

Report on the

WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP RESOLUTION

adopted at the 33rd International Conference





Cover photo: RCRC Movement leaders signing
the Women and Leadership Pledge, December 2019, Geneva.

“Women leading women inspire others to do the same, it has a ripple effect, and I was able to see this in the Americas region for the past 4 years. Women leaders as I see it, are more aware of the toxic or sexist leadership patterns we want to avoid, fostering a more nurturing, safer environment for them and their teams.”

Diana Oviedo,
IFRC Programs and operations coordinator
in Central America

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Working definitions

Respondents: In this report the word “respondents” refers to the individuals affiliated to either a National Society, the IFRC or the ICRC, who took the time to answer the questions in the GLOW Red Reporting Mechanism.

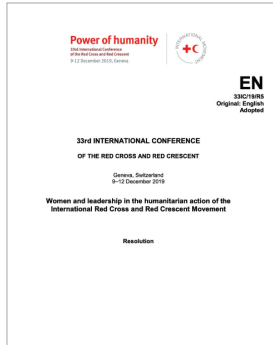
Movement Components: this term refers to National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC as the components of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

Reporting Mechanism: The GLOW Red Resolution Reporting Mechanism is an online form put together by the GLOW Red Secretariat. It was launched in October 2021, for the progress report and again in 2024 for this updated report, to gather information on what has been done across the Movement to advance the implementation of the Resolution on Women and Leadership from 2019.

Women and Leadership Resolution: When this term is used in this report, it refers to the 33rd International Conference [Resolution 5 on Women and Leadership in the humanitarian action of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement](#), adopted in 2019.

Executive Summary

At the 33rd International Conference (IC33) in 2019, a landmark resolution was passed on Women and Leadership in the humanitarian action of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Through this resolution, Movement components, alongside governments, undertake to focus on improving humanitarian impact by supporting more women in becoming leaders, considering that women are critical to ensuring effective and successful humanitarian outcomes.



Read the Resolution of the Women and Leadership in the humanitarian action of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

We know from research and experience that women and girls are often disproportionately affected by disasters or crises, and are at higher risk of violence, abuse, neglect, discrimination. To effectively reach these women and girls, humanitarian organizations must be inclusive: they must include women and girls' perspectives at all levels of decision-making, from the design of a program to its evaluation and through its delivery, and therefore must have women at all levels, including the highest ones. However, this is not the reality, and despite numerous commitments to create change women are still greatly underrepresented in leadership roles throughout the humanitarian sector.

Over the years, GLOW Red (The Global Network of Women Leaders in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement) has hosted a variety of events. From webinars to governance training and panel discussions, the events have had the same goal at their core: to increase women's leadership throughout the RCRC Movement. With titles like "Walking the Talk" and "From Words to Action", GLOW Red has always been focused on measurable and sustainable changes. Following the implementation of the IC33 Resolution on Women and Leadership, GLOW Red began to take steps to ensure that proper reporting and implementation of the resolution was taken.

The purpose of this report is to share and celebrate the progress that has been made towards

the implementation of the Women and Leadership Resolution and inspire RCRC Movement components to follow suit. It is also to identify barriers and lessons learned, instigate a culture of peer learning, and support the policy changes, resource allocation and replication of actions that are needed.

The report summarizes the 41 replies that Red GLOW received from 28 different RCRC Movement components, which represents a total of 14.5% of Movement Components. Examples of best practices are shared in each region, with 92% of the respondents of the survey indicating that they have taken steps to advance the implementation of the resolution. Many Movement Components are implementing similar processes to advance women's leadership, these include leadership training and mentoring programs, changing Statutes and organizational policies, and changing recruitment targeting and focus. Case studies from around the globe are explored throughout this document, highlighting the changes made as well as the lessons learnt.

The limitations and the successes presented in this report are important considerations going forward on the path of achieving gender parity within all Movement components by 2030. As the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, we must take the issues seriously and find ways to address them to break the barriers that still exist towards this goal.

1. Introduction and background

Over the years, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement has made several commitments to increase gender equality and gender parity at leadership levels. One of the first written commitments was Resolution XV of the 23rd International Conference in 1977, which urged National Societies and Governments to “raise the status of women socially and economically by providing opportunities for learning and leadership”. In 1987, the 11th General Assembly requested the League to “draw up a plan of action to safeguard that the resources and potential of women can be fully utilized to the benefit of development work in the Red Cross Red Crescent”, and in 1989 the 12th General Assembly acknowledged the need for concrete policies and sustained commitments to strengthen the role of women in Red Cross Red Crescent development.

Despite this, 30 years later at the 21st General Assembly in 2017, when elections were held for the IFRC Governing Board, there was a realization that a lot more had to be done to ensure equal participation at leadership levels in the RCRC Movement. The elections resulted in 26 men and 4 women being elected to the IFRC Governing Board – meaning women held only 13% of the seats in the board. It was evident to the entire General Assembly that this image did not reflect the organization’s base and composition.

Resolutions were drafted for the ongoing General Assembly and the consequent Council of Delegates, which attained widespread support among Movement representatives. [The Council of Delegates Resolution](#) signified commitments by all parts of the Movement “to take concrete measures to address the question of gender equality and equal opportunities at all levels of their own leadership take concrete measures”.

However, it was clear to the group of women who initiated the resolutions, based on long experience

of previous resolutions and commitments made in relation to women’s leadership and gender balance, that without proper follow-up and mechanisms in place, these resolutions would go nowhere. The Global Network of Women Leaders in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement (GLOW Red) came together as a reaction to the events and decisions that unfolded during the Red Cross Red Crescent meetings in December 2017.

The network was created in early 2018 in response to the need to ensure commitment to, and actions from, the resolutions. In December 2019, after intense advocacy work from GLOW Red representatives, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement took another important step towards gender parity, at the 33rd International Conference where Movement components and States unanimously agreed to adopt the [Resolution 5 on Women and Leadership](#).

The resolution urges RCRC Movement components to increase the representation of women from different backgrounds at all decision-making



↑
Women leaders' luncheon at the Red Cross Red Crescent General Assembly and Council of Delegates in 2017, Antalya, Turkey.

levels. It calls for Movement components to actively identify women leaders and invest in them through mentorship and leadership development, for Movement components to reach gender parity by 2030 and collect sex-disaggregated data to ensure that we can monitor progress. Additionally, the resolution encourages Movement components and States to invest in research and to provide an evidence base on the value of women's leadership.

In the beginning of 2021, GLOW Red initiated the Women and Leadership Resolution Working Group to ensure actions were taken to fulfill the commitments made in the resolution. The Working Group published a report in 2022, to highlight the progress of Movement components in their implementation of the commitments in the resolution. Now, in 2024, ahead of the 34th International Conference, the GLOW Red network is following up on the progress report with updated data and new examples of initiatives undertaken across the RCRC Movement to advance women's leadership.

The network wants to gather examples of best practice and shed light on the common barriers encountered across the Movement when trying to advance women in leadership. By capturing this

information, GLOW Red hopes to facilitate a process of peer learning across the Movement.

The first reporting period was between October 21st and November 21st, 2021. During this time, GLOW Red received 39 replies from 26 different Movement components. The second reporting period was between February 2nd to May 31st, 2024, during this time GLOW Red received 8 updates and 2 new reports. This report summarizes answers from both reporting periods and highlights some of the efforts being made across the RCRC Movement to advance women's leadership.

It should be noted that this is an informal Reporting Mechanism, specifically developed by GLOW Red and the Women and Leadership Resolution Working Group, for the Resolution 5 of the 33rd International Conference on Women and Leadership in the humanitarian action of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (33IC/19/R5). Formal reporting to the 34th International Conference is done on the [RCRC Conference website](#).

2. Implementation at a glance

Out of the 41 respondents...



This data is based on responses from 41 individuals representing their RCRC Movement components.

97%

of the respondents reporting on behalf of their RCRC Movement component on this mechanism were women.

92%

of these respondents reported that their RCRC Movement component has taken steps to advance the implementation of the Women and Leadership Resolution since 2019.

59%

reported to have increased the representation of women across several decision-making levels, including governing bodies and management positions.

41%

reported that their RCRC Movement component supported and strengthened the pipeline of future women leaders.

49%

reported their RCRC Movement component (or team) has reached gender parity at some middle or top management level.

18%

Only 18% of the respondents did NOT face any obstacles when working in the implementation of the Women and Leadership Resolution

Mapping of the respondents to the GLOW Red Resolution Reporting Mechanism, between 2021 and 2024



↑
29 RCRC Movement
Components responded
to the GLOW Red
Resolution Reporting
Mechanism.

The RCRC Movement Components who responded to the GLOW Red Resolution Reporting Mechanism are the following:

- American Red Cross,
- Australian Red Cross,
- Austrian Red Cross,
- Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society,
- Red Cross of Benin,
- Canadian Red Cross Society,
- Colombian Red Cross,
- Ecuadorian Red Cross,
- French Red Cross,
- Grenada Red Cross Society,
- Hungarian Red Cross,
- ICRC Head Quarters,
- IFRC Country Cluster for Dutch and English Speaking Caribbean,
- IFRC Head Quarters,
- Irish Red Cross Society,
- Japanese Red Cross Society,
- Jordan National Red Crescent Society,
- Red Crescent Society of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
- Kenya Red Cross Society,
- Kiribati Red Cross Society,
- Kuwait Red Crescent Society,
- Maldivian Red Crescent,
- New Zealand Red Cross,
- Romanian Red Cross,
- Spanish Red Cross,
- Swedish Red Cross,
- Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan,
- Uganda Red Cross Society.

Let's take a closer look at the actions reported by different RCRC Movement components who have successfully worked with the implementation of the Women and Leadership Resolution and towards achieving gender parity in leadership across the RCRC Movement.

3. What worked?

Leadership development programs for staff and volunteers

In accordance with the Women and Leadership Resolution's request to strengthen the pipeline for future women leaders, several RCRC Movement components have undertaken leadership development programs for women staff and volunteers. These programs, such as career path development, have been reported by the American Red Cross, the Australian Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross, the IFRC, the IFRC Dutch and English-Speaking Caribbean, the Jordan National Red Crescent Society and the Spanish Red Cross.

Throughout 2021, the Australian Red Cross carried out the Accelerate Program, a program dedicated to developing high potential female leaders by supporting them to create a career development plan, accessing identified training and scholarship opportunities for career development and providing them with a pathway for career progression within the organization after completing such trainings.

For several years, the Kenya Red Cross Society has implemented leadership development programs for women staff members and volunteers, through its human resources team. Based on a co-developed training plan, the human resources team identifies training opportunities for the participants to enhance their capacity and to grow professionally within the organization. The Kenya Red Cross Society's Procurement Manager is one of the success stories from such initiatives. She was one of the women in middle management positions selected to attend an international Master's program for managers in the United Kingdom funded by the Kenya Red Cross Society.

After completing her studies, she applied for and obtained the role of National Procurement Manager.

In 2021, the Spanish Red Cross approved Equality Plan IV, which includes 107 specific measures covering all aspects of the professional life cycle of people in the organization and encourages female leadership through family reconciliation measures and more flexible models.

Under the Readiness for Global Emergency Response Project, the Canadian Red Cross developed a strategy to support women leaders' career development and progression. The Canadian Red Cross is currently providing coaching for those women identified to have leadership potential on the delegate rosters. This process included an initial self-assessment on competencies of Operations Managers, which provided insight on where support for female managers was most impactful. Formal and informal learning, as well as networking opportunities are being explored and will feed into the greater career development strategy drawn for each of these women leaders' participants in the program.

Similarly, the ICRC has been encouraging staff to continue developing professionally by offering coaching, training programs and scholarships to women staff members. For this purpose, ICRC has set up a Humanitarian Leadership and Management school. The IFRC in turn has sponsored four of its female staff members with demonstrated leadership potential to attend an external nine-month leadership program.

Mentoring programs for future women leaders

The Women and Leadership Resolution requests National Societies as well as the IFRC and ICRC to actively invest in the pipeline of future women leaders. Several RCRC Movement components have started implementing mentoring programs in their organisations and teams, with the aim to strengthen both the personal and professional development of women who want to advance their leadership careers.

The Australian Red Cross and the ICRC are two examples of such initiatives. Throughout 2021, the Australian Red Cross set up a mentoring program in parallel to the women's leadership training program Accelerate. Mentoring partnerships were offered to women who participated in Accelerate after completing the program, where participants were paired up with women on the Executive team. As mentors of the women in the



executive team were responsible of providing the mentees with guidance and support, they crafted their career development plans within the

organisation. The ICRC has taken a similar approach and will start implementing the pilot of their mentoring program in the beginning of 2022.



Revising and updating Organizational Statutes and Policies to include gender quotas at the Governing Board levels

Several National Societies, such as the Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society, the Red Cross of Benin, the French Red Cross, the Grenada Red Cross Society, the Maldivian Red Crescent, the Costa Rican Red Cross, the Argentine Red Cross, as well as the IFRC and the ICRC, reported to have changed their Organizational Statutes and Policies in support of advancing the implementation of the Women and Leadership Resolution and their commitment to reaching gender parity at all levels in governing and management bodies by 2030.

In 2018, after having conducted a study on gender parity levels in the organization, the Costa Rican Red Cross' Gender Committee, supported by the Governing Board, decided to propose a statutory change before the National General Assembly for the Modification of Statutes. The Costa Rican Red Cross needed to keep up with the changes already made in the National Legislation for Associations, Law 218, and make explicit the need for having gender parity in all the organization's governing bodies. Hence, the new statutes established the organizational responsibility to have gender parity across the organization's governing boards, ensuring that all efforts are made to get as many women as men elected to these leadership positions. Currently, the Costa Rican National Society Governing Board has achieved gender parity with

4 women and 5 men members holding the 9 seats, and in 2021 the organization elected its very first female President.

Like the Costa Rican Red Cross, the Argentine Red Cross made several changes in its regulatory framework in 2021. Among other changes, the Argentine Red Cross included gender parity in all governing, control and consultative bodies, and established in their new National Society Statutes that "Gender equity must be considered in the composition of the Argentine Red Cross Governing Boards and in no case may the proportion of either sex exceed 60%".

Connected to these major organizational Statutory changes, the ICRC and IFRC have taken steps to make their policies more gender equitable. To retain new mothers working as delegates and to increase the number of women in leadership roles, the ICRC has changed and improved their Maternity Leave Policy. It now includes working at 80% with full pay until the child is one year old. The IFRC is currently undertaking a similar process by drafting new policies for its workforce on Parental Leave and Flexible Working Arrangements. In June 2022, the IFRC published their new Protection, gender and inclusion policy, [available on the IFRC website](#).



The policy is available on the [IFRC website](#).

Focus on the IFRC Protection, gender and inclusion policy

This policy sets out the approach of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to addressing issues of protection, gender and inclusion.

It demonstrates the IFRC network's commitment to preventing, mitigating, and responding to violence, discrimination, and exclusion through strengthening its institutional capacity, through programs and operations, and through advocacy, partnerships and collaboration.

The policy strengthens and clarifies the unique value of the work of the IFRC network in this area, through individual National Society's action and through IFRC Secretariat support. It also serves as a basis to strengthen complementarity of roles and approaches related to protection between all National Societies, the IFRC, the ICRC, other humanitarian actors and governments.

Within the Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society, the reviewed statutes of the National Society's Constitution state that during elections women should be considered as decision makers at all levels. In elections period women are therefore

encouraged to participate. Besides the Constitution, the Strategic Plan and some Policies were also reviewed to address gender equality and there is now a balanced representation in the Governance at all levels.

Targeted recruitment of women for leadership positions

Several National Societies, like the Australian Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross Society, the Ecuadorian Red Cross, the Grenada Red Cross Society, and the Kiribati Red Cross Society, report successful results from undertaking targeted recruitment campaigns to identify and encourage women to apply for leadership positions, which has increased the gender parity in leadership.

In 2020, the Canadian Red Cross developed a recruitment strategy targeting women leaders between the Senior Manager, Rapid Response Managers and Talent Acquisition teams. So far, the Rapid Response Manager roles have reached gender parity as this strategy continues to be applied. The Canadian Red Cross also reviewed executive recruitment processes for inequities and bias and intentionally focused on diversity within executive and board recruitment. This was proven efficient since the Canadian Red Cross has currently achieved equal representation of men and women at executive and board levels.

The Kiribati Red Cross Society reported to actively run recruitment campaigns targeting women candidates to bring gender balance in both their National and Branch Governing Boards.

The Maldivian Red Crescent declared to have proactively identified and approached potential women to fill in key positions of the Governing Board and encouraged them to run for election.

The Japanese Red Cross Society has reached its initial goal of having at least 16% female managers among non-medical staff by 2024. The Japanese Red Cross Society has prioritized creating a supportive work environment that enables female staff are able to continue their careers, regardless of life events such marriage and childbirth. The Japanese Red Cross Society has implemented a robust maternity/paternity leave system, as well as introduced a working from home option.

Appointing women to executive teams

The Women and Leadership Resolution urges National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC to increase gender parity at all decision-making levels, including in governing bodies and management positions, specifically increasing the representation of women from different backgrounds. Appointing women from diverse backgrounds to executive teams has been a strategy undertaken by several Movement components to fulfill this commitment.

At the IFRC, between the end of 2019 and June 2021, there was an increase in representation of women within the Senior Leadership (at internal grade levels G and H, which includes Directors and Under-Secretary Generals). This number remained the same for 2023, with 48% women and 52% men at grade level G, and 44% women and 56% men at grade level H (information only available for international staff).

Similarly, during 2021, the Australian Red Cross reported an increase in the representation of women from different backgrounds at decision-making levels. Firstly, by appointing two additional women to the Executive team, one as Head of Inclusion & Diversity and the other as

Head of International Humanitarian Law. Secondly, by appointing more First Nations staff members to the leadership team, which according to the respondents in the GLOW Red Reporting Mechanism, has already brought an invaluable perspective to the work of the organization. More recently, female representation has been increased in the Governing Board and gender parity was reached at the Heads of department level, where 4 out of 8 leaders at this level are female.

National Societies have also taken action to ensure women participate in decision-making fora in the RCRC Movement. For example, the Canadian Red Cross attended the Inter-Americas Regional conference in 2022, with an all-woman delegation. Their representative in the IFRC Governing Board is also a woman. In the same line, the Japanese Red Cross Society has taken an active decision to ensure that at least one seat within the Japanese Red Cross Society delegation for each Statutory meeting has been allocated for female staff members, allowing women to participate in these important events.

Cross-cutting working groups to define a coherent inclusion strategy

Since 2015, the Spanish Red Cross has a Commission for Equality and Gender. This Commission was an important asset to support their Strategy on Gender, adopted in 2018. Thanks to the articulated work organised by the Commission for Equality and Gender, which involved the participation of the territories, there has been a gradual increase in the number of women in management bodies and decision-making areas. In order to contribute to a change in mentality, various training and awareness-raising initiatives aimed at salaried staff and volunteers have been implemented, leading to greater awareness and a willingness to integrate the gender dimension within the organisation. Other initiatives have contributed to this process, such as resolutions advocating it, monitoring each electoral process, the analysis of resistance and backlash, the creation of the women's network,

and the achievement of consensus through working groups on actions that would facilitate an increase in the number of women in management bodies.

The Austrian Red Cross has established a Gender and inclusion working group whose mandate is to develop a Gender and inclusion strategy for the organization. The aim is to provide a framework which is adopted by all organisational levels (from headquarters to regional branches) and identify measures and indicators to be able to measure the rate of implementation.

The French Red Cross also created a Diversity, gender and inclusion working group in order to have a more coordinated approach within the organization on these topics. Representatives from all department are included. The working group tried to collect initiatives from all levels of

Romana Akter Jui,
Bangladesh Red
Crescent, and Jenelle
Eli, American Red
Cross in Cox's Bazar,
Bangladesh, 2019.
Photo by Brad Zerivitz,
American Red Cross.



the organizations, worked on the link between the RCRC Fundamental Principles and these topics, and support the transformation of the organization.

Beyond reaching gender equality through quotas, the Canadian Red Cross is developing a bottom-up approach to advance Diversity and Inclusion topics by launching a Women's Diversity Resource Group as of May 2024. This committee is an opportunity for staff, volunteers and delegates to discuss and share feedback to the executive team, network with each other and contribute to the diversity and inclusion strategic plans and goals.

The Swedish Red Cross has made Diversity and Inclusion one of the six focus areas in their new Strategy for 2024-2030. A sub-strategy has been developed which includes raising awareness around discrimination and building competence on diversity and inclusion across all levels of the organization and among both staff and volunteers. Training and workshops with management and governance teams were rolled-out at the end of 2023 and currently, in 2024, staff and volunteers are going through similar workshops.



4. Remaining challenges

Through the GLOW Red Reporting Mechanism, respondents reported several successful achievements when it comes to the implementation of activities aimed at advancing women's leadership and representation. However, as part of this work, several obstacles were identified to advancing this cause.

Patriarchal beliefs

"The main obstacle that we are facing when trying to advance women's leadership, is culture. Due to the predominance of machismo."
Anonymous respondent

Several RCRC Movement components referred to the remaining existence of patriarchal beliefs both in the societies they serve but also in the RCRC Movement component organisations they work for as the biggest challenge in advancing gender parity and increasing women's leadership. Patriarchal beliefs created backlash for some of

the successful initiatives mentioned above. Respondents who refer to this obstacle said that male colleagues in the sector believe that women are being selected for leadership positions because of gender specific policy compliance, not necessarily because women have the skills and capacities needed to be in such roles.

Need for more dedicated resources to undertake women's leadership and career development programs

"Men do not trust our abilities... there is a lot of patriarchal beliefs."
Anonymous respondent

Although the resolution mentions the importance of designating resources for implementation, it does not stipulate any concrete guidance on how resources should be allocated or provide any resources for the resolution's implementation. This was found by respondents to be a major limiting factor for the implementation of the resolution. Respondents called for clarity on how

the implementation of the resolution commitments are to be funded. Overall, respondents reflected on the fact that leadership across the RCRC Movement components needs to start prioritizing the implementation of this resolution. Respondents recommended channels for funding be established and firm commitments made on the allocation of resources.

The resolution lacks binding powers

"Resolutions need to come with resources and a shift in priorities so that leadership, donors and staff are clear and aligned on priorities."
Anonymous respondent

The resolution urges and requests National Societies, as well as the IFRC and the ICRC, to undertake initiatives to increase the representation of women at all decision-making levels (including governing bodies and management positions). It also encourages investment in the pipeline of future women leaders through means such as career-path development and leadership programs targeting women. However, the resolution does not include guidance on how the

resolution can be enacted and the implementation could benefit from a clear Plan of Action and regular advocacy efforts by the IFRC. As the resolution does not have binding power for implementation, the enactment and follow up of it relies purely on the goodwill and commitment of the Movement components. Their capacity for implementation may be significantly restricted by varying levels of funding and leadership capacity.

Anonymous
respondent

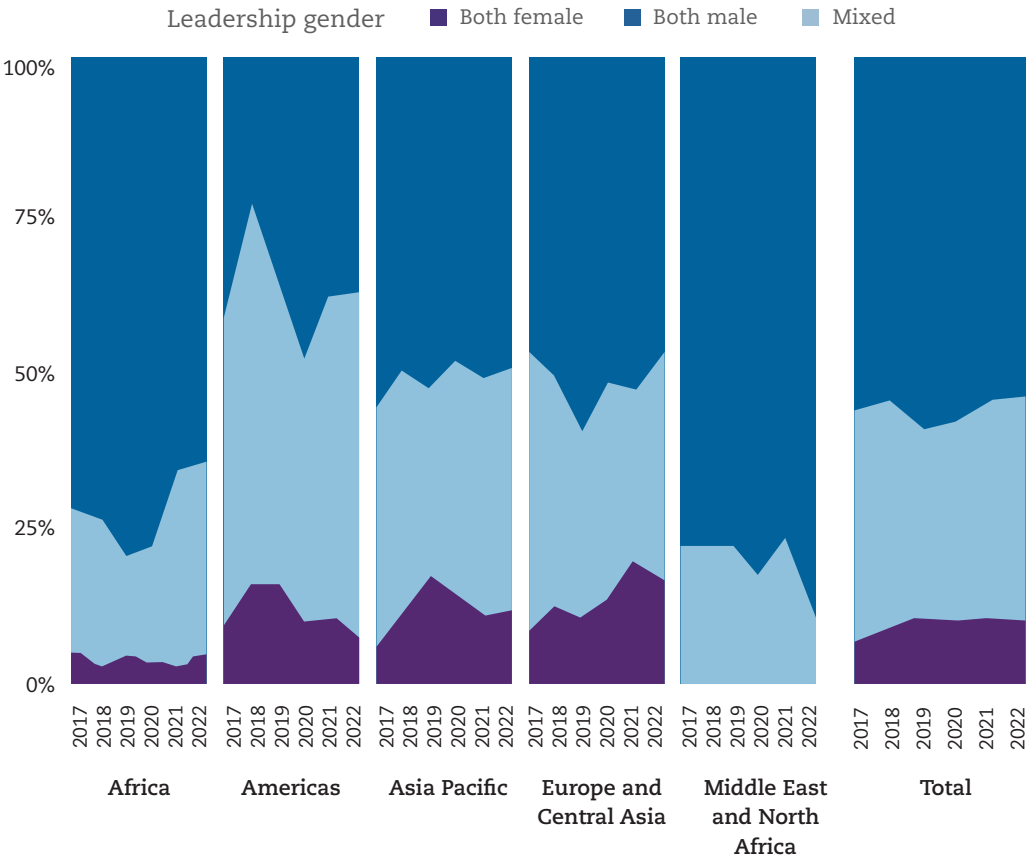
“There is nothing strongly binding in the resolution to begin with. As it stands, it is a call for action urging National Societies and States to support the highlighted objectives. The resolution merely draws attention to the issue but does not adequately outline methods to develop the existing efforts further.”

Assuming that the work is done

It is an obstacle to think and assume that gender equality and parity already exists in our organizations because there are some women in the executive teams of a few RCRC Movement components, or because the majority of the staff and volunteer force are women. Even if this is the case in some RCRC Movement components, it is crucial to challenge these assumptions and take a deeper look. The latest IFRC Everyone Counts report (2024) shows that the proportion of women in

National Society Governing Boards is slowly increasing but is still under 25% in Africa and MENA regions and under 45% in Americas, Asia Pacific and Europe. At the leadership level, over half of National Societies continue to have men in both President and Secretary General positions. These numbers have only differed by a few points over the last years and are expected to remain stable as turnover is relatively low in these positions, according to the report.

FIGURE 1. Percentage of National Societies with each combination of genders for President and Secretary General (IFRC Everyone Counts Report, 2022)



Source: IFRC
Everyone Counts
Report, 2022.

Lack of knowledge of the resolution across the RCRC Movement

Another limitation identified by several respondents is the lack of knowledge about the Women and Leadership Resolution across some RCRC Movement components. According to these respondents, there is a significant need to raise awareness across the RCRC Movement on the existence and content of the resolution as a primary step towards advancing its implementation. Some of the respondents highlighted the need for the IFRC to carry out regular trainings on the

content of the resolution and its range of actions to highlight its importance and help enforce and spread its execution. Suggestions include organizing online webinars and forums focused on explaining the content of the resolution as means to address this gap of knowledge, facilitating the development of a platform to foster discussion, either on an individual or organizational level, to allow for sharing of best practices and barriers or challenges encountered.

Anonymous
respondent

“Targeting women for special things (such as trainings, coaching opportunities...) is not thought of, as it is considered already done by the fact that the President of my National Society is a woman, and a large portion of the employees are women. Thus, the work on gender equality is considered already done.”

The importance of an intersectional lens

The Women and Leadership Resolution calls especially for the representation of women of diverse backgrounds in leadership positions. In this instance, diverse refers to the importance of having women from a variety of different backgrounds in leadership positions, this includes but is not limited to women of different ethnicities, ages, abilities, educational backgrounds, class, caste, sexual orientation and/or migrant status.

Respondents highlighted that some of the current processes of talent recruitment are in fact based on standards that are not reachable for all women. There are inherent limitations in the way position descriptions and selection criteria are currently drafted when it comes to qualification standards, working rights and permits, and even citizenships and mobility requirements, that are creating unnecessary obstacles for women. Respondents

noted that it is especially difficult for youth to access talent pools.

It is key that an intersectional analysis is undertaken to understand the barriers that prevent all women from accessing leadership positions, as women from across the RCRC Movement come from a variety of backgrounds and all have individual needs. Respondents highlighted that young women in the Global South often encounter significant barriers to access tertiary education and often have lesser mobility options. The requirements for entry level jobs are often too high, with applicants needing extensive educational and work experience. Respondents highlighted the need to revise recruitment standards and policies to focus on identifying the competence and skills needed for the job instead of taking a “one size fits all” approach.

5. Case studies

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American Red Cross – The importance of understanding the intersectionality of identities

The American Red Cross recognizes the profound power that comes from the sharing of stories, building compassion, and listening with empathy to continue their mission of alleviating human suffering. The American Red Cross also understands that equally essential is their utilization of data and analytics to highlight and address the discrepancies and disparities they face. Although

creating a diverse and inclusive culture is a moral responsibility, the American Red Cross also understands the importance of building the business case. To do this, the American Red Cross employs various metrics and outcomes to track and substantiate these changes through some of the dashboards noted below.

Impact of Statutory changes

The American Red Cross is dedicated to fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion through mobilizing, partnering, and collaborating with diverse voices among our employees and volunteers. This commitment is exemplified in our leadership:

49.7% of our executive leaders are women.

46.2% of our Board of Governors are women.

In Fall 2023, we supported the election of the second female President of the IFRC.

Workforce diversity dashboard

A critical tool for tracking the analytics of the American Red Cross is the Workforce Diversity Dashboard. Following training and confidentiality agreements, selected leaders access this dashboard, which aligns with the strategic plan's three pillars of the American Red Cross: ongoing dialogue, workforce diversity, and equitable mission delivery. The dashboard provides a comprehensive overview of employee and volunteer demographics, recruitment and retention rates within the past year, and organizational demographic trends. Employee and volunteer data is benchmarked against governmental data that represents individuals eligible for working, individuals currently employed, and the United States census. This dashboard aids in the creation of affirmative action plans, Diversity Equity and Inclusion action plans, and the identification of areas for improvement.

Employee data is detailed by binary gender (women and men), with filters for race, ethnicity, position status, and disability status, enabling leaders to understand the intersectionality of identities. This data can be further segmented by

division and region to analyze the representation of women of color across various positions and locations.

Workforce diversity at a glance

To promote transparency and accountability, the American Red Cross also provides a biannual workforce diversity report to all employees and volunteers. The report includes data on race and ethnicity, binary gender, veteran status, and disability status, comparing current figures with the previous year's data and Equal Employment Opportunity and Census benchmarks. For instance, the American Red Cross noted an increase in women executive leaders from 47.2% last year to 49.7%. Selected leaders also receive disaggregated reports by service line.

Human Resources dashboard

In addition to the Diversity Equity and Inclusion department, various other departments have dashboards and metrics that are used to measure our progress. One of these includes the Human Resources dashboard which disaggregates recruitment and retention data.



↑
Summit of the
American Red Cross
Team Member
Resource Group,
June 2023.

Team Member Resource Groups

Resource groups are groups of employees and volunteers who join together in their workplace based on shared characteristics, life experiences, or desire to engage/learn from a community.

At the American Red Cross, the Team Member Resource Groups are increasingly being engaged as a source of invaluable insight into the cultures and communities they represent, as well as guideposts for communication and forming connections with the diverse team members, clients, partners, and donors of the American Red Cross. The Women's Resource Group and Pride Resource Group focus on advocating for women and individuals of more gender expansive identities.

Women's Resource Group

The Women's Resource Group has approximately 2 664 members and hosted events with over 1 000 members last fiscal year alone. The group's main goal is to provide support to fellow women American Red Crossers. They have implemented several activities including:

- Launched two mentoring programs
- Facilitated inspiring book clubs
- Conducted meetings/talks focused on well-being, vision board...

- Organized sessions to highlight senior women leaders.

Pride Resource Group

The Pride Resource Group has approximately 673 members and represents the LGBTQIA+ community which includes individuals of various genders beyond women and men that have historically been underrepresented and disadvantaged.

With the Pride Team Member Resource Groups partnership, the American Red Cross was able to add an additional question to the application process that allows individuals to self-identify with genders beyond women and men. This allows individuals to represent their gender and demographics more accurately.

Opportunities for improvement

As the American Red Cross acknowledges many of the successes the organization has made to create a more inclusive environment, the American Red Cross also acknowledges the areas for opportunity, some of which are noted below.

- Data collection, integration, and disaggregation:
 - One challenge the American Red Cross faces is integrating data from various da-

tabases into a cohesive system, while simultaneously allowing for disaggregation and ensuring data accuracy. While much of the data is sourced from the human resources systems, other platforms and departments contribute as well. The American Red Cross is working to standardize demographic categories and reporting guidelines, as well as include more trending data.

- Additionally, the American Red Cross may not have enough data to report out on certain demographics. For example, the American Red Cross has not reached the threshold for

individuals that identify with nonbinary genders to publicly share that information with data accuracy and ensure confidentiality of the individuals.

- Leadership:

Although 49.7% of the executive leaders of the American Red Cross are women, 83.3% of the Presidents that report directly to the Chief Operating Officer are men. This is a noticeable area for opportunity given 68.8% of the total paid workforce of the American Red Cross identify as women.

5.2



Australian Red Cross – The importance of building an inclusive and diverse workforce

Throughout 2021, the Australian Red Cross actively invested in strengthening the pipeline of future women leaders by implementing a range of leadership programs. The Australian Red Cross already had a leadership framework in place, consisting of an entry level, mid- and senior leadership development programs. They also had a strong representation of women across the workforce. These factors presented the opportunity for them to consider putting together a program that was not just focused on leadership development, but rather on building an inclusive and diverse workforce.

A project group was established to look at this topic more broadly resulting in two actions: to develop a new role for a Director of Inclusion and Diversity to take part in the Executive Team, and to develop women in leadership program. Taking inspiration from issues which were within the Australian community and political environment, and looking at trends across the world, they set out to build a program that was more about impact rather than a hierarchical progression. The Accelerate Talented Women's Development program was the result.



Melinda Godber, Head of Organizational Development at the Australian Red Cross and the designer of all their leadership programs.

“We felt it was more important to provide our female team members with skills to build their impact in their chosen field, whether that be with Australian Red Cross, or more broadly within the community. This was not about building the next CEO, it was about enabling our female team members to be the next community leader, political representative or game changer in their chosen field of expertise and passion.”

The program was launched in June 2021 and 16 team members completed the program in December 2021. So far, three participants have taken on new or more senior roles, and another one has gained a scholarship to begin her PhD studies. The Australian Red Cross has developed a dashboard to track progress of each participant and have scheduled post program development conversations with each participant. These post

program conversations and skill assessment will be conducted again at the 6-month post program mark to check progress and impact.

Setting up the Accelerate Talented Women's Development program, the Australian Red Cross partnered with an external organisation called The Remarkable Woman. Through this partnership, all 16 participants were provided with a

one-year professional development, networking and mentoring. Participants had the possibility to connect with several different mentors based on their needs and wants as their progress through the program. Through the program participants were also formed into peer learning groups and connected with a female member of the Australian

Red Cross executive team. This was called the “CoEntor process” – a combination of coaching and mentoring. The peer groups connected with the members of the executive to talk about what the program was about, what they were learning, and sharing experiences and support.

5.3



Canadian Red Cross – The importance of collecting data to support long-term efforts

Since 2019, the Canadian Red Cross has worked to achieve many of the pledge’s goals. First of all, the Canadian Red Cross adopted diversity and inclusion into the organizational strategic priority areas and aims in the long-term to develop accountability, structure and seek funding to support Diversity and Inclusion initiatives within the organization. Secondly, the Canadian Red Cross reviewed the executive recruitment processes for inequities and bias (see above “Targeted recruitment of women for leadership positions”), and intentionally focused on diversity within executive and Board recruitment.

Their efforts towards gender parity are tracked quarterly through a self-identification questionnaire

on a number of demographic factors, including gender. This survey is sent out to newly-hired individuals – temporary, casual and permanent employees. The data also shows the overall staff population separated by women, racialized population, people with disabilities, Indigenous population and youth broken down by staff, senior management, and supervisory roles.

While facing challenges such as reduced investment into programming supporting capacity building for diversity, lack of available resources and competing priorities, the Canadian Red Cross believes Resolution 5 needs to be prioritized at the Movement level to prevent it from being lost with other ongoing initiatives.

5.4

French Red Cross - The importance of changing organizational statutes



In September 2021, the French Red Cross approved a statutory reform, stating that the proportion of members of each gender in the Board of Directors cannot be less than 40%. The statutory changes were effective immediately and in the new board that was elected at the same National Assembly, 12 out of 25 members were women, representing 48% of women in the Board of Directors.

Measures taken to accompany the transformation

The French Red Cross took several measures before the elections to support the implementation of these new provisions in their Statutes. An effort was made to distribute the new Statutes to their entire network of volunteers and to send out a reminder of the new parity composition of the Governing Board to the members of the General Assembly in the official call for applications.

French Red Cross
Governing Board, 2021.



Awareness about the new parity Statutes was also raised when the candidates for the Governing Boards were notified.

Difficulties and challenges

The journey to achieving parity at the National Governing Board and to adopt the new Statutes faced several challenges. To start with, despite the fact that French Red Cross has highly competent and involved women within its volunteers, it was not easy to find women candidates for such positions. Indeed, as in many National Societies, women are very present at local level but less so at the national level. There was an active effort to find women leaders who will be interested in running for these positions and to support them in their candidacy. Particularly when trying to get young women to put forward their candidacy.



Impact of Statutory changes

- In the 2021 new Governing Board: 12 out of 25 members are women, making up 48% of the board. Prior to 2021, women made up only 25% of all board members.
- Gender parity must also be respected in the following committees: the Ethics Committee, the Prospective Steering Committee and the National Appeals and Arbitration Commission.

Gender parity at the territorial level

For the boards of territorial branches, parity has not been imposed through the new Statutes. However, it is important to note that membership parity is respected at the local levels without it being imposed, as out of the 1 899 elected members for these branches, 59.4% are women.

In terms of women in leadership positions within the governing bodies at localities, the French Red Cross is quite close to parity with 47% of the Presidents being women. At the territorial level, the percentage of women Presidents drops to 30%. Overall, they are fewer women in senior positions at the territorial level.

The French Red Cross would like to achieve gender parity in the next few years at the locality and territorial levels, but currently it seems difficult to include such amendment to the existing Statutes as implementing gender quotas would risk slowing down this process even further. However, the French Red Cross is developing national programs such as masterclass or training in order encourage women to take responsibilities and support them for the next mandate.

Modernizing governance

In the beginning of 2024, the French Red Cross launched an open and participative process to modernize its governance. Among the proposals on which the Governing board is working is the adoption of a policy against sexist and sexual violence which should be adopted in October 2024 and deployed in 2025.

As the French Red Cross believes that women's leadership can only develop in a healthy and safe environment, a multi-stage training plan has been put in place. All employees and volunteers will follow an e-learning course on gender-based and sexual violence, with a compulsory additional module for all managers and elected representatives. Focal points will also be set up. Moreover, the French Red Cross had created a position of Head of Gender and Inclusion, directly under its Director general in order to be a more diverse and inclusive organization.

To improve the leadership of the Youth, two workshops on women leadership were organized during the Youth festival in September 2023. A training module has been set up to explain the alert procedure to the youth network, with a view to disseminating it more widely within the organization.

5.5

IFRC Americas Region – The importance of targeted initiatives for equity in leadership

Five years ago, 99% of IFRC disaster response operations in the Americas were led by men.

The “Equity and Leadership” initiative, launched in 2020 by the IFRC in collaboration with the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), aimed to change this by increasing women's participation in humanitarian

leadership roles in the Americas through training, mentoring, and support networks. This project has been essential in addressing the barriers women face and motivating them to actively participate in emergency and disaster response operations. The initiative saw significant success, with women leading 48% of operations in 2020 and 50%





Diana Oviedo,
IFRC Programs and
operations coordinator
in Central America

in 2021. However, the percentage dropped to 30% in 2023, highlighting ongoing challenges.

Diana Oviedo, IFRC Programs and operations coordinator in Central America, was a key participant in this initiative, she has managed major operations after participating in the women's leadership program. In the Americas Regional Office, Marianna Kuttothara (Americas Regional Office Head of Health, Disasters, Climate & Crises), María Martha Tuna (Manager, Operations, Evolving Crisis) and Boris Gaona (Disasters and Senior Officer, Surge Capacity) were part of the team behind the implementation of this initiative. They answered to some questions on the program.

→

Joanna Pierre,
Dominica Red Cross,
Wash promoter, Haiti
novembre 2022.



→

What were the main barriers preventing women from leading disaster response operations, resulting in 99% of such roles being held by men before the program?

In general, the main barriers identified in the program baseline were inequity and a hostile environment, unequal pay, unequal access to development opportunities leading to women simply being passed-up for opportunities for deployment or promotion to operational leading roles, and

lack of access to information (that reaches every branch). Women were twice as likely to perceive that gender had put them at a disadvantage to access to leading roles in operations at some point compared to men.

"I believe that added to the barriers identified in the program baseline and looking back to when I joined the IFRC in 2020, there was still a mysticism or sexist perception that the Operations Manager role was traditionally a male, with specific hero-like profiles with unattainable or larger than life qualities. However, I was lucky enough to join the network in a crucial moment where that traditional image was already changing thanks to people (men and women) who dared to think different and had the initiative to design the program - I, as a participant of the program am a living proof of that change."

→

What specific measures were implemented to help women overcome obstacles related to those barriers?

Several kinds of activities were developed:

- Training and capacity building programs: workshops and courses designed to develop skills in disaster and emergency management to equip participants with the necessary tools to assume leadership roles.

- Support networks and mentorship: creation of support networks among women leaders and aspiring leaders, and mentorship programs to guide and support women in their professional development (i.e. quota on the composition of the program to ensure women from

different subregions participated).

- Visibility and promotion: communication campaigns to inspire other women and promote a culture of recognition and appreciation of women leading operations and their capabilities.
- Work-life balance policies: promotion of policies that facilitate the participation of women with care giving responsibilities (i.e. funding to support alternative care giving) and

implementation of measures to improve work-life balance (i.e. remote deployments).

- Thematic forums and seminars: on gender and inclusion, and sensitization sessions on the importance of gender equity in disaster response.
- Psychosocial support and safe environments for women: during and after deployments, ensuring women feel supported and valued in their roles.

→

What are the specific outcomes or success stories from this program?

Several outcomes can be highlighted like the increase in female representation, women-led deployments with several responses to significant emergencies, such as Hurricanes Eta and Iota, the La Soufrière volcano eruption, and the Haiti earthquake in 2021 led by women trained under this initiative. Additionally, a strong cultural and motivational impact can be highlighted: the project has motivated women to overcome traditional

barriers and actively participate in leadership roles, changing the perception of their capability and role in the humanitarian field.

More statistics about Gender and Leadership in Operations are available on a [presentation from the IFRC, Equidad y liderazgo, and Cooperación Española](#).

“Women leading women inspire others to do the same, it has a ripple effect, and I was able to see this in the Americas region for the past 4 years. Women leaders as I see it, are more aware of the toxic/sexist leadership patterns we want to avoid, fostering a more nurturing, safer environment for them and their teams.”

Concerning mentoring and peer-to-peer networking, Diana Oviedo personally thinks that to be a leader you have to be self-aware on your strengths

and areas for improvement but also have people – role models within the network with key traits that you admire or want to emulate and adapt.

→

How can we explain that the percentage of women leaders dropped to 30% in 2023?

Diana Oviedo thinks that this could be attribute to the high turnover rates in National Societies/IFRC and the drop in financing after the COVID-19 appeal ended (December 2022). Another explanation can also be the remaining barriers concerning access information on professional development opportunities within the National Societies that do not reach everybody in all branches as

well. Diana Oviedo identifies that there is still a lack of support systems for women in care roles in National Societies, with dedicated and sustainable funding. Even though perceptions and pre-conceptions of “what a humanitarian leader is” have changed and continue changing, sexism persists and takes form on microaggressions and discrimination towards women of all ages.

“Moreover, the program identifies some obstacles that remain. For example, female volunteers were more likely to have felt insecure during deployments or have faced some type of discrimination or inappropriate treatment (55% of women VS 35% of male volunteers). Despite the advances achieved so far, there is still need for fairer selection processes at all levels of National Societies to access deployment opportunities as heads of operations.”



Diana Oviedo, IFRC
operations coordinator
in Central America,
talks to people
impacted by Tropical
Storm Lisa in Belize.



What solutions or strategies could be proposed to overcome these challenges?

According to Diana Oviedo, information on development and deployment opportunities as well as quotas for women are still needed. Moreover, communication for behavioural change, podcasts, awareness sessions, dissemination campaigns are key. Having dedicated funding for programs to support women in care giving roles to provide alternatives that will allow them to deploy also have a strong impact. Additionally, it is clear for Diana Oviedo that quotas are still needed in professional development programs as well as managerial structures to allow for more women in

decision making roles and for the generational change. A specific focus on the inclusion of youth has to be done too.

Women need to feel safe when deploying or taking leading roles, that is why reinforcing Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse policies and systems is necessary. Everyone must be aware on the available tools and mechanisms to report any misconduct and, the Movement must be informed on the results these have in safer environments for all.

“We need you », « You are enough », « We need your voice, thoughts, your view of the world »! I have mentioned these before and still stands. This encompasses what I wish someone had told me when entering into the humanitarian field 10 years ago or even when I started my career 17 years ago. This would probably have avoided me numerous moments of self-doubt, feeling inadequate or thinking that I had to compensate with more and more experience and/or more and more education/training before daring to voice my opinions and let alone taking on leading roles.

Finally, I would add « We need you in the decision making spaces to give a voice to all those that are not heard, to all those that, maybe like you or someone you know, have had to endure unfair treatment, inequalities, stigmatization or invisibilization » and « Be part of the change that you want to see wherever you are!”

Kenya Red Cross Society and French Red Cross - The importance of developing gender-responsive programs

In 2022, the Kenya Red Cross Society and the French Red Cross launched the Women Social Entrepreneurship Institute (WSEI) in Mombasa, Coastal Kenya.

Supported by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, this program supported 25 women informal business owners in their transition from informal “survival” entrepreneurship towards sustainable income generation. By growing their human,

social and economic capital, its long-term vision is to sustain and create new jobs, strengthen and scale the women’s businesses while empowering them and building their resilience in order for them to become change leaders in their communities.

The WSEI is being implemented on the ground by a women-only team from the Kenya Red Cross Society and the French Red Cross.

→
Winners of the first
edition of the WSEI,
2023.



The context

Mombasa is a 1.4 million inhabitants’ metropolis, second in Kenya, also known to be the largest trading hub in East Africa with a vibrant Coastal culture. However, Mombasa County has a very high unemployment rate (up to 44% among the youth). In such times, entrepreneurship in the informal economy appears to be an escape route for many, especially women. However, if the capital Nairobi counts a huge number of Entrepreneur Support Organizations, the Coastal region is not as rich. Besides, all entrepreneurs don’t stand the same chances to succeed and grow their businesses past the “glass ceiling” of taking part in the formal economy. Women, who however represent

the majority of informal microenterprise owners (58.5%), face a lot of disadvantages, starting with a lower level of education, as Kenya ranks 109 out of 153 globally with significant inequalities between males and females.

The gender-responsive approach

Adopting an approach inspired from social entrepreneurship, the two National Societies joined forces to build a methodology tackling gender inequality. Designed with local stakeholders, it relied on ensuring a transformative and comprehensive experience addressing the women’s scarcity in human, economic and social capital. The WSEI curriculum involved weekly group training



First promotion of the
Women Social
Entrepreneurship
Institute, 2023.

with local stakeholders, individual coaching from professionals, networking sessions and provision of seed-funding to boost the businesses. The participants were hosted at the Innovation Hub at the Kenya Red Cross Society which provided a “safe space” for them to create a community and encouraged peer-support. The program lasted 8 months and ended with a final Pitching Competition gathering the local ecosystem of Mombasa.

The impact

As an impact, a notable 38 additional positions were generated within women-owned businesses. The program effectively doubled the employment rate and on average, one entrepreneur now supports approximately three employees. The number of clients also increased: while almost half of the entrepreneurs had less than 20 monthly clients on average, 65% of them later reported having between 20 and 50 clients. The program successfully equipped women with the tools and insights needed to make a clear distinction

between personal and business finances, empowering them to make informed financial decisions. Therefore, the program’s impact on participants’ profitability is striking, especially considering 16% of them were not profitable before joining the program, only 52% were making a living out of it compared to 80% by the end of the program.

The program also contributed to empower the entrepreneurs as women and therefore as leaders in their communities. As they grew more self-assured in their entrepreneurial journey, they found themselves more inclined to share their knowledge and experiences with others, a testament to their growing confidence. Over the course of the program, these leaders have reached out to over 300 individuals, primarily women, to share their business insights, mentor local entrepreneurs, and provide training in a diverse range of practical skills, including bakery, cleaning, stitching, and digital competencies.

Find more information on
the [Women Social
Entrepreneurship
Institute](#)
on the [Red Social
Innovation website](#).



Maldivian Red Crescent – The importance of early organizational commitment to gender parity

Impact of Statutory changes

Starting from the National Society General Assembly in 2023, 3 out of 12 seats in the National Governing Board are reserved for women.

- 1 additional seat created to represent marginalized persons such as migrants and people with disabilities.
- A young woman leader with a disability was elected in the General Assembly of 2021, as one of the North Region representatives at the Governing Board.
- A female migrant leader was elected for the Complaints Committee, and represented as the Chair of the Committee.

Since the Maldivian Red Crescent was created back in 2009, there was a noteworthy effort to incorporate women's leadership and meaningful participation across the organization. From 2010 to 2012, the Maldivian Red Crescent, with support from the Swiss Embassy in Sri Lanka, carried out a women's empowerment program to train women members in leadership and to encourage them to stand for elections at all levels. In fact, 3 out of 4 previous Secretary Generals of the Maldivian Red Crescent have been women and have always promoted women's leadership both in the management and governance teams during each of their tenures.



Aisha Niyaz, former Vice-President of the Maldivian Red Crescent Governing Board, 2019

With its very first female Secretary General, the Maldivian Red Crescent established organizational policies to ensure equal participation of women and men in every operational deployment and volunteer mission. This laid a foundation for the organizational culture that is present to this date. In the words of Aisha Niyaz, the first woman

Vice-President of the Maldivian Red Crescent, “this created an enabling environment to give women the equal opportunity to go for the same positions as men”.

This early commitment to advance women's leadership was emphasized by the close involvement of the Maldivian Red Crescent in the development of and co-sponsorship of the Women and Leadership Resolution. In 2019, the Maldivian Red Crescent Subcommittee of the Governing board, responsible for revision of the organizational statutes, suggested making a change to better align with the resolution. In accordance with Maldivian Red Crescent's strong commitment to achieve gender parity, a proposal of allocating specific seats for women was made.

Making this change involved a consultation process across the whole organization. Although, such development did not face major pushbacks by the Maldivian Red Crescent members and volunteers, opinions were varied as to what was the best way to ensure gender parity at the Governing board. After several internal debates, the majority of Maldivian Red Crescent members voted for having a reserved seat for women for the positions that had two representatives. This gender specific allocation meant that, as of April 2021, 3 seats are allocated to women: 1 member out of the 2 Vice-Presidents, 2 North Region Members and 2 South Region Members, should be a woman.

Southeast Asia Red Cross Red Crescent Women Conference – The importance of networking

In August 2023, 11 National Societies organized the first Southeast Asia (SEA) Red Cross and Red Crescent Women Conference hosted by the Singapore Red Cross Society. The aims of this conference were to reinforce the spirit of mutual cooperation and solidarity within the Southeast Asia National Society Network and with the Movement's partners, and to further leadership progression for women in the Southeast Asia National Societies.

The National Societies committed for enabling empowerment and nurturing women leaders with two specific programs:

- The Southeast Asia Red Cross and Red Crescent peer-to-peer women exchange program to encourage cross-border learning in

the Southeast Asia RCRC Societies and share best practice and innovative ideas, to empower women and call for formal structures and systems to advance women into leadership roles and initiate a management development program.

- Online platform for the Women Humanitarians Community to encourage peer support networks and facilitate knowledge sharing.

They also identified several areas of collaboration, like resource mobilization, promotion of women in the SEA as champions of digitalization, and other areas in future such as mental health, migration and displacement.



Spanish Red Cross – The importance of male allyship



Achievements:

- At the provincial level, the Spanish Red Cross has been able to significantly increase the number of women in leadership positions. In 2022, 9 of the provincial presidents are women and all provisional Governing Board teams are formed by a woman and a man, for example a female secretary and a male coordinator, or vice versa.
- At the national level, the Spanish Red Cross has elected a female Vice-president.
- At the international level, the Spanish Red Cross presented a female candidate as the Chair of the Standing Commission in 2019, working in the interest of the entire RCRC Movement.
- There is a strong commitment from the Spanish Red Cross to continue working to get more women in leadership positions.

According to the respondent from the Spanish Red Cross, there are significant factors that enabled the increase of women in leadership roles across provisional governing boards. They are:

Commitment from leadership and male allies

Starting with the previous male national President of the Spanish Red Cross, who took it as a personal mission to change the composition of the provincial and regional presidencies of the Governing Boards, this commitment was shared by the male president of the autonomous region of Castilla and Leon. From his leadership position, he has been supporting the female President of the Avila Province with the initiatives she proposed to help increase the number of women running for leadership positions and the number of women elected across the National Society.

In 2021, the Spanish Red Cross worked to develop an action plan for parity in governance, approved by the National Committee, aiming for access to and participation of women in the Spanish Red Cross' governing bodies. In 2022, the governance initiative was developed with the aim of providing support, raising awareness, training, creating tools for territories, coordinating actions with other commissions and projects, and advising the National Commission for Equality and Gender on issues relating to women in decision-making. It is from this initiative that the measures agreed in the Expanded Governance Decalogue are being implemented.

The initiatives are summarized in 3 commitments, 10 objectives, 90 actions and 4 work plans for effective equality between women and men in the governance of the Spanish Red Cross.

The 3 commitments are:

- Work to guarantee equal access for women and men to the different levels of decision-making in the organization.
- Promote the full and effective participation of women at all decision-making levels within the organization.
- Improve transparency and internal and external communication around the process put in place to achieve parity in governance and commitment to equality.

To achieve these objectives and commitments, more than 90 awareness-raising, monitoring, training and consultancy initiatives are being deployed to achieve greater equality in governance.

In 2024, the Spanish Red Cross elected a female President and appointed a female Secretary General and a female General coordinator.

Research to support the process

In order to accompany the change within their National Society, the Spanish Red Cross launched two studies, looking at the access and the participation of women to the governance bodies at every level of the organization in order to have qualitative and quantitative analysis on this subject. These studies are essential for the Spanish Red Cross to understand the obstacles and barriers for women to access governance bodies and allows them to have an adequate and effective response. One of the studies, carried out in 2020, revealed that although 61% of Spanish Red Cross volunteers are women, only 38% of them are in the management bodies (in Spanish Red Cross, the management bodies are elected from among the volunteers and/or members), which is why several institutional commitments have been made to achieve greater parity.

Women supporting women

The Spanish Red Cross created the Women leaders network (Red de Lideresas), a space for women leaders to take action to advance gender quality and diversity within the Spanish Red Cross. With the support of dedicated female leaders, women with key profiles and leadership potential were recruited, joined the network and took active part in activities to advance the 2018 Gender Strategy within the Spanish Red Cross. This network is currently advising the National Gender Commission.

Awareness raising

Having spaces to showcase women's leadership skills is important in raising awareness on the crucial role women have across the Spanish Red Cross and the RCRC Movement in general. These forums and trainings are a good opportunity for women to showcase their skills. From public speaking to problem solving and decision making, these forums show their colleagues they have what it takes to be in a leadership position. In 2023, the Spanish Red Cross held its 10th General Assembly, at which a woman was elected President, and the strategic lines for the next four years were approved, with a focus on gender equality, women's leadership and measures to encourage women to sit on governing bodies.

Obstacles

The progress made over the last years has not come without limitations. For the Spanish Red

Cross, one of the main challenges is to overcome the backlash from male colleagues. Especially at the smaller county and provincial offices, there has been resistance towards the work to increase the number of women in leadership roles. Some

men have expressed that the women in leadership positions have been granted their roles because they are women and because the organization is pushing for more gender parity, and not because of their skills and capabilities.

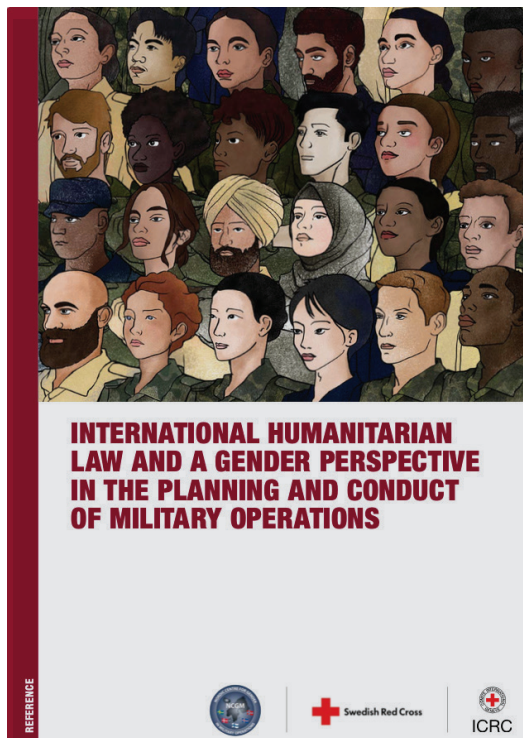
5.10



Swedish Red Cross and the ICRC - The importance of understanding gendered harm arising from military operations

In March 2024, the ICRC, the Swedish Red Cross and the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations published a report entitled “*International Humanitarian Law and a Gender Perspective in the Planning and Conduct of Military Operations*”.

The report is available online on the [ICRC website](#).



Gender inequality persists in all countries worldwide and tends to be more severe in conflict-affected contexts. Designed to protect humanity from the worst excesses of war, the objective of international humanitarian law is best realized when parties to armed conflicts take account of the inequality shaping the lives of diverse women, men, girls, and boys so that all civilians are protected, equally. Yet the practical measures this entails for armed forces remain under-explored and under-prioritized.

To address this knowledge gap and consider corresponding practical implications for the application of international humanitarian law, the ICRC, the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations and the Swedish Red Cross convened in 2022 an expert meeting of military and State practitioners. It results in this new report. The report is available online on the [ICRC website](#).

The report provides guidance as to how gendered harm arising from military operations can be better understood and sets out good practices to avoid and reduce it. It draws in particular from applicable international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as well as policies, directives, and practices both at national level and within the framework of the United Nations Women, Peace and Security agenda. Its intended audience is practitioners engaged in national security or defence who are seeking to better protect civilians and improve compliance with non-discrimination obligations using a gender perspective. The report was launched at an online event on March 25th, 2024, entitled “*Gender and international humanitarian law: Practical Implications for Military Operations*”. Featuring a brief scene-setting presentation of the report’s key takeaways, the event focused on good practices to avoid and reduce gendered harm arising from military operations. A roundtable among military and humanitarian practitioners addressed challenges – as well as how such challenges might be overcome – to better protect all civilians and improve compliance with international humanitarian law’s non-discrimination obligations. An event highlights and the full recording of the event are available online on the [ICRC website](#).

Bayarbaatar Bayarmaa, Mongolian Red Cross; Dr Asha Mohammed, IFRC;
Samantha Dickson, Grenada Red Cross; Eunyoung Park, Korean Red Cross
↓ at the GLOW Red Network meeting in Mongolia, 2023.



6. The work of GLOW Red

Following the General Assembly decision and Council of Delegates Resolution on Women and Leadership from 2017, GLOW Red was formally founded in 2018 at a meeting in Stockholm for women leaders from across the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.



GLOW Red annual meeting 2022 in Paris, France



GLOW Red was created to foster the implementation of the newly passed resolution, and to advance the following objectives:

- Change the electoral face of the International Governance of the Movement by 2022.
- Increase and strengthen the pipeline of future women leaders, enabling and supporting high potential women from staff and volunteers for leadership positions beyond 2022.

From global to regional action

Leading up to the International Conference in 2019, GLOW Red played an important role in advocating and rallying support for the Women and Leadership Resolution. In addition, the 100 Voices platform was launched to highlight the contributions of women to the RCRC Movement since its inception. Today, voices of more than 150 women

from all parts of the world are available on the platform (glowred.org). Every year, GLOW Red launches a call for new voices and continues to underline the amazing work of women for the Movement.

Between 2019 and 2022, GLOW Red organized four governance leadership trainings for women. From

the first training in 2019, 25% of the participants were elected to IFRC international governance positions at the Statutory Meetings later the same year. From the following trainings, six participants have been elected to the IFRC Governing Board. Being organized as a global network with regional and national representatives, GLOW Red has been able to participate in and advocate for change at several regional meetings across the RCRC Movement over the last years. Both before and after the adoption of the Women and Leadership Resolution in 2019, the active advocacy work from GLOW Red members at regional statutory meetings has resulted in the following commitments:

- **In Europe:** Through the Almaty Commitments in 2018, leaders of Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies in Europe and Central Asia expressed their determination to “increase diversity at all levels of National Societies as to be representative of the communities we serve”. In 2022, in Tbilisi, Georgia, National Societies reaffirmed their willingness to improve the diversity of leadership in their National Societies across genders, generations and backgrounds, including by addressing the structural barriers (such as adapting terminology in National Society Statutes, improving human resource policies, fostering allyship, mentorship and peer-to-peer support) that prevent women, including young women, from stepping forward and assume leadership role. They also recalled the existing

commitments to implement Resolution 5 of the 33rd International Conference on Women and Leadership in the Humanitarian Action of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

- **In Asia-Pacific:** One of the targets in the 2018 Manila Conference outcome document was to reach gender parity among elected and appointed leaders of the National Societies and IFRC governance. In November 2023, during the 11th Asia Pacific Regional Conference, National Societies from the region reiterated their commitments in the Hanoi Call for action and re-committed to “ensuring Asia Pacific National Societies are diverse and inclusive organizations at all levels, with specific emphasis on achieving gender parity for women in leadership positions and in participation at all regional events of the Movement and agreed to hold the first Women’s Conference for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Asia Pacific prior to 2026 to review tangible processes and report progress to the next Asia Pacific Conference”.
- **In Americas:** During the Inter-Americas Conference in Argentina in 2019, the Buenos Aires Commitment, was signed by all National Societies in the Americas Region. A section specific to Women and Leadership was put forward, to advocate for the leadership role of women by promoting equity at all levels,



Asia Pacific Regional
Conference, Hanoi,
2023.



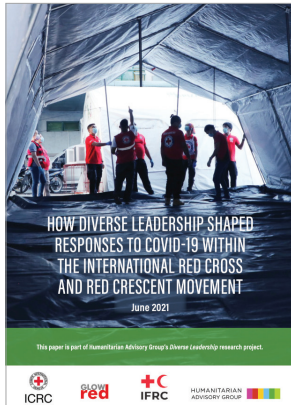


within and outside the Movement. In 2023, the National Societies of Americas went one step further with the Nassau Accord committing to reduce the barriers and implemented targeted approaches and programs to enhance respect for diversity and gender equity and develop and strengthen internal regulations, policies, strategies, mechanisms and programs to guarantee protection, gender equity and inclusion in all actions of National Societies. Moreover, specific commitments for women leadership were taken:

- “Establish comprehensive communication strategies and mechanisms, as well as binding policies to boost the gender and diversity approach and integrate this within our own societies, generating organizational culture change through actions that encourage dialogue, reflection and the promotion of humanitarian attitudes oriented towards gender equity, protection, respect for diversity, integrity and security.”
- “Incorporate into Red Cross Society strategic plans clear and effective lines of action to promote women’s leadership, adopting measures that promote representation and diverse, balanced and equitable participation in leadership at strategic (Governance), technical (Management), and operational (Operations) levels.”

- **In Africa:** On the occasion of the 10th Pan-African Conference in Kenya in 2023, the Nairobi commitments were adopted by all the National Societies of Africa. During the discussions, the National Societies emphasized the need for diversity and inclusion, particularly increased women leadership, in the National Societies of the region and committed to “Invest in women leadership, improve gender balance, diversity and inclusion of our National Societies, attract talented leadership, volunteers and staff, strengthen youth participation in our decision-making structures at all levels, and allocate resources for local youth actions”. By 2028, National Societies pledge to have a higher number of National Societies with at least 30% women representation in leadership positions at all levels.

This progress was achieved through the persistent and dedicated work of women leaders in each region who advocated for including women’s leadership in the agenda of the conferences, supported and participated in round tables and used these opportunities to talk about the importance of gender equality in the humanitarian sector, supported by fellow members of the GLOW Red network.



The report is available on the website: womenhumanitarianadvisorygroup.org



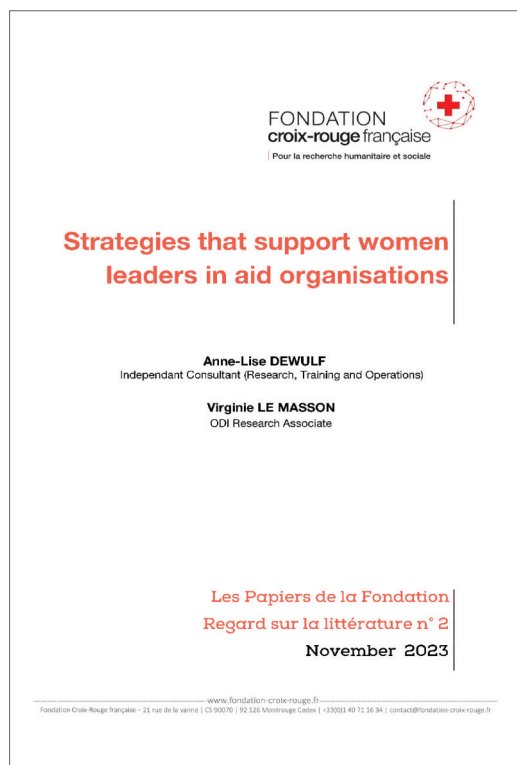
Read the report on Strategies that support women leaders in aid organisations.

Research on women's leadership in the humanitarian sector

One important commitment in the Women and Leadership Resolution is that States and Movement components should “invest in research, involving women to identify good practices and how to remove the barriers to women's participation, in particular in leadership and decision-making in humanitarian responses”.

In 2021, GLOW Red realized a research report entitled “How Diverse Leadership Shaped Responses to COVID-19 Within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement”. initiated by GLOW Red and became a Movement wide initiative in collaboration between the Humanitarian Advisory Group, the IFRC, the ICRC and GLOW Red.

In 2023, to continue to identify good practices and find solutions on how to remove the barriers to women's participation in leadership and decision-making in humanitarian responses, a study entitled “Strategies that support women leaders in aid organisations” was initiated by the GLOW Red network, supported by the Swedish Red Cross and the French Red Cross Foundation.



The authors of this study are Anne-Lise Dewulf and Virginie Le Masson. The full research is available online on the French Red Cross Foundation website.

The aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of the strategies that promote equality among the leaders and representatives of aid organisations. This literature review goes beyond an analysis of the barriers faced by women leaders and those who aspire for leadership positions and explores the approaches that need to be put in place to move towards greater parity and equality in aid organisations.

The research considers 7 areas of action to support women working in aid organisations who aspire to be and remain leaders:

1. **Building an organizational culture that supports gender equality internally** (and not just in intervention programs).
2. **Special support for women facing multiple systems of oppression** on the basis of their geographical, ethnic or religious origins, or their sexual orientation.
3. **The collection and analysis of data specific to the organization's context and on gender differences** to better inform awareness-raising strategies.
4. **The responsibility of today's leaders** to encourage mentoring and female leadership role models.
5. **Parenting support** to overcome the obstacles faced by working mothers who want to manage their children.
6. **A zero-tolerance policy** on sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.
7. **Continuous training, adapted and networked**, to support women's leadership.

Once these 7 areas of action have been identified, the research puts forward 18 recommendations for improving gender equality among the leaders and representatives of aid organizations. Key points include: conducting gender equality self-assessments, improving recruitment strategies, addressing intersectionality, collecting gender-sensitive data, retaining women leaders, fostering inclusive cultures, supporting working parents, establishing safe complaint procedures for harassment, and implementing targeted training programs. The emphasis is on creating systemic change to promote gender equality at all levels.

Taking stock: an external evaluation of GLOW Red's first four years of action

In May 2022, the GLOW Red network published an evaluation report about their four first years of action entitled “Lighting the path to women’s leadership: a review of GLOW Red’s four years of action”. It has been realized by an external and independent organization, the Humanitarian Advisory Group. The full evaluation report is available [on the GLOW Red website](#).

GLOW Red’s membership base has expanded immensely since its inception, from 28 women leaders gathered in Stockholm to formally organize GLOW Red, to more than 650 women staff and volunteers from across more than 120 National Societies nowadays. Its expansion continues. The review found that the role of focal points was critical to the functioning of GLOW Red. According to the evaluation, over the first four years of its initiatives, GLOW Red has been pivotal in strengthening women’s leadership within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, despite its limited resources. It has successfully placed the issue of women’s leadership prominently on the agenda of the Movement. Through well-timed and appropriately targeted activities and initiatives, GLOW Red has also effectively reinforced women’s leadership within the Movement. Additionally, GLOW Red has served as a catalyst in amending resolutions and policies to better support women’s leadership.



of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that GLOW Red has influenced policies and decision-makers in a way that has strengthened women’s leadership.

The evaluation also highlights areas for further improvement to achieve new progress.

For instance, GLOW Red can continue to enhance its impact by focusing more on developing and supporting a pool of women leaders at various levels of seniority and responsibility, not just at a governance level. GLOW Red can also create and leverage male allies, as the evaluation points out: “Some interviewees shared that they appreciate when male leaders show support to GLOW Red by attending their events, but this is an area that GLOW Red could strengthen, because broadening male allyship means that responsibilities to change the face of the board does not fall to women leaders alone”.



Additionally, to improve its impact, GLOW Red should reach a more diverse cohort, improve its understanding of members’ needs, and advocate for more radical cultural change within the Movement. The evaluation highlights that while gender parity in leadership positions is a significant milestone, the real challenge lies in creating an enabling environment for women to voice their opinions, as many women in leadership roles still hesitate to speak up. GLOW Red can strengthen the Movement’s responsibility for women’s leadership.

Finally, GLOW Red must examine how to move towards a more sustainable governance and operating model. GLOW Red’s future role and model will need to balance ambitions, resources and ways of working inside the network to be sustainable. There is consensus that an intentional process is needed to articulate a vision and understand options for financial and workforce sustainability of the GLOW Red network. These contributions are reflected in GLOW Red’s new strategy for 2023-2027.

“In our National Society we do have gender parity in the management position as well as currently for the first time in the governance also which is a huge milestone. But it’s not just the numbers, is it? It’s also a matter of creating that enabling space, that safe space to voice out or meaningfully contribute into the decision-making process. I’m still observing that women who are in leadership roles are hesitant to speak up.”

Going further: the 2023-2027 GLOW Red Strategy

GLOW Red’s strategy for 2023-2027 is based on the outcome and recommendations of the external evaluation of the network’s effectiveness after its four first years of action mentioned above, plus a reflection and strategy workshop held in October 2022, and the concrete actions emerging from these inputs. The strategy is also informed by the

knowledge that success must be sustained. In order not to lose momentum or continued change, GLOW Red must pursue its advocacy, growing the network, supporting senior and emerging women leaders. The full version of the 2023-2027 Strategy of the GLOW Red network is available [on the GLOW Red website](#).

The strategy sets a vision and a mission of the network, and sets out 3 objectives to guide the ongoing work:

1. Increase and strengthen women leaders in senior positions of leadership and representation.
2. Expand and diversify the pool of aspiring leaders.
3. Change the electoral face of governance at all levels of the Movement.

To achieve these three objectives, the strategy has identified two key enablers:

Enabler 1: A sustainable, dynamic and growing network.

Enabler 2: Strengthen and build outreach, advocacy, and alliances.

More actions from GLOW Red

GLOW Red has also worked for the implementation of the Women and Leadership Resolution by organizing trainings and other initiatives to support women’s leadership:

- **Humanitarian Coaching Network:** Through a collaboration with the Humanitarian Coaching Network, GLOW Red has been able to offer online professional coaching to over 30 women, between 2019 and 2023.
- **Women’s Leadership Workshops:** Between 2019 and 2022, GLOW Red organized Women’s leadership workshops for women aspiring for governance leadership positions in the IFRC. A total of 42 women from all around the world have taken the training in-person and

online to develop their leadership skills, strengthen their capacities in personal presence, learn how to run an effective campaign, and deepen their understanding of the politics and policies of the RCRC Movement.

- **Women and Leadership working group:** In 2021, GLOW Red formed a working group made up of representatives from the RCRC Movement to make sure the Resolution on Women and Leadership from 2019 is implemented. This group is committed to track and



collect data on the implementation of this resolution across the Movement.

- **EmpowerRED:** It is a virtual peer-support leadership initiative where RCRC women leaders get to grow and enhance their leadership by connecting with other women and discuss topics that women leaders often find challenging, or they want to learn more about.
- **Annual network meetings:** Every year, GLOW Red organizes virtual or in-person meetings for its members, to foster the network of contacts, celebrate progress and discuss remaining challenges. Virtual meetings were set up in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In October 2022, the French Red Cross hosted a strategic planning meeting in Paris, and in June 2023, the Mongolian Red Cross Society hosted a GLOW Red network meeting in Ulaanbataar.
- **Collaboration with the International Coaching Federation (ICF):** In 2024 GLOW Red joined the ICF Ignite program that offers pro-bono coaching to its members. In this pilot initiative, a

total of 20 women from National Societies, the IFRC and ICRC, are receiving coaching over 6 months (ending in December 2024). GLOW Red hopes to continue this partnership expand the group of mentees for coming cohorts.

- **Women in Digital:** In 2023, a group of women decided to create a sub-group in the network, called the GLOW Red Women in Digital, for women from the RCRC Movement working in digital, data and tech space. The group has hosted several meetups and webinars focused on Women in Technology and how to encourage more women leadership in these spaces within the Movement.
- **Inspirational sessions with leaders:** Through the years, GLOW Red organized several inspirational sessions with leaders from the RCRC Movement and the humanitarian sector in order to inspire, to exchange on leadership experiences and discuss strategies to reach gender equality at leadership levels.

Acknowledgements

GLOW Red and the Women and Leadership Resolution Working Group would like to formally thank everyone who took the time to complete the Reporting Mechanism, as well as those who contributed to other elements of this report. The leadership that you have demonstrated has helped us to break down silos, ensuring that best practices to advance women's leadership are shared throughout the entire RCRC Movement.

→
GLOW Red at the IFRC
General Assembly,
2022.



We look forward to the work that will be done by RCRC Movement Components in the future, as well as further learning from each other. If you would like to be put in contact with any RCRC Movement partner mentioned in this report, or with the GLOW Red network, please reach out to glowred@redcross.se.

Learn more about GLOW Reds' activities at www.glowred.org.



American
Red Cross



Kenya
Red Cross



ICRC



Australian
Red Cross



**CROIX-ROUGE
FRANÇAISE**



Cruz Roja Colombiana



Cruz Roja Ecuatoriana



**ҚАЗАҚСТАН
ҚЫЗЫЛ АЙЫ**



ދިވެހިރާއްޖޭގެ ރަތް ސަލާމަތް
Maldivian Red Crescent



Crois Dhearg na hÉireann
Irish Red Cross



**Japanese
Red Cross Society**

+C IFRC



**NEW ZEALAND
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RIPEKA WHERO AOTEAROA



AUSTRIAN RED CROSS



Swedish Red Cross



Cruz Roja Española

Report on the

WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP RESOLUTION
adopted at the 33rd International Conference