

Reconnecting families through SMS and USSD services



Everyone has a right to know where their family is. This is the belief of REFUNITE, a technology non-profit with a mission to change the process for family tracing. By creating a user-friendly, online global database with more than 400,000 users and growing, people that have been separated from their friends or family members can now search for their missing loved ones with the click of a button.

CHALLENGE

Natural disasters and armed conflict leave millions of people as refugees and displaced people across the globe each year, often separated from family and friends and lacking the resources to locate them as the first step towards reuniting.

REFUNITE helps displaced persons find their loved ones through a global, online database that can be accessed and searched online or via mobile.

Mobile is the true challenge: it needs to be a reliable and resilient service that can work even far away from any kind of internet coverage and be cost-effective for REFUNITE, but also familiar and widely used by users in different countries.

SOLUTION:

Infobip SMS and USSD services

SMS is the most popular and widely used mobile channel, supported by all kinds of mobile phones, not requiring internet connectivity and enabling communication wherever there is a mobile signal.

Just like SMS, USSD is robust and reliable, supported by all types of mobiles and doesn't need a mobile data connection, but unlike SMS, it lets users interact via text menus with a back end application in real time. USSD is mostly used in polling, customer care and mobile banking.

The two technologies seemed like a perfect fit for REFUNITE and their needs, USSD to enable users to search the database of displaced persons, and SMS to provide notifications, information and alerts, as well as enabling users to search the online database by sending in a simple SMS with the name of the person they are looking for.

REFUNITE and Infobip partnered to develop a complete solution, where REFUNITE harnessed the digitised database, developed the database application and the back end, and Infobip provided the technology to connect REFUNITE with its mobile operator partners in several countries across the world, with large populations of displaced people. Infobip's expertise and market position enables it to act as a single provider towards mobile operators, simultaneously ensuring USSD and SMS coverage.

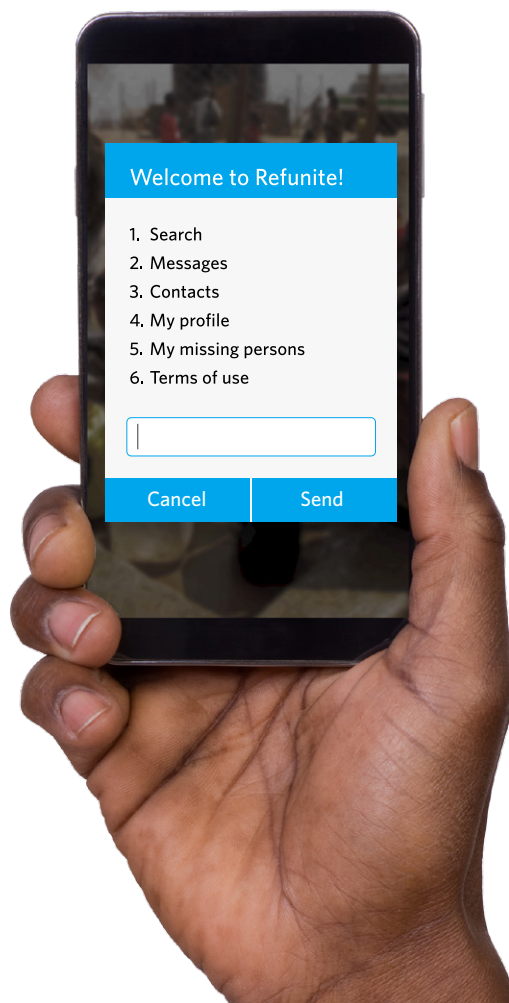
Bringing REFUNITE's family tracing platform to offline users via SMS and USSD complements the online access method via www.refunite.org. Knowing that most of the world's refugees and displaced populations do not have internet access, these two services are crucial in order to reconnect millions of

separated families across the globe. Both USSD and SMS deliver easy to use menus, where users can enter search parameters (name, age, last known location etc.) and receive a list of potential matches.

RESULT

Currently, REFUNITE and Infobip are able to deliver access to the online family tracing platform via SMS and/or USSD in DR Congo, Jordan and Turkey. Countries in the pipeline include Somalia, South Sudan, and the Philippines.

As employed by REFUNITE, USSD and SMS services have proven themselves to be reliable and practical in supporting the mission of REFUNITE, bringing families back together.



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Infobip is a global provider of mobile solutions connecting mobile network operators and enterprises through an in-house developed and operated mobile services cloud.

Our converged messaging, m-payments and push notifications services bring a mobile dimension to any business. Offices on six continents and strategic partnerships with major telco groups enable us to provide seamless integration and delivery.

Always looking for innovation and new ideas, fostering a customer-first business philosophy and being at home in every part of the world makes us the reliable provider for thousands of clients worldwide.

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