
Congo (Democratic Republic of)	✓	✓
Congo (Republic of the)	✓	✓
Cook Islands	✓	✓
Costa Rica		✓
Côte d'Ivoire	✓	✓
Croatia	✓	✓
Cuba	✓	✓
Cyprus	✓	✓
Czech Republic	✓	✓
Denmark	✓	✓
Djibouti	✓	
Dominica	✓	
Dominican Republic	✓	✓
Ecuador	✓	
Egypt		✓

	2014 Survey	2015 Survey
El Salvador	✓	✓
Equatorial Guinea		
Eritrea (not recognized)		
Estonia	✓	✓
Ethiopia	✓	✓
Fiji	✓	✓
Finland	✓	✓
France	✓	✓
Gabon	✓	
Gambia	✓	✓
Georgia	✓	✓
Germany	✓	✓
Ghana	✓	✓
Greece	✓	✓
Grenada		
Guatemala		✓
Guinea	✓	✓
Guinea-Bissau	✓	✓
Guyana		
Haiti	✓	✓
Honduras	✓	✓
Hungary	✓	✓
Iceland		
India	✓	✓
Indonesia	✓	✓
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	✓	✓
Iraq	✓	✓
Ireland	✓	✓
Israel	✓	
Italy	✓	
Jamaica		

	2014 Survey	2015 Survey
Japan	✓	✓
Jordan	✓	✓
Kazakhstan	✓	✓
Kenya	✓	✓
Kiribati	✓	
Korea (Democratic People's Republic of)		
Korea (Republic of)	✓	
Kuwait	✓	
Kyrgyzstan	✓	✓
Lao People's Democratic Republic		✓
Latvia		
Lebanon	✓	✓
Lesotho	✓	✓
Liberia	✓	✓
Libya	✓	
Liechtenstein		
Lithuania		
Luxembourg	✓	
Macedonia (former Yugoslav Republic of)	✓	✓
Madagascar	✓	✓
Malawi	✓	✓
Malaysia	✓	✓
Maldives	✓	✓
Mali	✓	✓
Malta	✓	✓
Marshall Islands	✓	✓
Mauritania	✓	✓
Mauritius		✓
Mexico	✓	✓

	2014 Survey	2015 Survey
Micronesia (Federated States of)	✓	✓
Moldova (Republic of)	✓	✓
Monaco	✓	✓
Mongolia		
Montenegro	✓	✓
Morocco	✓	✓
Mozambique		
Myanmar	✓	✓
Namibia	✓	
Nepal	✓	✓
Netherlands	✓	✓
New Zealand	✓	✓
Nicaragua	✓	✓
Niger	✓	✓
Nigeria	✓	✓
Norway	✓	✓
Pakistan	✓	
Palau	✓	✓
Palestine	✓	
Panama		✓
Papua New Guinea	✓	✓
Paraguay	✓	✓
Peru	✓	✓
Philippines	✓	✓
Poland	✓	✓
Portugal	✓	✓
Qatar	✓	✓
Romania	✓	✓
Russian Federation	✓	✓
Rwanda	✓	✓
Saint Kitts and Nevis		✓

	2014 Survey	2015 Survey
Saint Lucia		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines		
Samoa	✓	✓
San Marino		
Sao Tome and Principe		
Saudi Arabia	✓	✓
Senegal	✓	✓
Serbia	✓	✓
Seychelles		
Sierra Leone	✓	✓
Singapore	✓	✓
Slovakia	✓	✓
Slovenia	✓	
Solomon Islands	✓	
Somalia (Puntland and South/Central)	✓	✓
Somalia (Somaliland)	✓	
South Africa		
South Sudan	✓	✓
Spain	✓	✓
Sri Lanka	✓	✓
Sudan	✓	✓
Suriname	✓	✓
Swaziland	✓	✓
Sweden	✓	✓
Switzerland	✓	✓
Syrian Arab Republic		✓
Tajikistan	✓	✓
Tanzania (United Republic of)	✓	✓
Thailand	✓	✓

	2014 Survey	2015 Survey
Timor-Leste	✓	✓
Togo	✓	✓
Tonga	✓	✓
Trinidad and Tobago	✓	
Tunisia		✓
Turkey	✓	✓
Turkmenistan	✓	
Tuvalu (not recognized)	✓	
Uganda	✓	
Ukraine	✓	✓
United Arab Emirates		
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	✓	✓
United States of America	✓	✓
Uruguay		
Uzbekistan	✓	
Vanuatu	✓	✓
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)		
Viet Nam	✓	✓
Yemen	✓	
Zambia	✓	✓
Zimbabwe	✓	✓
Other non-recognized RC/RC entities		
Red Cross of Kosovo	✓	✓

Annex B: Selected results from the 2014 & 2015 surveys on the RFL Strategy

This annex presents the highlights of the consolidated results of two surveys completed by National Societies (NS) in 2014 and 2015. The first focused on integrating RFL into emergency preparedness and response, and the second on resources and partnerships for RFL as well as on RFL communication, promotion and positioning.

Percentages expressed in this document are based on the number of NS that responded to the surveys in 2014 (157) and 2015 (143). Wherever possible, a comparative analysis with previous surveys is included herein.[29]

Overview of RFL needs, services & trends

Figure 1:   National Societies providing RFL Services

2011
124 NS
95%

2014
145 NS
92%

• The vast majority of NS provide RFL services, although not all have the same capacity or resources.

Figure 2: Trend in casework exchanges with other components of the Family Links Network since 2011

Trend in casework exchanges with the FLN since 2011 (2015)

11%   7%

29%

53% saw an increase

■ Increased   ■ Remained the same   ■ Decreased   ■ I don't know
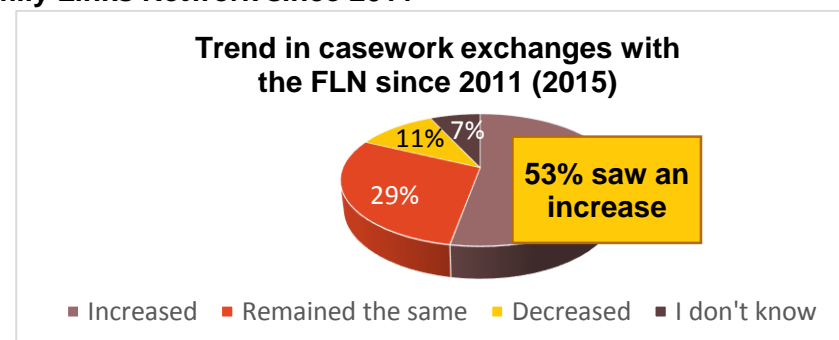
• 53% of NS stated that casework exchanges within the Family Links Network (FLN) have increased since 2011.

• In RFL services, tracing missing persons forms a substantial part of NS' casework, with the highest figures attributed to recent armed conflicts and other situations of violence[30] (80% of NS) and migration (78% of NS).

• The provision of phone services is on the rise, again with the highest figures attributed to current armed conflicts and other situations of violence (59% of NS) and migration (55% of NS).

• The provision of RFL services in connection with past armed conflicts (before 2000) and other situations of violence as well as natural disasters remain an important part of NS' caseloads. A majority of NS have reported that these RFL services have remained at the same level or declined since 2011.

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[29] This includes the 2005-2006 global mapping of the Movement's RFL capacities and the 2011 monitoring survey on the implementation of the RFL Strategy.

[30] Armed conflicts and other situations of violence which have occurred since 2000.

Figures 3 & 4: Trends in RFL services provided by the ICRC with operational partners

RFL services for making contact with family (2003-2014)

- RCM for detainees
- RCM for others
- Phone calls (incl. VTC)
- Oral messages for detainees
- Family visits to detainees

RFL services for tracing & reunification (2003-2014)

- New tracing requests
- Separated children registered
- People located (successful tracing requests)
- Families reunited
- Travel documents provided

Global RFL casework trends are difficult to verify as the FLN is not equipped with a consolidated monitoring and statistic system. The preceding statistics on RFL services performed worldwide by the ICRC – often with NS as operational partners – confirm the following trends observed in responses received from NS to the surveys concerning the evolution of needs and services:

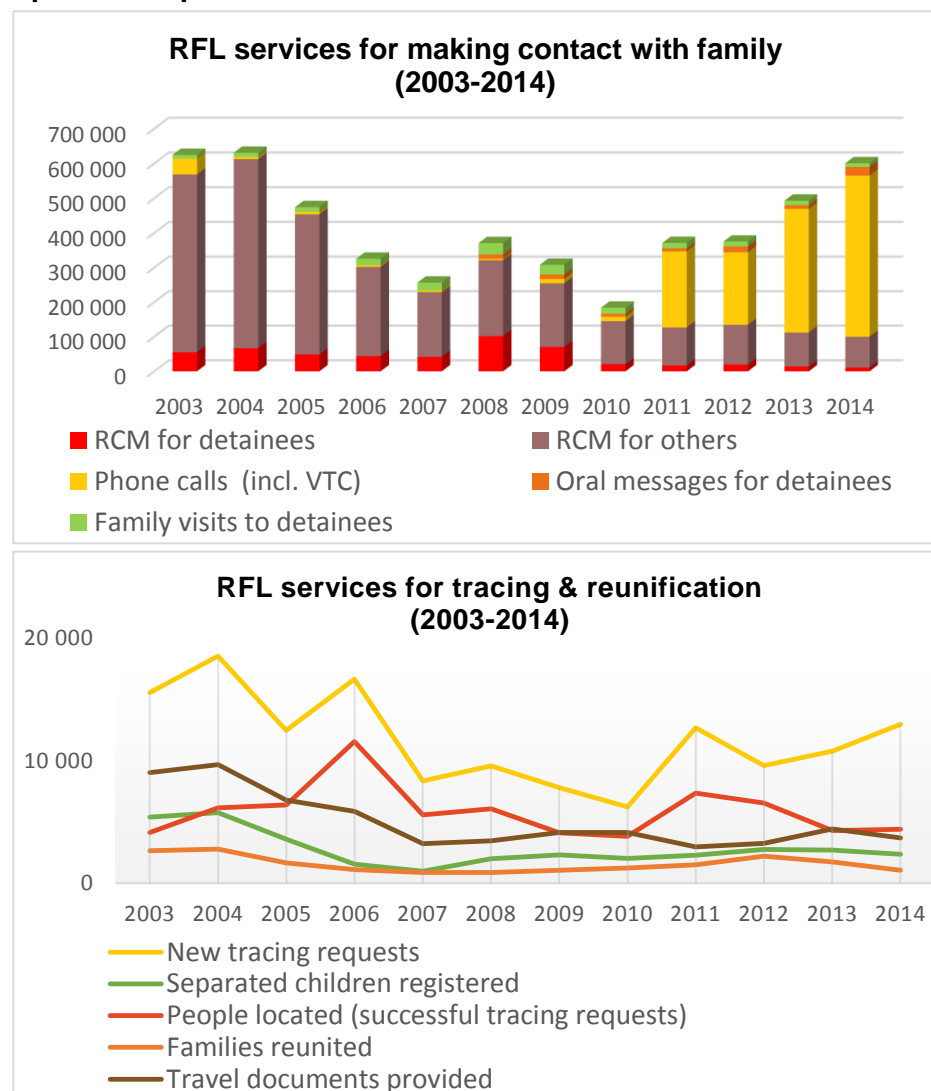- The provision of phone services (including Video Teleconference Calls or VTC) is becoming a standard practice in response to all situations.

- The use of Red Cross Messages (RCMs) is on the decline overall, but remains essential where there are no other services available (e.g. in detention, in regions with limited access to internet and mobile communication networks).

- The significant growth in the number of tracing requests that have been opened since 2011 can be attributed to the following reasons: (i) the intensification of and/or increased number of armed conflicts; (ii) the development of new strategies to trace missing migrants; (iii) a broader policy regarding the opening of cases (less restrictive criteria despite the difficulties in locating missing persons); and (iv) the fact that enquirers are able to approach the FLN more easily to request its services.

Figure 5: RFL needs assessments

RFL needs and risks assessments since 2011

In progress 15%

Completed 36%

49%

- Yes
- No
- In progress

2008-2011

47% of NS had completed a RFL needs assessment
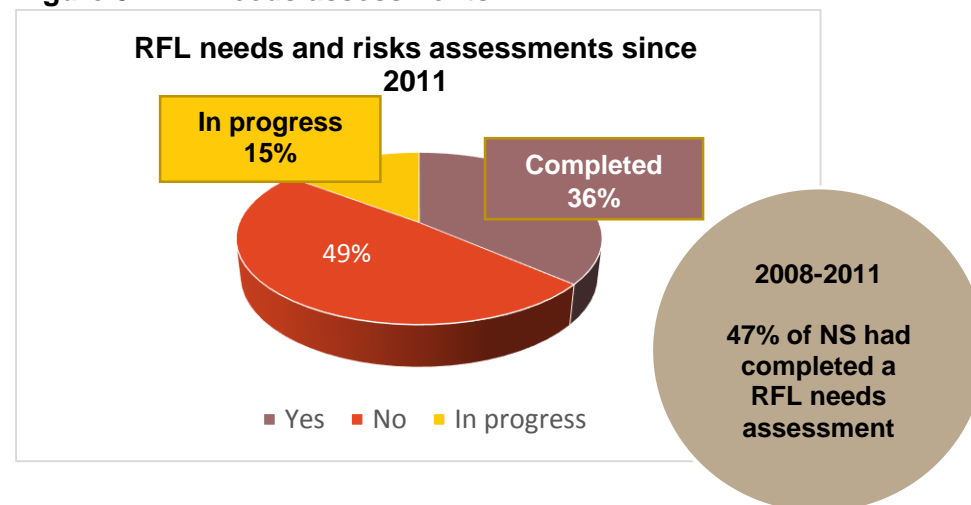
- With 51% of NS confirming they had completed or were in the process of conducting RFL needs assessments, the positive trend in their use observed before 2011 has continued, allowing the FLN to be gradually more engaged in assessing changing RFL needs and risks.

Figure 6: Knowledge of RFL needs

Perceived level of actual RFL needs and potential risks of family separation (2015)

	I don't know	No needs/risks	Limited needs/risks	Significant needs/risks
OTHER SITUATIONS	40%	30%	19%	11%
MASS GATHERINGS	4%	31%	48%	17%
MIGRATION	4%	6%	27%	63%
DETENTION	6%	17%	48%	29%
NATURAL/MAN-MADE DISASTERS	2%	10%	47%	41%
PAST CONFLICTS/VIOLENCE	4%	19%	50%	27%
RECENT CONFLICTS/VIOLENCE	3%	19%	43%	35%

1. Migration
2. Disasters
3. Conflict

- There is a general perception among NS that migration now poses the most significant risk of family separations that they may have to deal with. Similarly, the 2014 survey results reveal that 27% of NS perceive as high the risk of dealing with RFL needs of migrants involved in emergencies (e.g. massive influx, capsizing).
- An overwhelmingly majority of NS (88%) anticipate RFL needs as a result of natural disasters in their own countries.

- The number of NS observing or anticipating RFL needs in their own countries as a consequence of armed conflicts and others situations of violence (detention, disappearances, internal displacement, refugees, etc.) remains high (78%).

1 Integration of RFL into emergency preparedness and response

Figure 7: Integration of RFL into National Societies' disaster/emergency preparedness and response plans

2006	2011	2014
40%	64%	66%

…of NS have integrated RFL into their disaster/emergency preparedness and response plans.
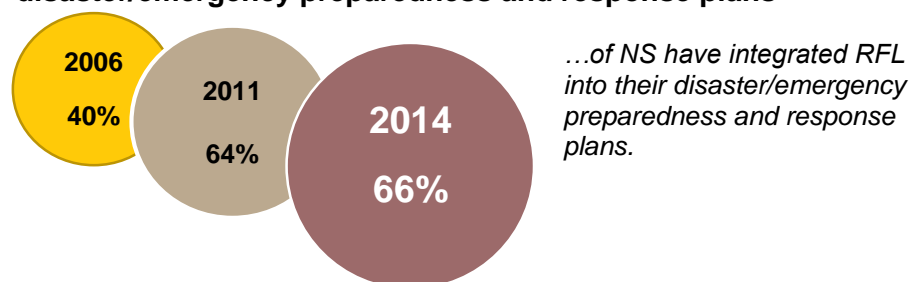
- Roughly two-thirds of NS have now included responses to RFL needs in their internal disaster/emergency preparedness plans. This marks significant progress over the past decade. Nevertheless, it is also to be underlined that a majority of NS (56%) do not have internal tools, procedures and equipment specifically designed for RFL response in emergencies, and that more than half of NS (54%) have no procedures for the administration of individual cases and the secure management of personal data in emergencies.
- 25 of the 54 NS that indicated that they have not integrated RFL into their internal plans also stated that their country was prone to emergencies/disasters and that they faced significant risks of family separation.

Figure 8: Integration of RFL into public authorities' emergency plans and agreements with National Societies

2014

42%

…of NS have a formal or informal agreement in place with the public authorities identifying their role in RFL in disasters and emergencies.

- 50 of the 91 NS that indicated that they do not have such an agreement in place with the authorities also stated that their country was prone to emergencies/disasters and that they perceived significant risks of family separation resulting from emergencies and disasters.

- In 2006, only 12% of NS RFL services had a specific role in their country's disaster response plans.

Figure 9: Effective RFL assessments and response in disasters and other emergencies

116 NS experienced an emergency in 2011-2014

→ Approximately 40% did not deploy staff/volunteers trained in RFL

→ Approximately half of NS did not carry out an RFL needs assessment

→ The RFL pool of specialists was deployed in **19 emergencies:**
2009-2011: 10
2012-2015: 9
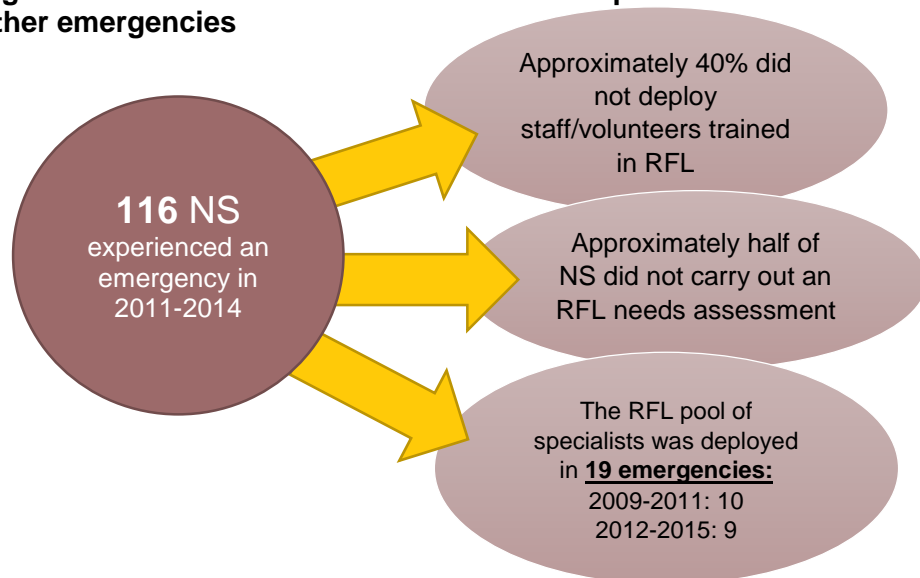
- Despite progress made in the positioning of RFL in disaster/emergency preparedness and response plans, gaps need to be addressed in order to ensure effective operational deployments, including rapid assessment of RFL needs and service delivery when an emergency occurs.

- It is unclear whether the RFL pool of specialists should have been more frequently deployed between 2009-2014, considering the following factors: (i) normally the pool should be called upon (by NS, the ICRC or the Federation) only when domestic capacities are overwhelmed; (ii) results below (Figure 11) suggest limited knowledge of the pool.

Figures 10 & 11: Awareness of RFL needs and knowledge of response tools in emergencies

Perceived NS internal awareness of RFL needs in emergencies (2014)

	Very good	Good	Average	Basic	None
Leadership	22%	36%	19%	20%	3%
Staff and volunteers in RFL services	26%	40%	15%	15%	4%
Staff and volunteers in disaster mgmt.	15%	36%	28%	18%	3%
Staff and volunteers in communication	10%	29%	34%	19%	8%
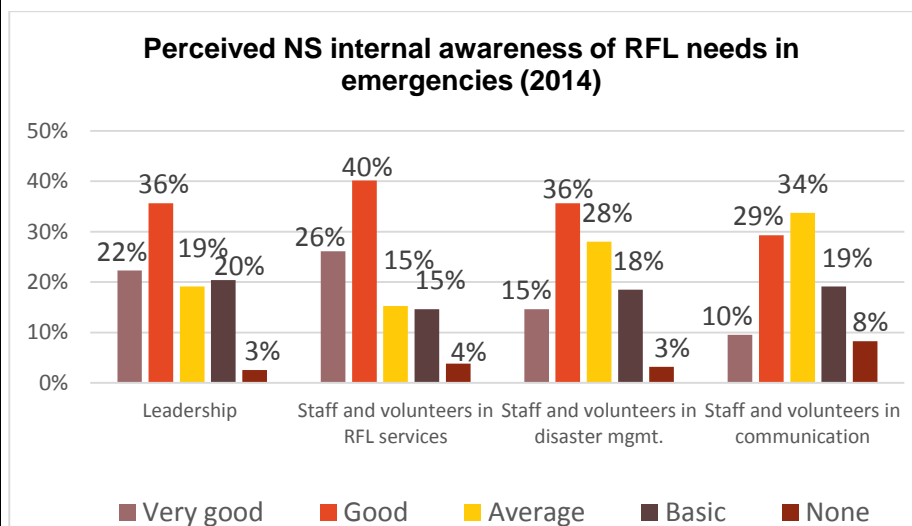
Knowledge of Movement tools and mechanisms that support of RFL operations in emergencies (2014)

	Good	Limited	None
DMIS	43%	44%	13%
DREF	50%	39%	11%
FAMILYLINKS.ICRC.ORG	41%	50%	9%
RFL UPDATES	53%	34%	13%
RFL POOL OF SPECIALISTS	38%	46%	16%
RFL IN DISASTERS FIELD…	41%	45%	14%

■ Good ■ Limited ■ None
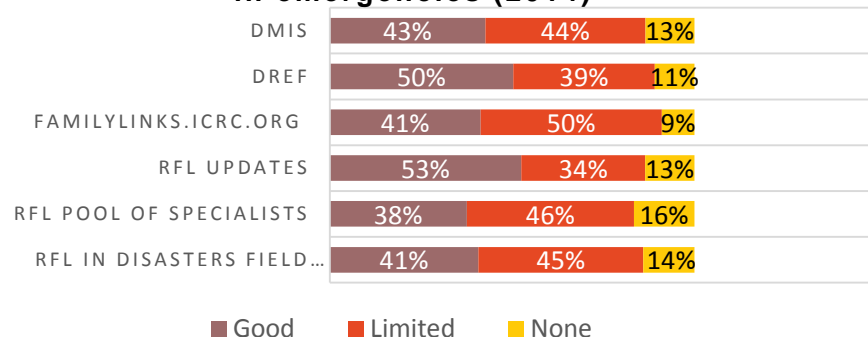
- The levels of awareness of RFL needs in emergencies appear to be highest amongst those directly involved in the provision of RFL services.

- Awareness of RFL needs is lower amongst staff and volunteers working in disaster management and communication. In general, further attention is required to ensure better awareness of RFL needs in emergencies amongst leaders and others in NS, the Federation and the ICRC and achieve better operational integration of RFL into emergency preparedness plans, with adequate resources and skills.

- More than half of NS indicated that they had a limited or no knowledge of the availability and purpose of the tools and mechanisms at their disposal in any emergency requiring a domestic or international RFL response. Respondents had the least knowledge about the RFL pool of specialists. Further dissemination, training and integration are required to optimize these tools' operational use.

Figures 12 & 13: National Societies and internal RFL tools & procedures for emergencies

Internal RFL tools & procedures for emergencies (2014)

44%
56%

■ Yes
■ No

Internal procedures on RFL case administration & data protection in emergencies (2014)

46%
54%

■ Yes
■ No
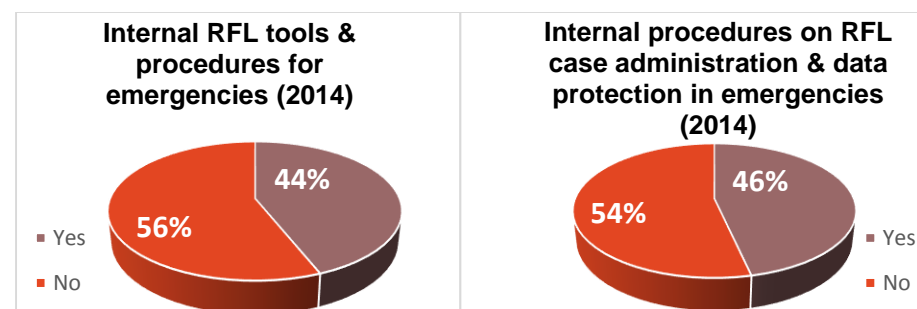
- The results suggest that the internal technical capacity to respond to emergencies effectively and securely has yet to be improved.

2 Communication, promotion, & positioning of RFL

Figure 14: Integration of RFL in National Societies' statutes and strategic plans

RFL in NS's statutes and strategic plans (2015)

- NS' statutes: Yes 53%, No 36%, I don't know 11%
- NS' strategic plans: Yes 76%, No 20%, I don't know 4%

2011
67% of NS' strategic and/or development plans recognized RFL
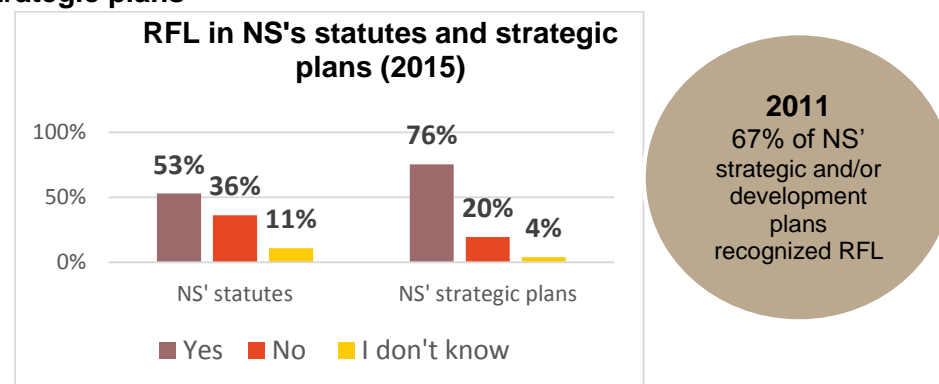
- RFL is explicitly recognized in three-quarters of NS' strategic pla which represents continued progress compared with the results of 2011 survey.

Figure 15: Integration of RFL into laws, regulations and agreement with authorities

RFL recognition in domestic law and agreements with authorities (2015)

- Domestic law and regulations: Yes 44%, No 36%, I don't know 20%
- Agreement(s) with authorities: Yes 34%, No 48%, I don't know 18%

- The fact that only one-third of NS confirm that RFL is explicitly recognized in agreements with national authorities may be attributed to the apparently low level of cooperation between the two (see Figure 26) and the high number of NS that rate awareness of RFL activities (see Figure 17) as basic or non-existent.

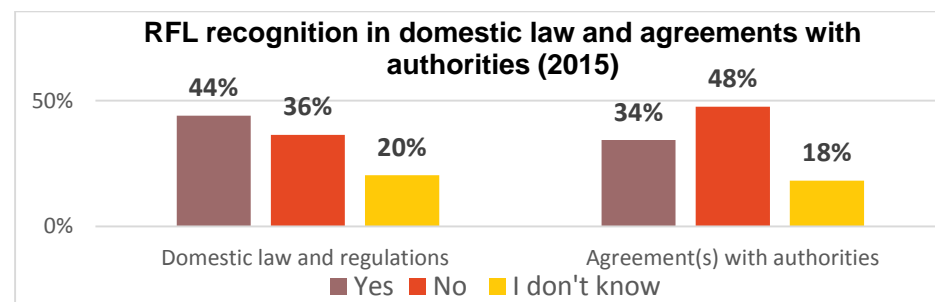**Figures 16 & 17: Awareness & knowledge of RFL activities amongst internal and external audiences**

Perceived awareness & knowledge of RFL activities amongst NS internal audiences (2015)

Legend: Non-applicable | None | Basic | Average | Good

	Non-applicable	None	Basic	Average	Good
HUMAN RESOURCES	4%	8%	38%	30%	20%
FUNDRAISING	11%	18%	38%	22%	11%
COMMUNICATION		6%	27%	31%	36%
HEALTH	1%	8%	38%	25%	28%
DISASTER MANAGEMENT		5%	21%	24%	50%
SOCIAL WELFARE	6%	15%	33%	28%	18%
BRANCH LEADERS	3%	4%	32%	34%	27%
NATIONAL LEADERS	3%	3%	26%	29%	39%
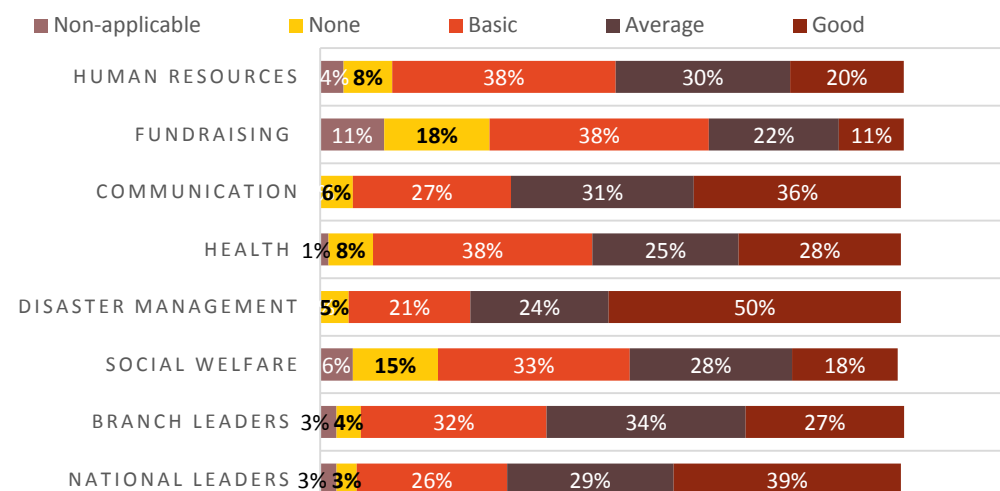
Perceived awareness & knowledge of RFL activities amongst external audiences (2015)

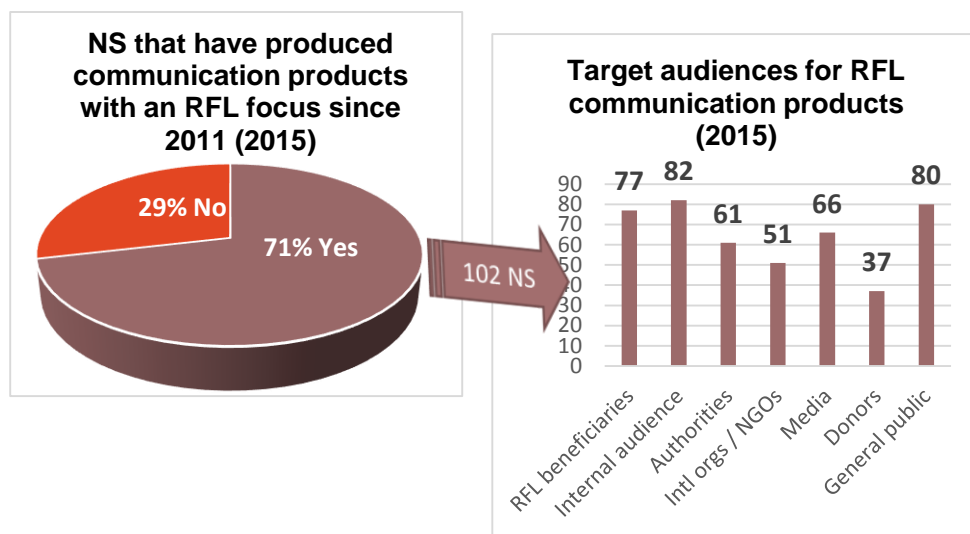|	Non-applicable	None	Basic	Average	Good
DONORS	11%	29%	39%	16%	5%
MEDIA	2%	20%	44%	25%	9%
INTL ORGS / NGOS	5%	14%	35%	36%	10%
EMBASSIES	6%	19%	42%	25%	8%
AUTHORITIES	2%	15%	45%	29%	9%
GENERAL PUBLIC	2%	17%	55%	22%	4%
RFL BENEFICIARIES	2%	8%	26%	40%	24%
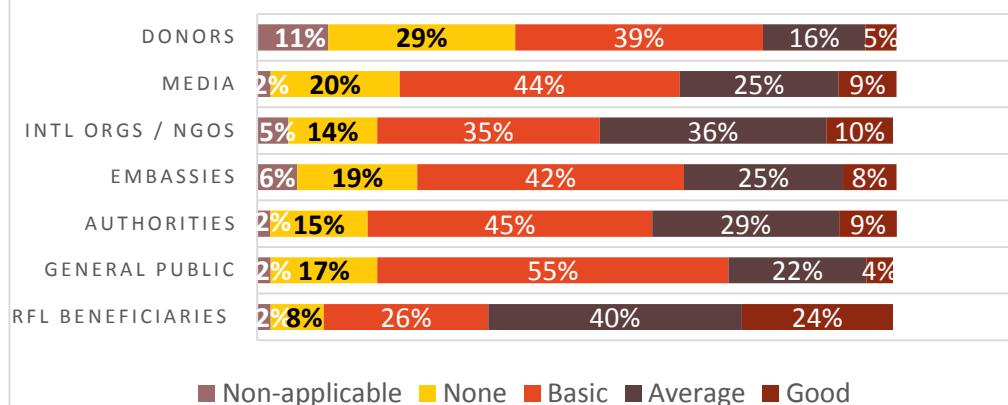
- In 2011, only 38% of NS deemed their leaders', managers', and staff and volunteers' awareness and knowledge of RFL as sufficient. Across the departments, awareness and knowledge are clearly higher in 2015. Yet, overall, raising internal awareness of RFL remains a challenge.

- Increased collaboration and coordination with disaster management staff and volunteers seems to be bearing some fruit, as this group is rated the highest in terms of RFL knowledge.

- Progress appears to have been made in raising awareness amongst NS national leaders and senior management. Results are lower for NS branch leaders and management. That may be an obstacle when RFL needs are to be addressed at this level.

- Awareness and knowledge of RFL activities are perceived as average or good amongst RFL beneficiaries. There is still room for improvement in enhancing RFL awareness amongst, in particular, public authorities, donors and the general public. This is most likely linked to the low perceived level of RFL awareness amongst fundraisers.

Figures 18 & 19: National Societies' RFL-focused communication plans

NS that have developed communication plans with an RFL focus since 2011 (2015)

43%

57%

62 NS

■ Yes ■ No

Target audiences for RFL communication plans (2015)

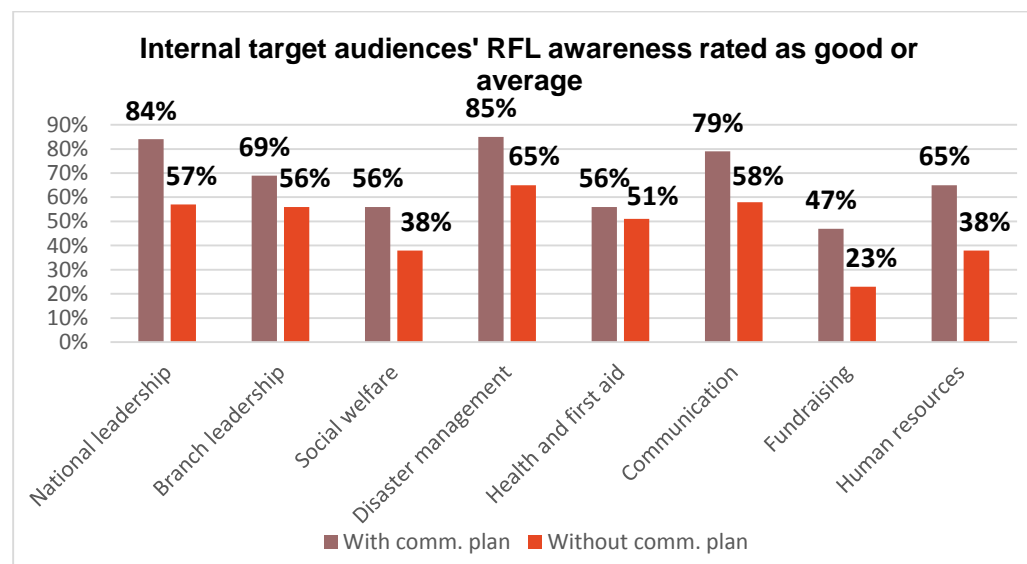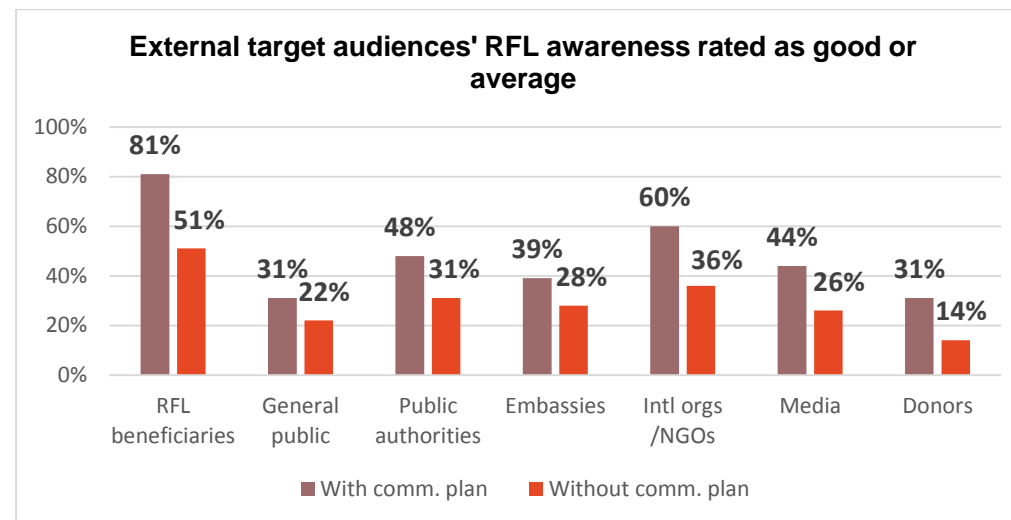| RFL beneficiaries	Internal audience	Authorities	Intl orgs / NGOs	Media	Donors	General public
50	54	37	32	44	25	50
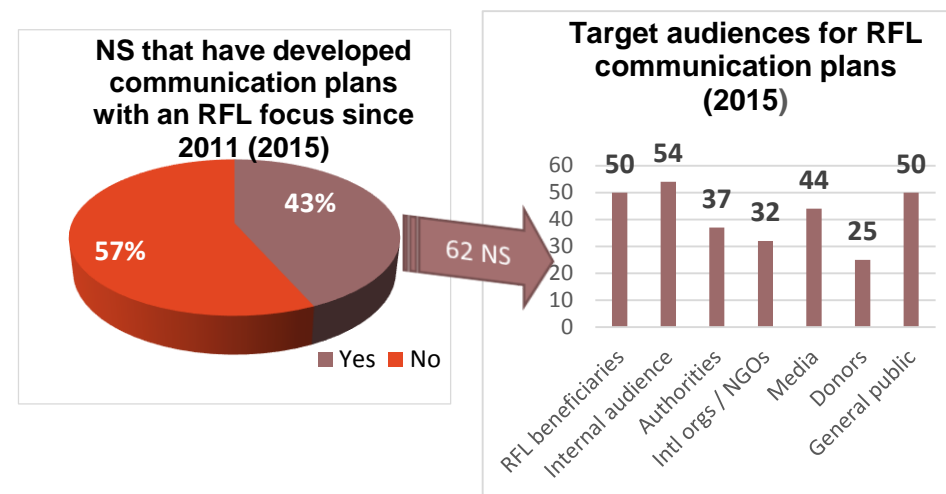
- Further progress is still to be made in regards to the development and adoption of RFL communication plans by NS.

- The majority (55) of the 62 NS with communication plans containing RFL elements also confirmed they are facing significant RFL needs.

- There remains room for improvement in targeting external audiences, particularly donors.

Figures 20 & 21: Production of RFL-focused communication products

NS that have produced communication products with an RFL focus since 2011 (2015)

- 29% No
- 71% Yes

102 NS

Target audiences for RFL communication products (2015)

- RFL beneficiaries: 77
- Internal audience: 82
- Authorities: 61
- Intl orgs / NGOs: 51
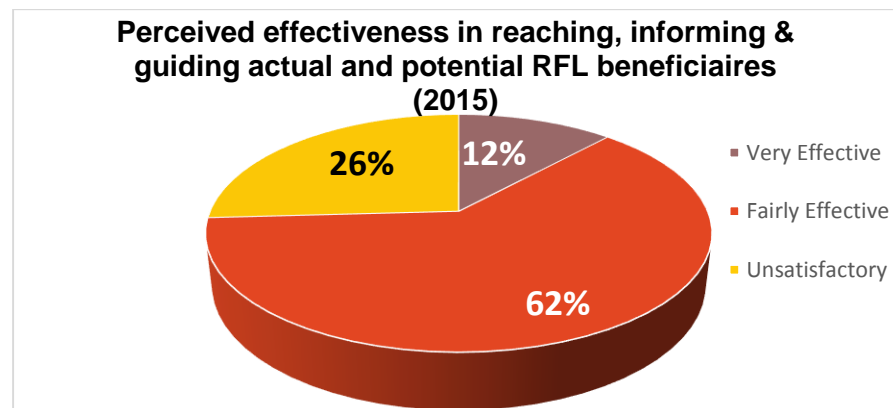- Media: 66
- Donors: 37
- General public: 80

- The fact that over two-thirds of NS create communication products with an RFL focus is a positive development.

- Again, there remains room for improvement in targeting external audiences, particularly donors.

Figures 22 & 23: Impact of the availability of communication plans on the level of RFL awareness

External target audiences' RFL awareness rated as good or average

	With comm. plan	Without comm. plan
RFL beneficiaries	81%	51%
General public	31%	22%
Public authorities	48%	31%
Embassies	39%	28%
Intl orgs /NGOs	60%	36%
Media	44%	26%
Donors	31%	14%

Internal target audiences' RFL awareness rated as good or average

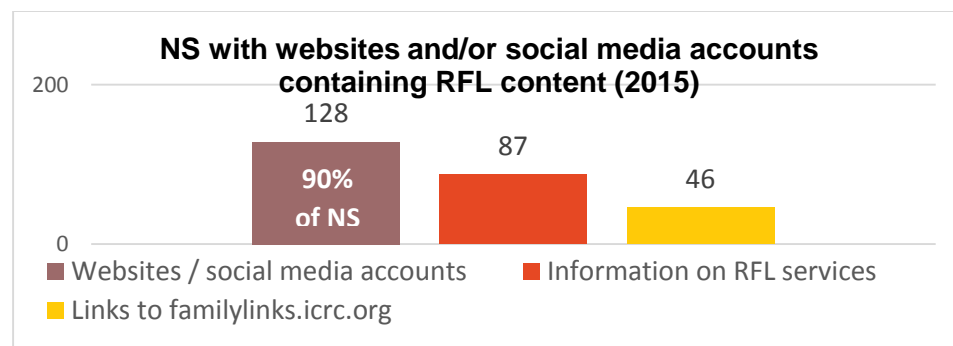|	With comm. plan	Without comm. plan
National leadership	84%	57%
Branch leadership	69%	56%
Social welfare	56%	38%
Disaster management	85%	65%
Health and first aid	56%	51%
Communication	79%	58%
Fundraising	47%	23%
Human resources	65%	38%

- Clear differences in internal and external awareness of RFL are observed between NS that have developed and implemented a communication plan with a focus on RFL and those that have not.

Figure 24: Perceived effectiveness in reaching beneficiaries

Perceived effectiveness in reaching, informing & guiding actual and potential RFL beneficiaires (2015)

- Very Effective — 12%
- Fairly Effective — 62%
- Unsatisfactory — 26%

- The results show that 74% of NS believe that they are fairly or very effective in reaching beneficiaries.

Figure 25: National Societies with institutional websites and/or social media accounts containing RFL content

NS with websites and/or social media accounts containing RFL content (2015)

- Websites / social media accounts — 128 (90% of NS)
- Information on RFL services — 87
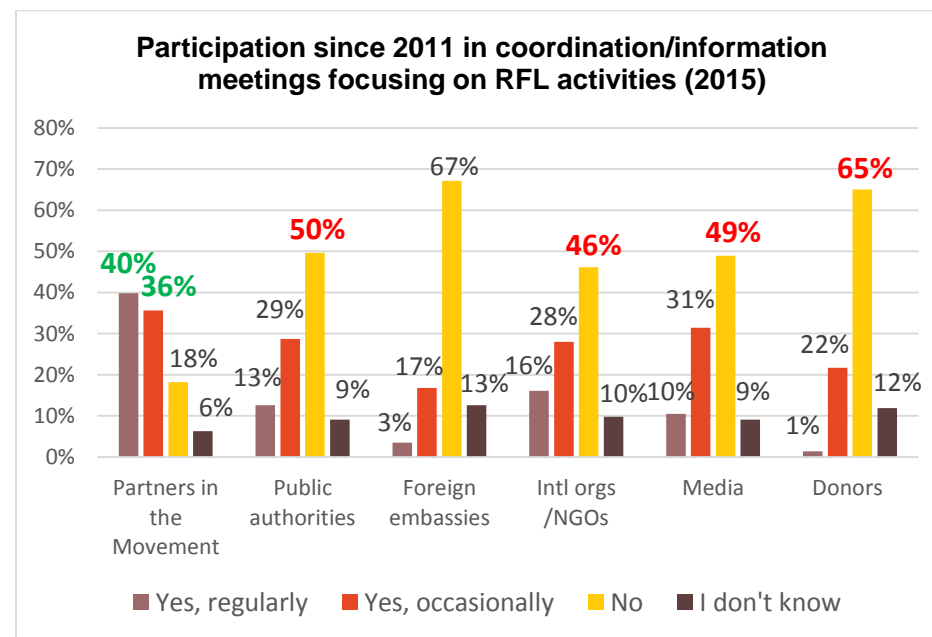- Links to familylinks.icrc.org — 46

- The presence of the NS on the internet and social networks has increased considerably. The visibility of RFL activities conducted by NS and the worldwide FLN has increased but needs further improvement.
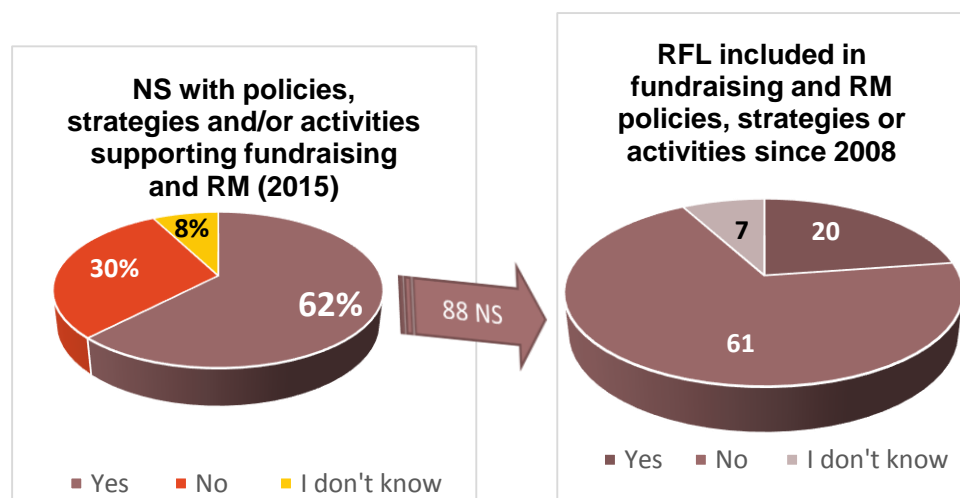
3 Resources & Partnerships for Restoring Family Links

Figure 26: National Societies' participation in coordination/information meetings focusing on RFL activities with the Family Links Network and external stakeholders

Participation since 2011 in coordination/information meetings focusing on RFL activities (2015)

	Partners in the Movement	Public authorities	Foreign embassies	Intl orgs /NGOs	Media	Donors
Yes, regularly	40%	13%	3%	16%	10%	1%
Yes, occasionally	36%	29%	17%	28%	31%	22%
No	18%	50%	67%	46%	49%	65%
I don't know	6%	9%	13%	10%	9%	12%

- International exchanges within the FLN are steadily progressing, in particular through regional and trans-regional working platforms.

- There is clearly room for improvement in terms of coordination and information-sharing with external stakeholders, who deserve more attention, as they can be instrumental in the development of RFL services, particularly in terms of resources, access to beneficiaries and recognition of the NS's role in RFL.

Figures 27 & 28: Policies, strategies, activities and personnel supporting fundraising and resource mobilization within National Societies

NS with policies, strategies and/or activities supporting fundraising and RM (2015)

62%
30%
8%

88 NS

RFL included in fundraising and RM policies, strategies or activities since 2008
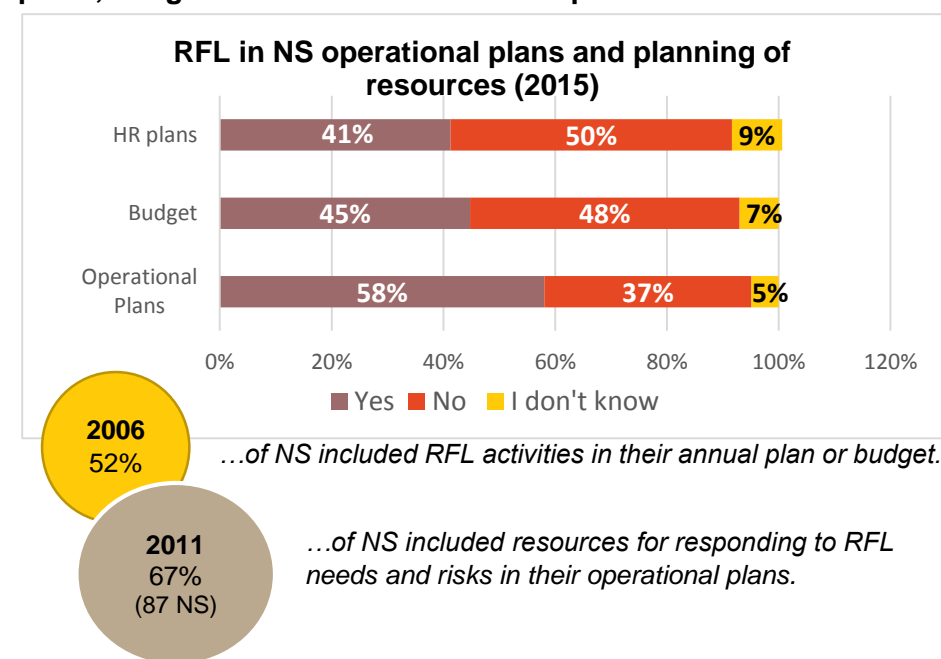
7
20
61

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

- The capacity to mobilize resources is considered a general weakness for many NS.

- 62% of NS confirmed having internal resource mobilization (RM) policies, strategies or activities and 67% confirmed having personnel in charge of RM. These figures are high compared to the results of the Federation's 2010 study, which was conducted in preparation for the Federation-wide RM Strategy and in response to which 26% of NS

confirmed that they had a national strategy for fundraising and 36% that they had staff trained in fundraising. While progress has certainly been made in the area of RM since 2011, this great shift may also be due in part to a lack of knowledge by respondents on the functioning of RM in their NS.

- As indicated above (see Figure 16), NS personnel in charge of fundraising and RM are perceived has having the lowest level of awareness and knowledge of RFL activities. This is certainly detrimental to the positioning of RFL in the implementation of RM strategies and activities.
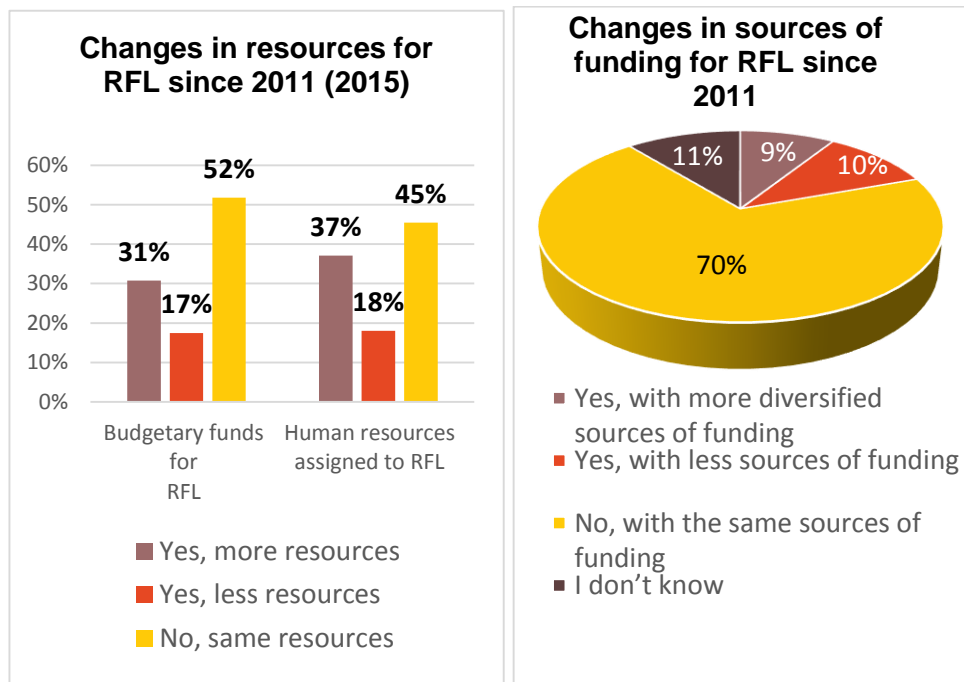
Figure 29: Integration of RFL into National Societies' operational plans, budgets and resource allocation plans

RFL in NS operational plans and planning of resources (2015)

	Yes	No	I don't know
HR plans	41%	50%	9%
Budget	45%	48%	7%
Operational Plans	58%	37%	5%

2006
52%

…of NS included RFL activities in their annual plan or budget.

2011
67%
(87 NS)

…of NS included resources for responding to RFL needs and risks in their operational plans.

- The rate and number of NS integrating RFL into their operational plans have declined slightly since 2011. The 2015 survey also revealed that

55% of NS do not plan specific allocations of funds for RFL services into their budget, which is worrying when looking at actual and potential RFL needs observed.

Figures 30 & 31: Changes in resources and availability of diversified sources of funding for RFL

Changes in resources for RFL since 2011 (2015)

Changes in sources of funding for RFL since 2011

- Yes, with more diversified sources of funding
- Yes, with less sources of funding
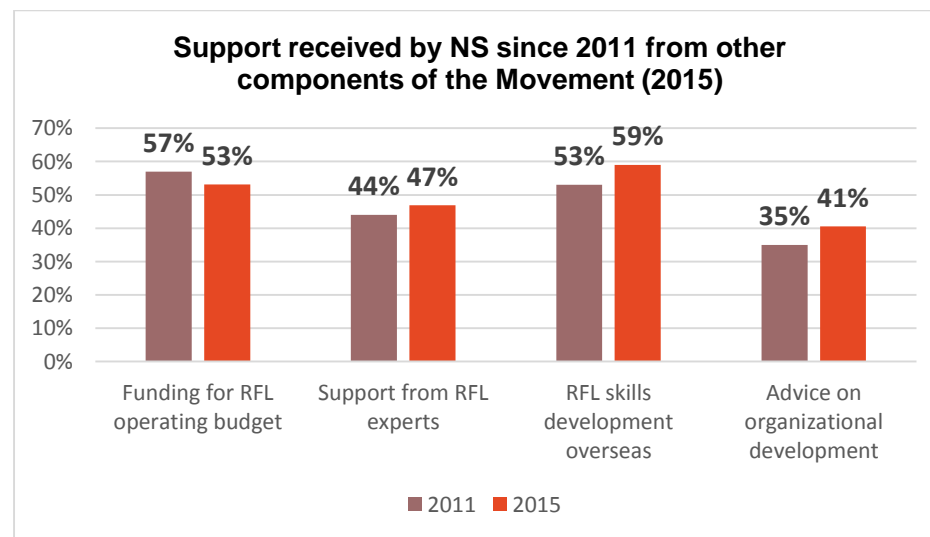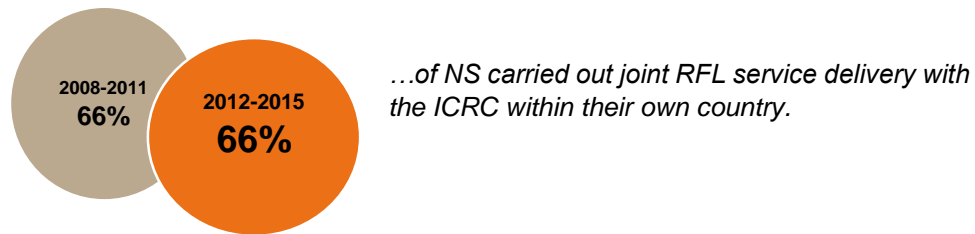- No, with the same sources of funding
- I don't know

- Globally, levels of human and financial resources assigned to RFL have continued to stagnate, which makes it difficult for many NS to invest in their own development in accordance with changing needs. Not much appears to have changed since 2011 in terms of diversification of funding.

- The 2006 global mapping exercise revealed that there was an excessive reliance on ICRC funding, which was often the only source

of income for NS' RFL services. This was reiterated in the 2011 progress report. In 2015, **55%** of NS' RFL services received funding from the ICRC (2011: 59%). For **41%** of NS, ICRC funding represented 50-100% of the budget and for **25%** (2011: 32%) it represented the entire budget.
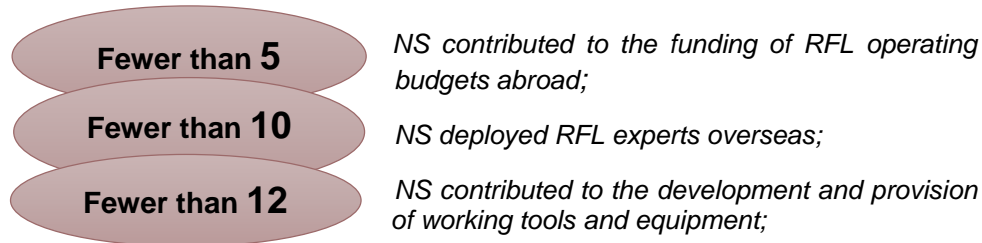
- Only 21 NS' RFL services (**15%**) receive funding from public authorities (5 NS receive 100% of their RFL budget).

- Only 9 NS' RFL services (**6%**, compared to 10% in 2011) receive funding from the corporate sector or private donors.

- 10 NS' RFL services (**7%**) are partially funded by a sister NS.

- Within this context, the perceived low level of knowledge and awareness of RFL amongst public authorities, donors and NS' fundraisers (see Figures 16 & 27) is a challenge that needs to be overcome in order to achieve diversification in funding.

Figures 32, 33 & 34: Development of international relations and partnerships within the Family Links Network

Support received by NS since 2011 from other components of the Movement (2015)

…of NS carried out joint RFL service delivery with the ICRC within their own country.

2008-2011 66%

2012-2015 66%

From 2012 to 2015:

Fewer than 5 — *NS contributed to the funding of RFL operating budgets abroad;*

Fewer than 10 — *NS deployed RFL experts overseas;*

Fewer than 12 — *NS contributed to the development and provision of working tools and equipment;*

… in support of a sister NS, the ICRC and/or the FLN.

- Joint RFL service delivery by NS and the ICRC is a common practice and requires proper coordination of each other's roles and responsibilities. It may take the form of operational partnerships involving significant funding by the ICRC (see comments below Figure 31) or of support for NS capacity building.

- The capacity and interest of NS to commit financial and human resources internationally in support of durable RFL partnerships with sister NS, the ICRC or the FLN remain limited.

*****