Digital Access and Barriers in Displacement-affected Communities in White Nile, Sudan

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

White Nile State is home to 700,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance, including 280,000 refugees from South Sudan. Most of these refugees live in one of the nine official refugee camps.
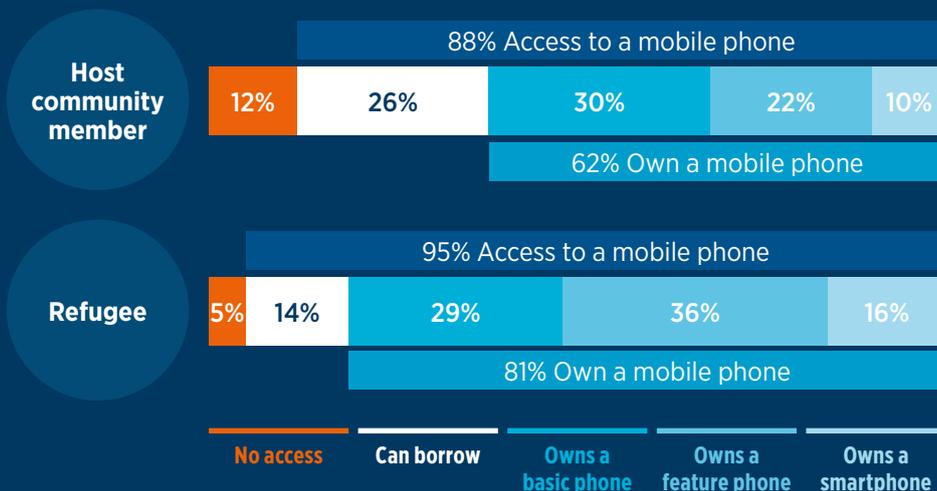
Access

Most people have access to a mobile phone, with a majority owning one. More refugees than host community members own an internet enabled handset
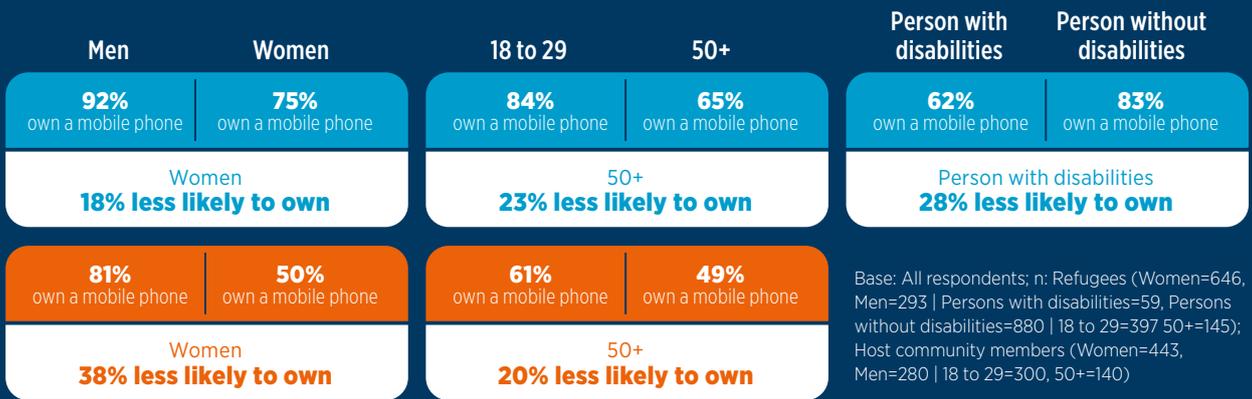
(a feature phone or a smart phone)

Individual access to a mobile phone, by status

Host community member

88% Access to a mobile phone

| 12% | 26% | 30% | 22% | 10% |

62% Own a mobile phone

Refugee

95% Access to a mobile phone

| 5% | 14% | 29% | 36% | 16% |

81% Own a mobile phone

| No access | Can borrow | Owns a basic phone | Owns a feature phone | Owns a smartphone |

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: Refugees=939, Host community members=723

NRC NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

GSMA

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

UKaid
from the British people

Women, persons with disabilities (in the refugee sample) and older people were all significantly* less likely to own a mobile phone

	Men	Women	18 to 29	50+	Person with disabilities	Person without disabilities
Refugee	92% own a mobile phone	75% own a mobile phone	84% own a mobile phone	65% own a mobile phone	62% own a mobile phone	83% own a mobile phone
	Women **18% less likely to own**		50+ **23% less likely to own**		Person with disabilities **28% less likely to own**	
Host	81% own a mobile phone	50% own a mobile phone	61% own a mobile phone	49% own a mobile phone		
	Women **38% less likely to own**		50+ **20% less likely to own**			

Base: All respondents; n: Refugees (Women=646, Men=293 | Persons with disabilities=59, Persons without disabilities=880 | 18 to 29=397 50+=145); Host community members (Women=443, Men=280 | 18 to 29=300, 50+=140)

*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 in both communities

Top five barriers to mobile phone ownership, by status

	The cost of buying a mobile phone is too high	The cost of buying airtime is too high	I do not have the necessary registration or ID documents to buy a SIM card	I don't know how to use a mobile phone	There is limited or no network coverage in my area
Refugee	81%	27%	17%	13%	12%
Host	70%	24%	10%	15%	19%

Q: Which of the following reasons prevent you from owning a mobile phone?
Base: Non-phone owners; n: Refugees=175, Host community members=270

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

Access to charging at home	34% Refugee	42% Host

Q: Can you charge your phone's battery reliably at home? Base: all phone owners (refugee 760; host community 450)

Focus group participants reported costs of between **SDG 100 [$0.22USD] and SDG 800 [$1.79USD]** to charge their phone at a charging station. They found these costs to be high.
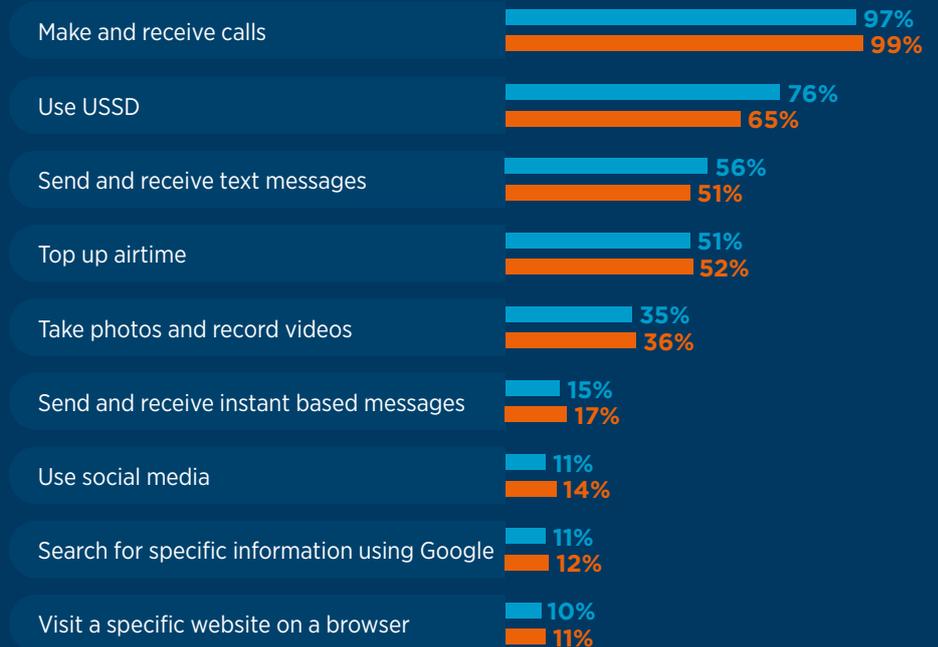
Usage

Most people know how to make basic use of mobile phones, but fewer than 20 per cent of people know how to use any service that requires internet access
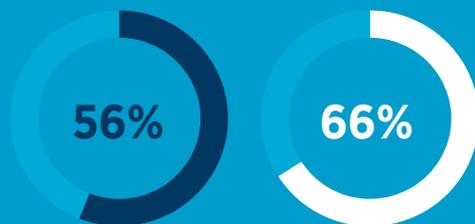
🔵 Refugee
🟠 Host community member

Q: Do you know how to use a phone to....?
Base: All respondents; n: Refugees=905;
Host community members=678

Knowledge of mobile services, by status

Service	Refugee	Host community member
Make and receive calls	97%	99%
Use USSD	76%	65%
Send and receive text messages	56%	51%
Top up airtime	51%	52%
Take photos and record videos	35%	36%
Send and receive instant based messages	15%	17%
Use social media	11%	14%
Search for specific information using Google	11%	12%
Visit a specific website on a browser	10%	11%

Awareness of the internet is low and usage even lower. Usage remains low even amongst those who own internet enabled phones

Heard of internet
56% (Refugee)
66% (Host community member)

Use internet
16% (Refugee)
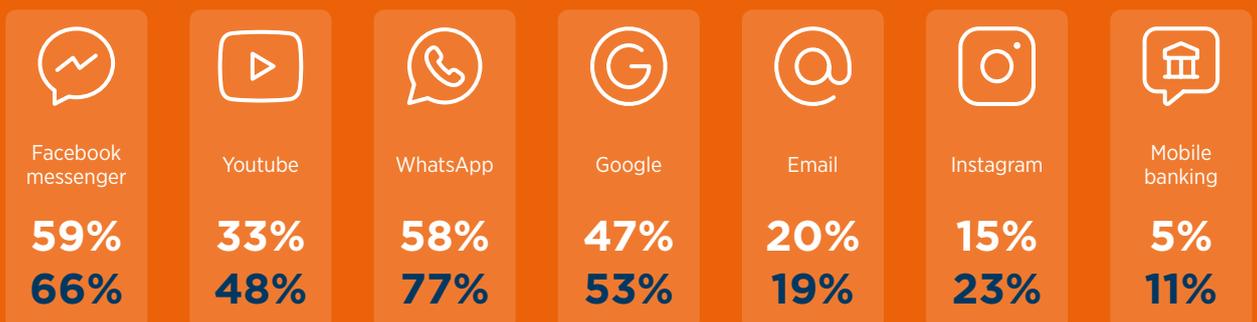11% (Host community member)

🔵 Refugee   ⚪ Host community member

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: Refugees=939, Host community members=723

Internet use is largely for communication

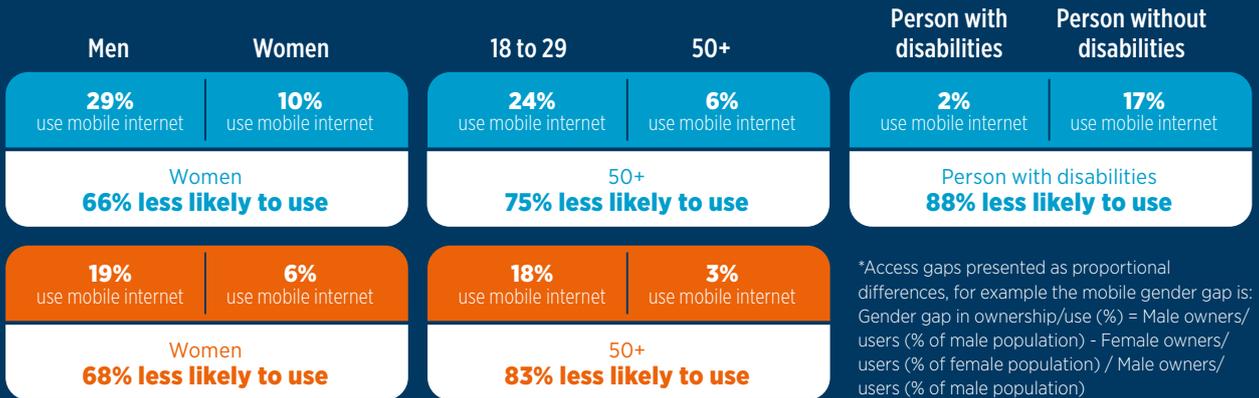|	Facebook messenger	Youtube	WhatsApp	Google	Email	Instagram	Mobile banking
Refugee	59%	33%	58%	47%	20%	15%	5%
Host	66%	48%	77%	53%	19%	23%	11%

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: Refugees=939, Host community members=723

Women, persons with disabilities (in the refugee sample) and older people were all significantly* less likely to use mobile internet

	Men	Women		18 to 29	50+		Person with disabilities	Person without disabilities
Refugee	**29%** use mobile internet	**10%** use mobile internet		**24%** use mobile internet	**6%** use mobile internet		**2%** use mobile internet	**17%** use mobile internet
	Women **66% less likely to use**			50+ **75% less likely to use**			Person with disabilities **88% less likely to use**	
Host	**19%** use mobile internet	**6%** use mobile internet		**18%** use mobile internet	**3%** use mobile internet			
	Women **68% less likely to use**			50+ **83% less likely to use**				

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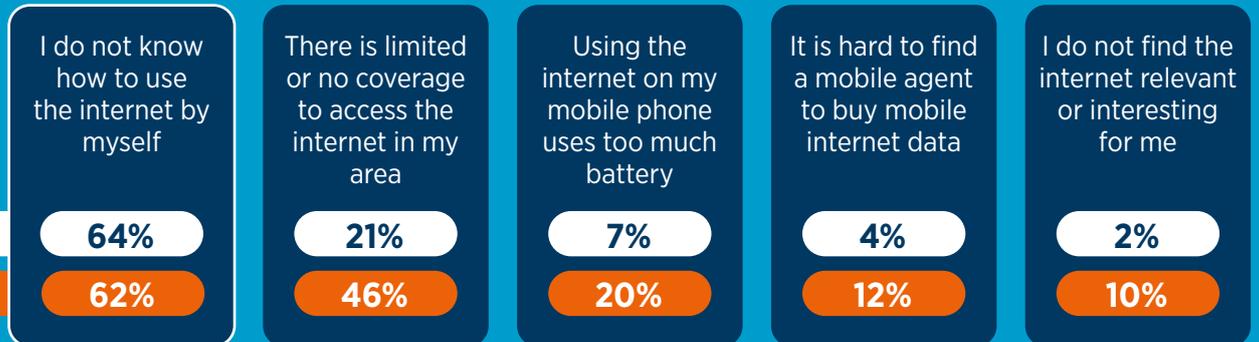
Base: All respondents; n: Refugees (Women=646, Men=293 | Persons with disabilities=59, Persons without disabilities=880 | 18 to 29=397 50+=145); Host community members (Women=443, Men=280 | 18 to 29=300, 50+=140)

Digital literacy and coverage are key barriers to uptake of internet

	I do not know how to use the internet by myself	There is limited or no coverage to access the internet in my area	Using the internet on my mobile phone uses too much battery	It is hard to find a mobile agent to buy mobile internet data	I do not find the internet relevant or interesting for me
Refugee	64%	21%	7%	4%	2%
Host	62%	46%	20%	12%	10%

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: Refugees=338, Host community members=153

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

Mobile money
- 1% Refugee
- 2% Host community member

P2P credit transfer
- 48% Refugee
- 44% Host community member

Q: How do you use your mobile phone? (Mobile money, for example (MTN Amwal, Garooshi Sudani), Credit transfer). Base: All respondents, n: Refugees = 939, Host community members = 723

White Nile, Sudan

NRC conducted this assessment in Al Alagaya, Al Redis II and Khor Al Warel refugee camps in White Nile, as well as the closest host community village to each, in December 2021.

In total 1,662 end user surveys (939 refugees and 723 host community members), 5 focus groups, 67 merchant interviews and 18 signal strength tests were conducted.