Digital Access and Barriers in Displacement-affected Communities in West Darfur, Sudan

Highlights from the end user survey from a Connectivity Needs and Usage Assessment (CoNUA)

West Darfur is a state in western Sudan that shares a border with Chad and is home to nearly 2 million people. More than 900,000 people in West Darfur will need humanitarian assistance in 2022, nearly half of the population. Roughly one in five people in West Darfur are displaced or returnees, 300,000 of whom are internally displaced in Sudan.
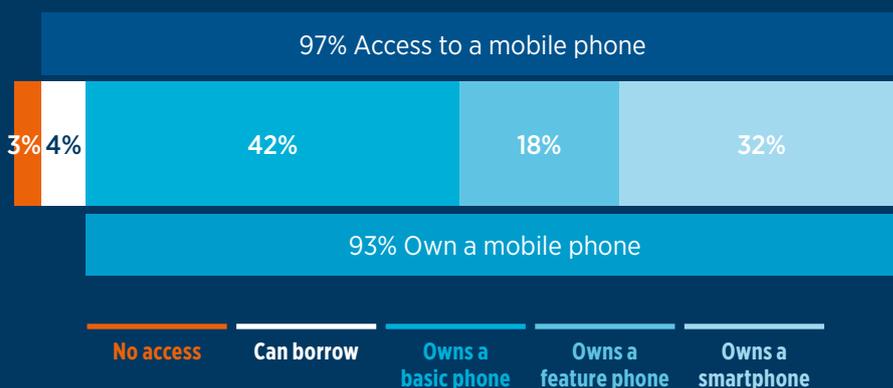
Access

Most people have access to a mobile phone, with a majority owning one. Half of people own an internet-enabled handset (feature phone or smartphone)

Individual access to a mobile phone

|				
97% Access to a mobile phone				
No access 3%	Can borrow 4%	Owns a basic phone 42%	Owns a feature phone 18%	Owns a smartphone 32%
93% Own a mobile phone				

Q: What kind of phone do you personally own? (None, Basic, Feature, Smart) and Do you have access to someone else's mobile phone? Base: All respondents; n: 1,547

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GSMA

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

UKaid from the British people

Women, persons with disabilities, older people and speakers of minority languages were all less likely to own a mobile phone

Own a mobile phone

Men	Women	Person without disabilities	Person with disabilities
95% own a mobile phone	**75%** own a mobile phone	**93%** own a mobile phone	**79%** own a mobile phone

Women
11% less likely to own a mobile phone

Person with disabilities
15% less likely to own a mobile phone

Own a smartphone
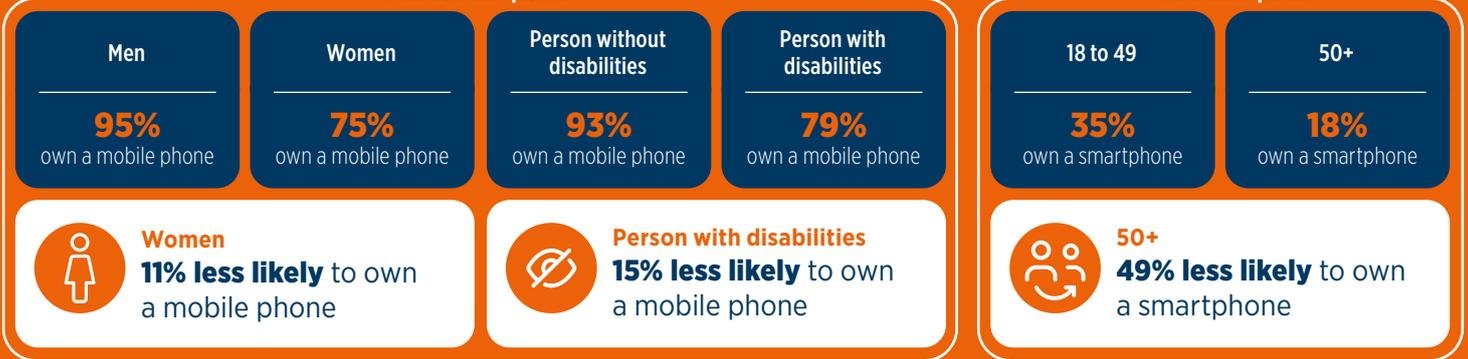
18 to 49	50+
35% own a smartphone	**18%** own a smartphone

50+
49% less likely to own a smartphone

Base: All respondents; n: (Women=565, Men=981 | Persons with disabilities=95, Persons without disabilities=1,452 | 18 to 49=1,283, 50+=264)
*Access gaps presented as proportional differences, for example the mobile gender gap is: Gender gap in ownership/use (%) = Male owners/users (% of male population)
- Female owners/users (% of female population) / Male owners/users (% of male population)

## Cost presents the biggest barrier to owning a phone
Top four barriers to mobile phone ownership

The cost of buying a mobile phone is too high	The cost of buying airtime is too high	I don't know how to use a mobile phone	There is limited or no network coverage in my area
73%	**24%**	**17%**	**12%**

Q: Which of the following reasons prevent you from owning a mobile phone?
Base: Non-phone owners; n: 115

Few phone owners have access to charging at home, leaving them reliant on charging stations in the market

Only 25 per cent of phone users can reliably charge at home

25%
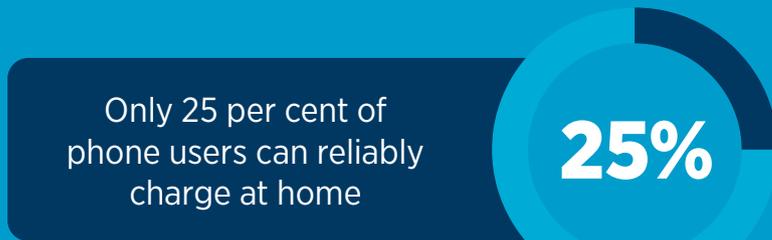
Q: Can you charge your phone's battery reliably at home?
Base: all phone owners (1,427)

Usage

Knowledge of mobile services, by status

Service	Percentage
Make and receive calls	96%
Use USSD	79%
Top up airtime	77%
Send and receive text messages	68%
Listen to FM radio	36%
Send and receive instant based messages	33%
Take photos and record videos	30%
Send and receive voice messages	25%
Use social media	20%

Most people know how to make basic use of mobile phones, but fewer than 35 per cent of people know how to use any service that requires internet access

Q: Do you know how to use a phone to....?
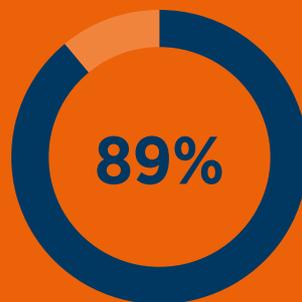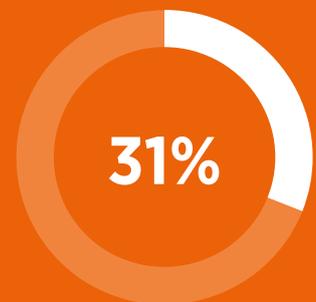Base: All respondents; n: 1,547

Whilst awareness of the internet is high, usage is low. Usage remains low even amongst those who own internet enabled phones

Heard of internet

89%

Use internet

31%

Q: Have you ever heard of the internet (apps, services, and websites like Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger)? and Do you currently own a phone and use mobile internet? Base: All respondents; n: 1,547
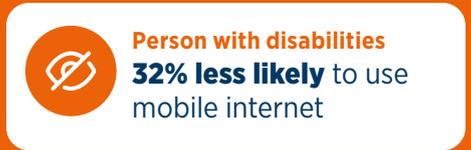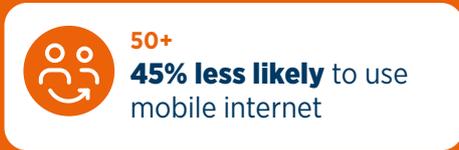
Internet use is largely for communication

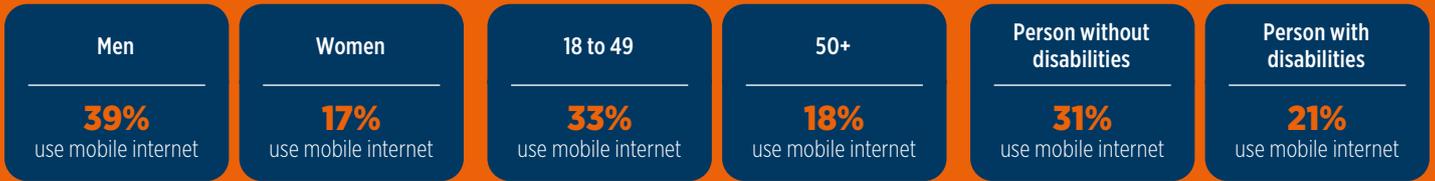| Service	Percentage
WhatsApp	71%
Facebook	68%
Facebook messenger	64%
Google	60%
Youtube	57%
Instagram	15%
Email	14%
Mobile banking	6%

Q: What do you use your mobile phone for? Base: Internet users; n: 473

Women, persons with disabilities and older people were all less likely to use mobile internet
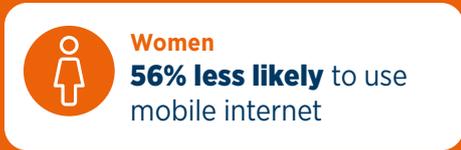
Men	Women	18 to 49	50+	Person without disabilities	Person with disabilities
39% use mobile internet	**17%** use mobile internet	**33%** use mobile internet	**18%** use mobile internet	**31%** use mobile internet	**21%** use mobile internet

Women
56% less likely to use mobile internet

50+
45% less likely to use mobile internet

Person with disabilities
32% less likely to use mobile internet

Base: All respondents; n: (Women=565, Men=981 | Persons with disabilities=95, Persons without disabilities=1,452 | 18 to 49=1,283, 50+=264)
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Digital literacy and coverage are key barriers to uptake of internet

There is limited or no coverage to access the internet in my area	I do not know how to use the internet by myself	The cost of buying data is too high for me	It is hard to find a mobile agent to buy mobile internet data	The internet on my phone is too slow
34%	**31%**	**26%**	**17%**	**15%**

Q: Which of the following reasons limit your use of mobile internet? Base: People with feature phones and smartphones who do not use the internet; n: 296

Very few people use mobile money, though the high prevalence of P2P credit transfer indicates potential unmet consumer need

Q: How do you use your mobile phone? (Mobile money, for example (MTN Amwal, Garooshi Sudani), Credit transfer). Base: All respondents: 1,547

Mobile money **1%**

P2P credit transfer **68%**

West Darfur, Sudan

NRC conducted this assessment in six administrative units and associated settlements that have experienced conflict and associated displacement across West Darfur (El Geneina, Kereinik, Misterei, Murnei, Sileia, Krinding), in January and February 2022. In total 1,547 end user surveys, 44 merchant interviews and 13 signal strength tests were conducted.