

CONNECTED SOCIETY

MTN Data Smart

Increasing mobile internet access and use through digital skills training





The GSMA represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide, uniting more than 750 operators with nearly 400 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem, including handset and device makers, software companies, equipment providers and internet companies, as well as organisations in adjacent industry sectors. The GSMA also produces the industry-leading MWC events held annually in Barcelona, Los Angeles and Shanghai, as well as the Mobile 360 series of regional conferences.



MTN is an emerging market mobile operator at the forefront of technological and digital changes. Inspired by our belief that everyone deserves the benefits of a modern connected life, we provide a diverse range of voice, data, digital, fintech, wholesale and enterprise services to more than 280 million customers in 21 markets. Headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa.



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GSMA Connected Society

The Connected Society programme works with the mobile industry, technology companies, the development community and governments to increase access to and adoption of mobile internet, focusing on underserved population groups in developing markets.

For more information, please visit www.gsma.com/connected-society

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Introduction

Mobile internet use is on the rise, bringing a range of tangible benefits that have a profound impact on people's lives and communities. Mobile internet enables users to access essential services, such as healthcare, education and financial services, while also contributing to key development objectives, such as digital inclusion, gender equality and poverty eradication. However, only half of the world's population is currently using mobile internet while the other half is missing out on these life-enhancing services.

Although most of the world's population is now covered by a mobile broadband network, more than 570 million people live in areas without coverage. This coverage gap is shrinking every year as mobile network operators (MNOs) expand their coverage footprint and upgrade their networks. However, broadband coverage alone is not sufficient to tackle the broader challenge of digital inclusion. More than 3.4 billion people still live within the footprint of a mobile broadband network but do not use mobile internet services (the usage gap).¹

This indicates there are other barriers to mobile internet use. GSMA research has found that, across low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), mobile users who do not use mobile internet identify literacy and digital skills as the main barriers. Addressing digital skills is therefore crucial to closing the usage gap and addressing digital inclusion.

The usage gap is particularly wide in Sub-Saharan Africa where 49 per cent of adults who live in an area with mobile broadband coverage do not use mobile internet. This amounted to 520 million people in 2019.² Only 26 per cent of adults in Sub-Saharan Africa have adopted mobile internet – a considerable social and commercial opportunity for MNOs to attract new customers and contribute to the socio-economic growth of the region.

The GSMA Connected Society Programme works with the mobile industry and key stakeholders to increase access to and adoption of mobile internet, focusing on underserved populations in LMICs. To address the digital skills barrier identified by mobile users, the GSMA has developed the Mobile Internet Skills Training Toolkit (MISTT). Practical and easy to use, the toolkit helps to improve the digital literacy of first-time mobile users, enabling them to reap the benefits of mobile internet. The MISTT includes training modules on the most popular apps, such as WhatsApp, YouTube and Facebook, how to set up an Android or KaiOS phone, use mobile money and stay safe online.

1. GSMA. (2020). *The State of Mobile Internet Connectivity Report 2020*.

2. Ibid.



Mobile Internet

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  <p>WhatsApp</p> <p>Send and receive one-to-one messages. Create and participate in groups</p> |  <p>YouTube</p> <p>Search for videos</p> |  <p>Google</p> <p>Search and navigate information</p> |  <p>KaiOS</p> <p>More advanced Internet features. Setting up advices</p> |  <p>Android</p> <p>More advanced Internet features. Setting up devices</p> |
|  <p>Mobile Money</p> <p>Financial services via mobile</p> |  <p>Wikipedia</p> <p>Search and navigate free information</p> |  <p>Facebook</p> <p>Connect with family and friends</p> |  <p>Safety & Cost</p> <p>Stay safe online and understand mobile internet costs</p> |  <p>Accessibility Features</p> <p>Accessibility features for people with visual and hearing impairments</p> |

MTN is one of Africa’s largest MNOs. The company has made digital inclusion a core part of their growth strategy and embedded this commitment in their CHASE framework, which includes five initiatives: Coverage, Handset Affordability, Services, Education and Ease of Access. These are the pillars of MTN’s overarching framework for digital inclusion.

This report provides an overview of the MTN Data Smart campaign and how it has increased mobile internet use among MTN customers in two key markets: Benin and Cameroon. The report highlights how MTN successfully incorporated the lessons from the 2019 pilot to reach scale and empower their customers’ lives through a campaign that continues to expand.

In 2019, MTN Group launched Data Smart, a multi-market pilot to support the Education and Ease of Access pillars. Data Smart draws on materials from the GSMA’s MISTT. The Data Smart pilot was rolled out in eight markets in 2019, most of which were in the West and Central Africa (WECA) region. Building on the success of the pilot, Data Smart continued as a full-scale campaign in 2020 and beyond.

MTN's digital skills approach



A brand ambassador in Cameroon conducting a training in a bar, going wherever customers are

Background

In 2020, MTN reported more than 100 million active data subscribers³ on their network. This was out of a total 273.4 million customers in 21 markets⁴ with a smartphone adoption rate of 50 per cent.³ This provides considerable scope for MTN to extend its mobile internet user base and close the digital divide.

However, a variety of barriers are preventing people from using mobile internet, including lack of awareness, affordability, perceived relevance, literacy and digital skills. Among mobile users who are aware of mobile internet, a lack of digital skills is perceived as the greatest barrier to mobile internet adoption, and it has a disproportionate impact on internet access for underserved groups, such as rural communities and women.⁵ Helping people build the skills they need to use and make the most of mobile internet is integral to digital inclusion.

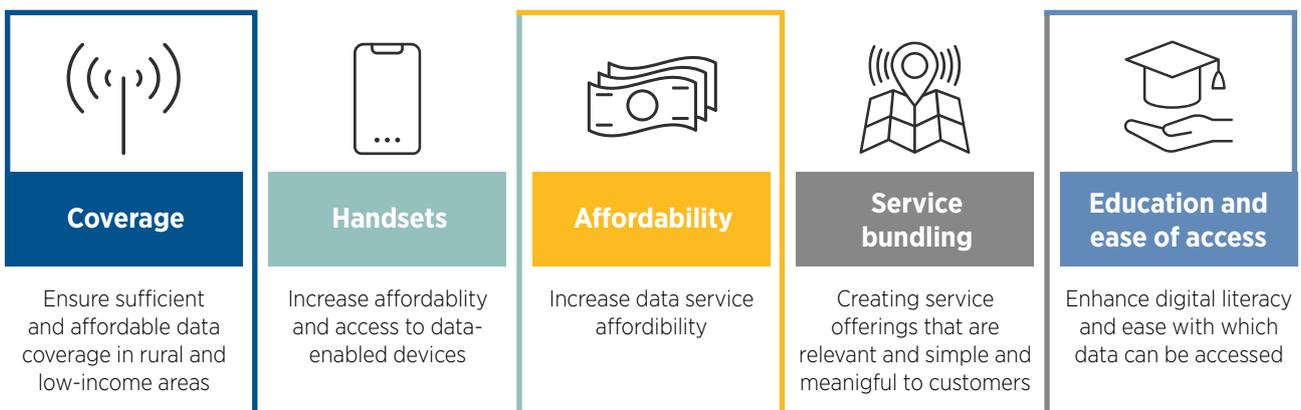
The MTN CHASE framework

In 2018, MTN began executing their dual data strategy aimed at enhancing digital inclusion among their large customer base and converting non-mobile internet users into active mobile internet users in urban and rural areas.

MTN's CHASE framework aims to accelerate digital and financial inclusion by connecting the unconnected and ensuring that everyone reaps the social, economic and developmental dividends of being online (Figure 1).

Figure 1

MTN CHASE framework

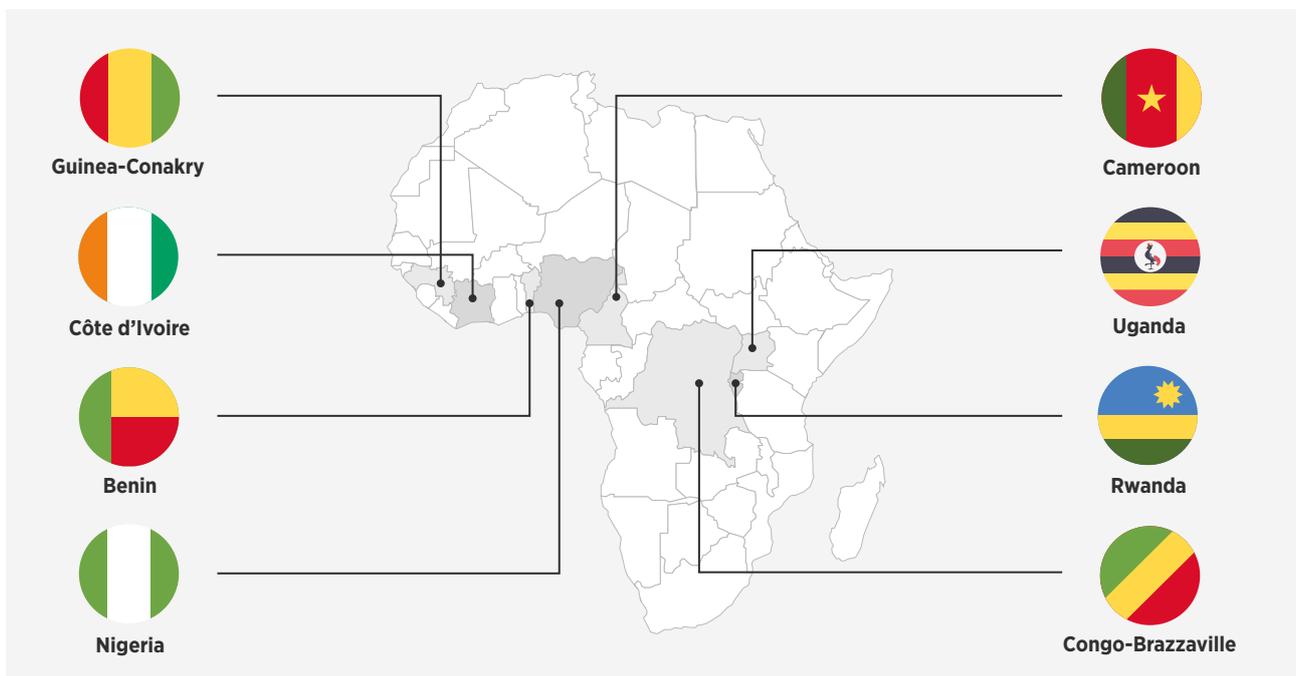


3. MTN Group Limited. (2021). *Sustainability report for the year ended 31 December 2020: Leading digital solutions for Africa's progress.*
 4. MTN Group Limited Quarterly update for the period ending 30 September 2020.
 5. GSMA. (2020). *The State of Mobile Internet Connectivity Report 2020.*

MTN Data Smart

In 2019, MTN launched Data Smart, a digital literacy campaign aimed at improving their customers' basic understanding of mobile internet and apps, as well as increasing their active data user base and revenue. Data Smart is part of the Education and Ease of Access pillars of the CHASE framework and seeks to improve digital literacy in markets where

MTN operates. The campaign went live in eight markets in 2020: Benin, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Conakry, Nigeria, Rwanda and Uganda. MTN is expanding the campaign into more markets in 2021.



Data Smart built on the GSMA's MISTT to find a simple, sustainable and effective way for customers to overcome the barriers to using mobile internet. By improving their understanding of the benefits of mobile internet and how it can be used to meet their needs, Data Smart addresses customers' misconceptions about the costs and benefits of data. The campaign provides customers with practical information and training on how to use mobile internet via several channels, including in-store, sales agents, videos, social media, TV and radio. An important part of the campaign is meaningful use cases based on customers' needs and interests that make mobile internet relevant and applicable to their lives. For example, in an area where a cinema recently opened, agents showed customers how to watch trailers for the films on their phones.

To increase digital inclusion and support MNOs, the GSMA continues to expand the MISTT content. Since the launch of Data Smart, six new modules have been developed to strengthen users' digital skills and ensure they can access mobile internet safely and on their own terms. These modules cover how to get started with mobile money, how to keep themselves and their children safe online, how to set up an Android or KaiOS device, tips on keeping costs under control and how persons with visual and hearing difficulties can use accessibility features. MISTT modules are now also available in video format, which provides an additional flexible delivery channel. The videos also provided a safe and accessible solution during the COVID-19 pandemic. These new modules are being integrated as part of the 2021 Data Smart roll out.

Launching Data Smart

Although Data Smart was launched during a busy period, the eight MTN operating companies involved in the pilot were keen to test the concept and reorganised their resources, priorities and plans to do so. This required significant additional effort and leadership on the part of each country office. The country teams were acutely aware of the potential impact on people's lives if Data Smart were successful, and echoed MTN's core belief that everyone deserves the benefits of a modern connected life.



“The education element is absolutely critical to our Dual Data strategy and overall commitment to creating shared value as part of MTN's Ambition 2025 corporate strategy. Educating people on how to easily access information using their mobile devices is foundational if internet access is to add value to their lives. And tackling digital literacy has proven to be one of the more complex areas to address within the Education and Ease of Access pillar of CHASE. The underlying challenge of learning how to access the internet is just one aspect. Enabling people to understand the relevant opportunities that being connected brings them and how it can not just support, but fundamentally change their lives for the better, is key.”

Irshaad Gouse, *MTN Group*, Interim Executive, Group Strategy and Transformation



The MTN Data Smart audience

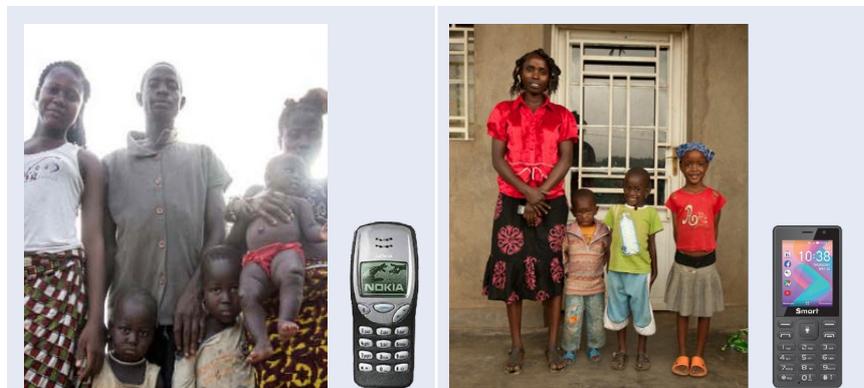
The Data Smart campaign is aimed at two types of mobile customers: 1) those with the potential to convert from using voice services exclusively to using data; and 2) those who use the internet in a very limited way and could benefit significantly from learning more about the broader benefits of digital inclusion.

Understanding the unique needs of each customer segment and the opportunity to meet those needs were key to Data Smart’s success. The campaign focused on “entry” and “emerging” customer segments who together accounted for 80 per cent of MTN’s target population, a significant social and commercial opportunity.

Information about the context in which entry and emerging customers lived helped to shape customer engagement during the campaign. Figure 2 provides a high-level example of these contexts. One of the key lessons of the Data Smart campaign was the importance of contextualising mobile services to a customer’s needs and demonstrating how mobile internet can help them achieve their specific goals. For example, customers in the entry-level segment are somewhat unlikely to have easy access to electricity or running water and use their mobile phone primarily for communication. By contrast, customers in the emerging segment are more likely to already have an internet-enabled phone and have reliable access to electricity and running water. This is important information to consider when planning which channels to use to reach each customer segment and what kind of services to offer.

Figure 2

Customer profiles of entry and emerging mobile customers



| SEGMENTS | ENTRY | EMERGING |
|--|--|--|
|  Revenue opportunity | 20% | 30% |
|  % of population | 40% | 40% |
|  Customer profile | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2 monthly spend on telco services • Informal and digital service channels • Live in informal urban or rural areas • Can afford \$10-\$20 basic-phone • Have 2G and 3G network coverage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5 monthly spend on telco services • Informal or digital service channels • Live in urban or peri-urban areas • Can afford \$20-\$50 smartphone • Have 2G and 3G network coverage |

Box 1

Profile of an entry customer segment⁶

Monique Konan and family in Lagunes, Côte d'Ivoire

Monthly income: \$92

Monique spends 39 hours a week collecting water and firewood. They make a living farming and selling cassava. They produce 90 per cent of their own food.

They plan on buying better farming tools and dream of buying a car.



Box 2

Profile of an emerging customer segment⁷



Nshimiyimana family in Rubengera, Rwanda

Monthly income: \$236

The couple works 60 hours a week. Martin is a cattle trader, and his wife Musabyimana is a farmer. They produce 60 per cent of their own food.

They plan on buying more agricultural land and dream of buying a car.

6. Dollar Street: <https://www.gapminder.org/dollar-street>

7. Ibid.

Implementation strategy

The MTN Data Smart campaign focused on specific sales and marketing channels to target relevant audiences. The MTN Group Marketing team supported the local teams by tailoring the GSMA MISTT to the company's messaging and branding, and translated the content into local languages and dialects to make it accessible to a wider audience

and increase uptake. MTN Group provided strategic guidelines for implementation and technical support to roll out the campaign. The company took a multi-pronged approach that included face-to-face training, in-store videos, point of sale (POS) training, SMS links, posters and more. In each country, the local MTN Consumer Business ran the campaign and were responsible for commercial and marketing-related aspects.



Brand ambassadors connecting with customers in a market in Cameroon

MTN Data Smart in Benin and Cameroon

Customer training session at a market in Benin



In 2019, MTN piloted Data Smart in eight markets, including Benin and Cameroon, before expanding the campaign in 2020. The key performance indicators (KPIs) for the pilots were the number of customers trained, data adoption and increased data use after receiving the training, and data revenue.

MTN Data Smart in Benin

MTN Benin launched the Data Smart pilot in two peri-urban locations in May 2019. Their aim was to train 200,000 people, primarily marginal users who consumed less than 5 MB a month.

MTN Benin used various delivery channels to reach customers, including:

- SMS marketing offers to marginal users that directed them to a zero-rated environment that hosted training videos translated into four local languages;
- MTN digital channels (MTN corporate site, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) where customers could watch the Data Smart videos;
- 134 trade marketing agents who trained POS staff to deliver training to customers;
- 400 dedicated Data Smart field sales agents (employed for the pilot) who trained customers and helped ensure they purchased data packs after the training;
- MTN-branded stores and third-party handset retailers that received in-store training; and
- Mobile data acquisition teams that delivered training sessions in classroom environments and supported customer engagement, awarding small prizes to incentivise them.

To track the progress of the pilot, Data Smart agents logged the identity and mobile phone numbers of trained customers. This allowed them to evaluate data usage and revenues for a fixed period after the training. The data showed that the pilot was a very cost-effective way to convert voice-only customers into new mobile internet customers, and marginal data customers into heavier data users. Pilot expenses were related mostly to third-party marketing agents, customer rewards/prizes and the logistics of classroom training, including audio systems and transport.

A key lesson was the efficacy of providing low-data and non-data users with digital skills training to increase mobile internet adoption and use. The training targeted marginal data users and subscribers who had data-capable phones but were not data users themselves. The training increased both the number of customers using data services and the volume of data consumed by existing data users. Average monthly data use among trained customers increased by over 400 per cent over the course of the pilot (see the section, The commercial impact of Data Smart later in this report). In terms of mobile internet adoption, the number of active data subscribers increased by 24 per cent by the end of the pilot.

A key challenge for the pilot was that consumers in Benin could not be incentivised with free mobile internet data. This was due to a regulation on mobile internet pricing that restricts MNOs from giving away data and requires the industry to sell data at a minimum price. However, free mobile internet data was an effective incentive that MTN used in other markets. Customers who received the training were motivated to go online to practice what they had learned and discover the value of mobile internet themselves.

In line with past GSMA research, consumer barriers to mobile internet adoption identified during the pilot included low literacy, lack of digital skills and the affordability of internet-enabled handsets. In the 2020 phase of the Data Smart campaign, MTN Benin included an affordable smartphone offering at training sessions to help address the affordability barrier.

“The program was a huge success in our opco as it has been very helpful in terms of data education and active data subscribers’ performance. For 2021, our ambition is to exceed 500,000 subscribers trained.”

Franck Adjou Moumouni,
Consumer Segment Manager, MTN Benin

COVID-19 impact and adaptation

Just as the Data Smart campaign was beginning to scale up in 2020, it was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The campaign in Benin was originally scheduled to begin in February, but was delayed until October and only ran for three months. Given social distancing restrictions, the 2020 campaign shifted away from face-to-face and group trainings to focus on bulk SMS, MTN Benin’s website, Facebook and brand ambassadors. These alternative channels continued to be used in 2021 along with sales agents (colloquially referred to as “foot soldiers”), interactive voice response (IVR) and USSD. Despite these challenges, MTN Benin remains committed to Data Smart and has a goal of training 500,000 customers in 2021.

Brand ambassadors meeting customers in a popular gathering area



MTN Data Smart in Cameroon



Brand ambassadors going the extra mile to reach customers where they are

MTN Cameroon deployed a Data Smart pilot to test the methodology and the MISTT-based materials. The pilot targeted 15,000 customers in the country's two main regions, Yaounde and Douala. As in Benin, the content was translated into several local languages to make it more accessible to rural customers.

The primary targets of the pilot were non-data users and marginal data users. The delivery channels were similar to the pilot in Benin and included, among others, dedicated sales agents and targeted SMS campaigns to reach customers who were marginal users.

To track the progress of the pilot, Data Smart agents recorded the number of active sales agents, the number (both reported and approved) of customers trained and statistics on the data bundles purchased by trained customers. The target customers were marked in the MTN consumer database to track their engagement during the pilot. Using a dedicated USSD code, any foot soldier could check whether the customer they were engaging with was an identified target for the pilot and ensure that they offered them digital skills training. This process allowed monitoring to be automated. During the pilot, the Business Intelligence team could monitor on a daily basis the number of customers reportedly trained against the number of customers targeted.

A key lesson was that providing a commission to sales agents who conducted the training was an effective way to motivate agents to offer and provide training to customers. The role of the sales agents was to train customers in the Data Smart modules and encourage them to purchase a new data bundle. Data bundle sales were the KPI for the quality and success of the training. Agents received a commission based on the amount of data activation per trained customer.

Unlike in Benin, the Cameroon team did not face specific regulatory challenges, which allowed them to offer data bonuses to customers. Customers who took part in the training were given a free data allowance of at least 250 MB to download apps for use during the training and review the material afterwards. As in Benin, the pilot was found to be cost-effective, with expenses linked primarily to agent commissions, free data and the logistical costs of classroom training.

“The program has been a key success. Our focus for phase 2 is to deploy in rural areas.”

Sandra Handou, MTN Cameroon

COVID-19 impact and adaptation

The COVID-19 pandemic created several challenges for the 2020 campaign in Cameroon since face-to-face interactions became more difficult and resources on the ground were constrained. Still, the campaign managed to achieve scale and have a significant impact. The team introduced a variety of measures to adapt to this unexpected situation and continue to see results:

- Reduced the size of the training groups to accommodate social distancing.
- Used online training to ensure the campaign materials were accessible nationwide.
- Created WhatsApp groups for online interactions and to refresh customers' memories with regular tips.
- Focused ground activity around big cities where MTN could rely on existing team members and limit the number of resources in the field.
- Increased the customer value management (CVM) component of the training. Targeted customers could access the training content free of charge and receive up to 1 GB of data to discover the value of mobile internet on their own.
- Included POS staff in the training rollout since they were still in contact with customers.
- Made training more efficient by improving the customer eligibility confirmation process.
- Identified areas with high potential for brand ambassador deployment.
- Used automated business intelligence reporting for real-time monitoring of active resources, conversion rate, areas covered and performance-based resourcing.



Data field agents training customers in one of the biggest markets in Douala, Cameroon's economic centre

Campaign evaluation methodology

The GSMA received transactional data from both MTN Cameroon and MTN Benin to assess changes in customers' network activity and consumption patterns following the pilot. MTN Cameroon provided transactional data of 10,000 trained customers for a six-month period (which covered three months before and after the training). MTN Benin provided similar data on 265,000 trained customers for an eight-month period (four months before and after the training).

For both countries, the GSMA derived monthly figures for each trained customer and calculated the averages of two key metrics before and after the training:

- Average monthly data revenue per user (ARPU) in local currency (CFA); and
- Average monthly data usage in megabytes (MB).

For a more granular analysis, the GSMA disaggregated the revenue and usage data by network (2G, 3G and 4G) and type of device used (basic, feature or smartphone) to identify which factors seemed to accelerate uptake of data use for Data Smart trainees.

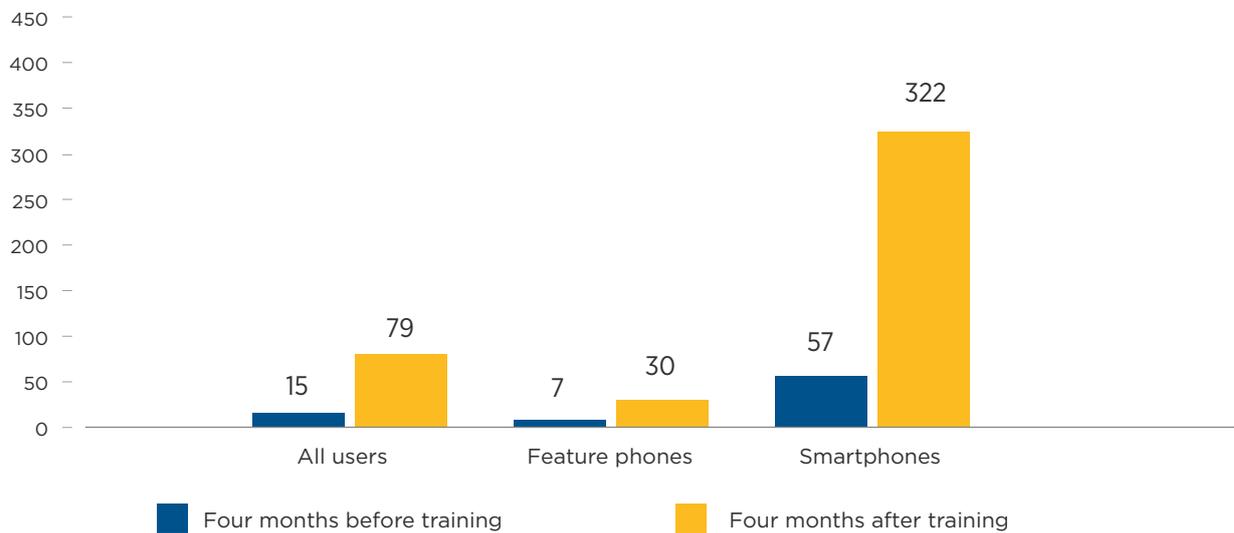
The commercial impact of Data Smart

Analysis of MTN transactional data showed a significant increase in data usage among customers who received the digital skills training, both in Cameroon and Benin. Customers started to apply the knowledge and skills they learned to use mobile internet, which increased both mobile usage and data expenditure.

After the pilot in Benin, the average monthly mobile internet use per trained customer increased from 15 MB to 79 MB over a four-month period, an increase of 427 per cent (Figure 3). Uptake was highest among smartphone users, with monthly data usage soaring from 57 MB to 322 MB, an increase of 465 per cent (Figure 3). These findings clearly show an enhanced mobile internet user experience for those with a smartphone. Similarly, data use among feature phone users more than tripled, indicating greater appreciation of the value of mobile internet.

Figure 3

Average monthly data use in MB for Data Smart trainees in Benin

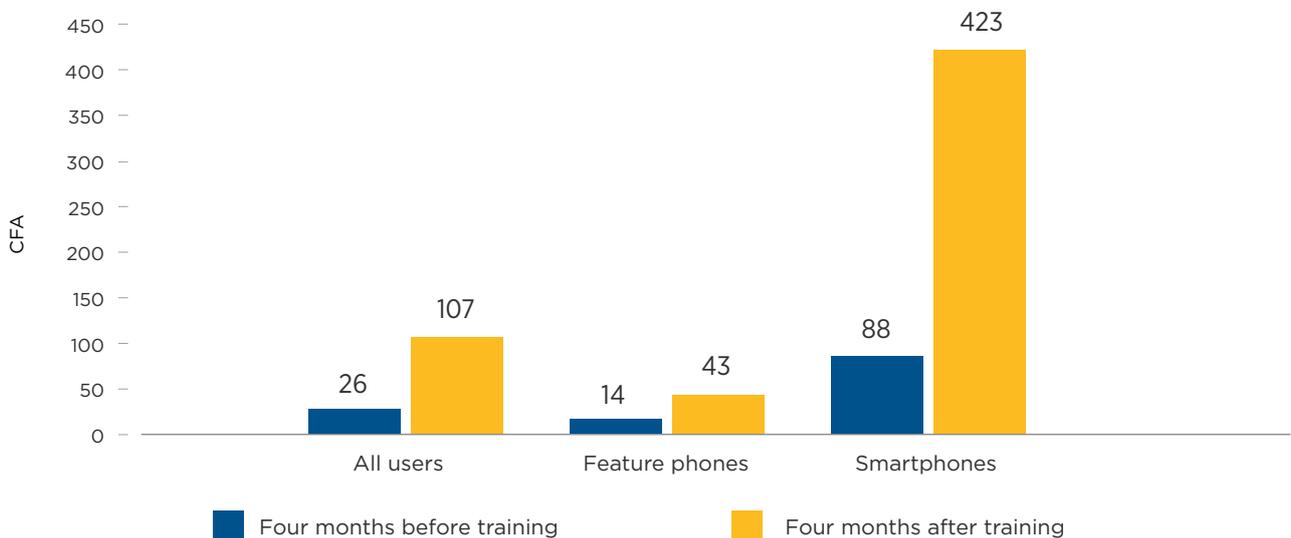


Across all device types, monthly mobile internet data ARPU increased four-fold, from CFA 26 to CFA 107, an increase of 311 per cent (Figure 4). Smartphone users showed even more impressive uptake, from CFA 88 to CFA 423, a 380 per cent increase. Increased data usage among trained

customers has, in turn, boosted revenues for MTN Benin. In addition to higher data use, the total number of active data subscribers (ADS) increased by over 300,000 (before and after the pilot), a 24 per cent increase.

Figure 4

Data ARPU (in CFA) for Data Smart trainees in Benin

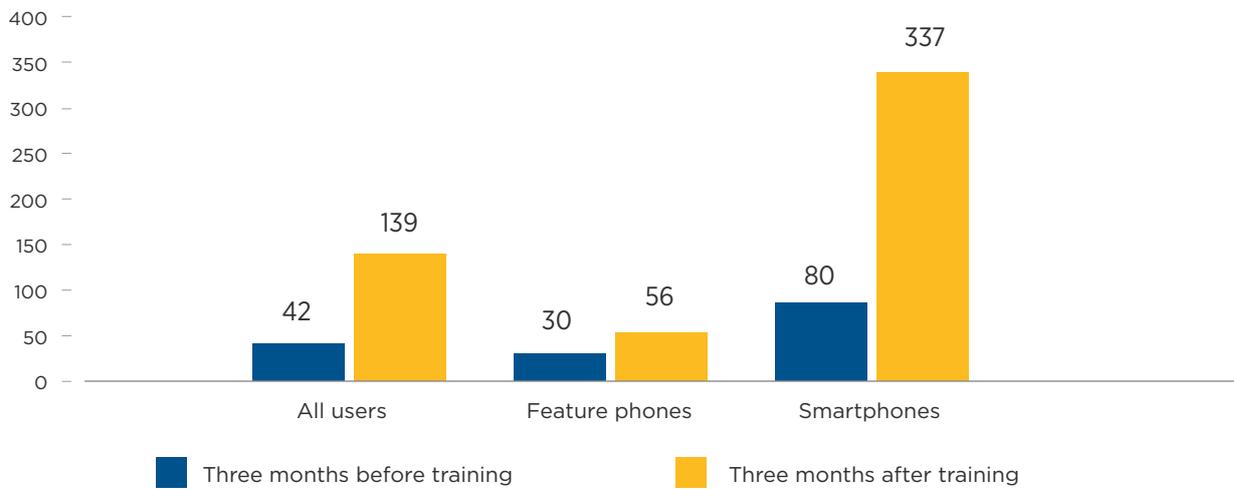


Data Smart training in Cameroon also resulted in a significant increase in data usage and revenues. As shown in Figure 5, after the three-month pilot, average monthly mobile internet use increased from 42 MB to 139 MB among trained customers across all devices (231

per cent increase). This uptake was significantly higher for smartphone users, with average monthly data usage rising from 80 MB to 337 MB, an increase of 321 per cent.

Figure 5

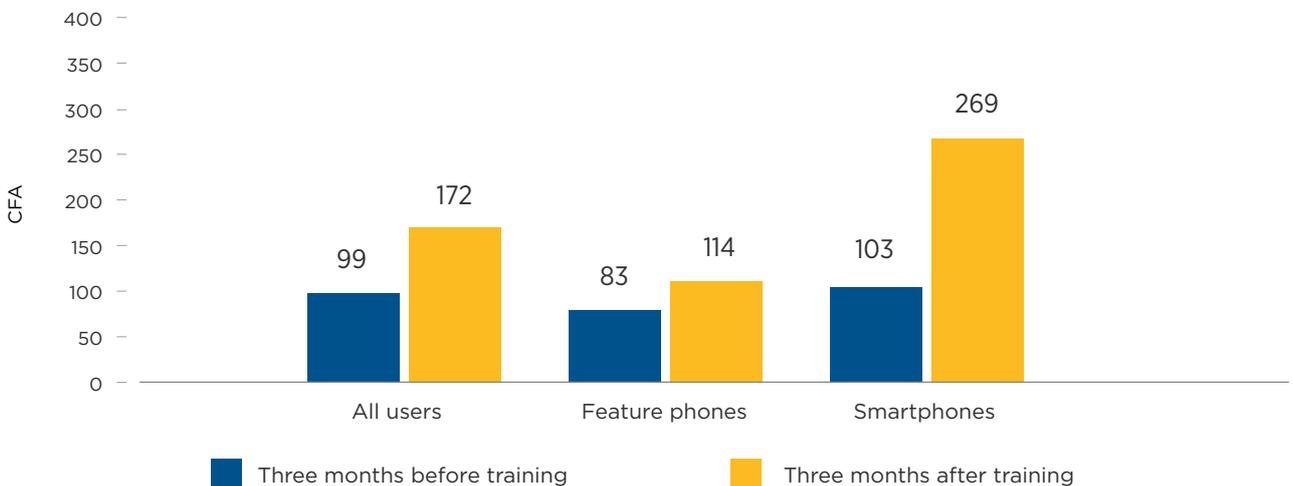
Average monthly data use in MB for Data Smart trainees in Cameroon



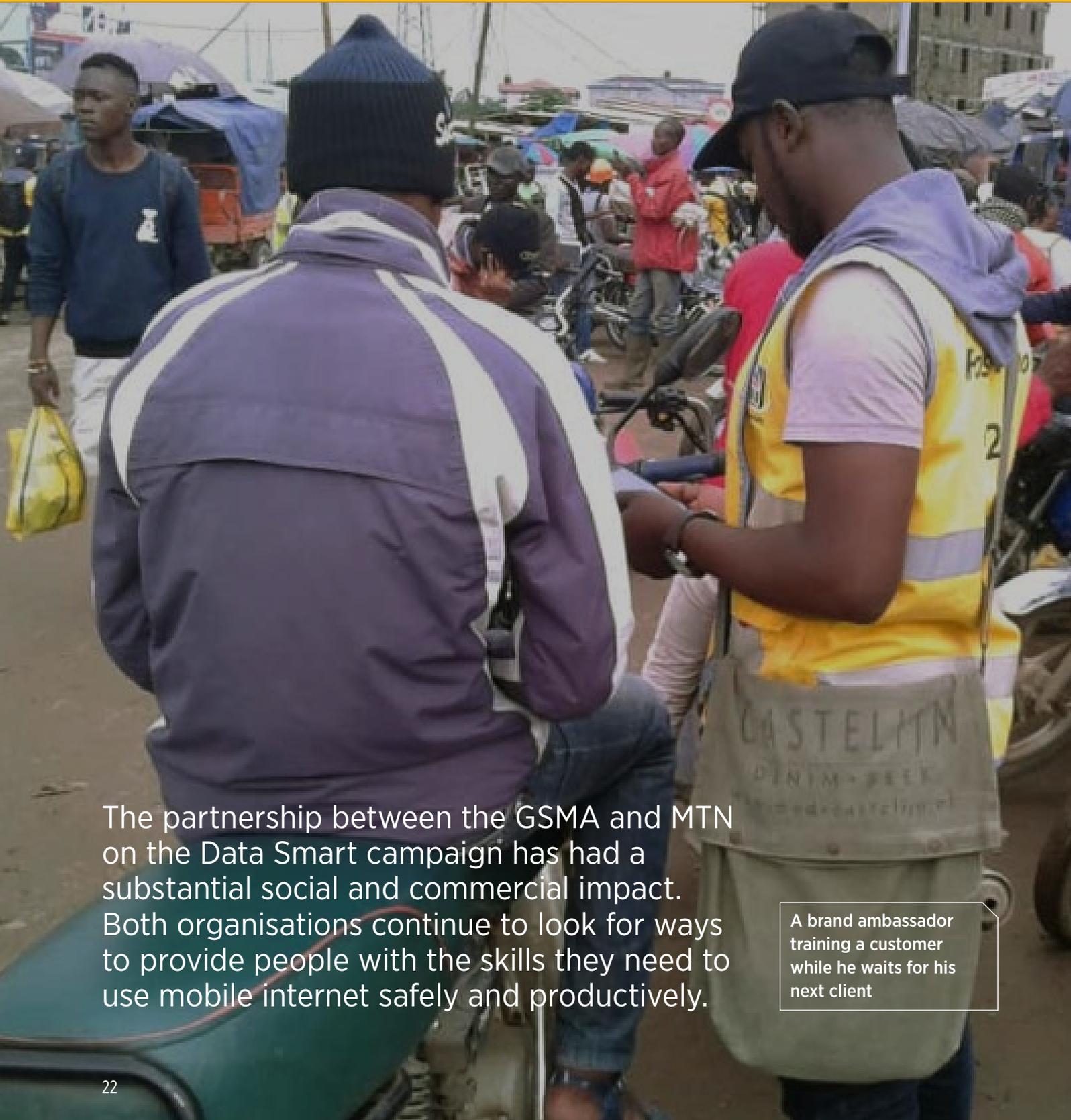
As a result of the pilot, the monthly data ARPU of trained customers increased significantly, from CFA 99 to CFA 172 (74 per cent increase) for all users, and from CFA 103 to CFA 269 (161 per cent increase) for smartphone users (Figure 6).

Figure 6

Data ARPU (in CFA) for Data Smart trainees in Cameroon



Scaling digital skills: key insights



The partnership between the GSMA and MTN on the Data Smart campaign has had a substantial social and commercial impact. Both organisations continue to look for ways to provide people with the skills they need to use mobile internet safely and productively.

A brand ambassador training a customer while he waits for his next client

The partnership between the GSMA and MTN on the Data Smart campaign has had a substantial social and commercial impact. Both organisations continue to look for ways to provide people with the skills they need to use mobile internet safely and productively.

Key elements for reaching scale were:

- The 2019 **Data Smart pilots**, which trained three million people and were key to MTN scaling up their digital skills training. The insights derived from the pilots were also critical to improving the Data Smart campaign and allowing it to reach scale. Since the pilot, MTN has scaled the campaign across eight countries and, as of April 2021, has trained over 18 million people.⁸ Since phase one of the campaign, MTN has expanded operations in the region to reach even more consumers in 2021 and accelerate digital inclusion.

Figure 7

MTN’s journey to scaling digital skills training



- **MTN’s hybrid approach**, which included remote delivery methods alongside traditional face-to-face training, ensured the campaign continued to reach scale even during the COVID-19 pandemic. MTN customers were notified about the training via SMS and provided with links to access content, which

was housed in a zero-rated environment that made it more accessible. MTN also broadcast tutorials on local radio, and call centre staff were trained to provide the training to customers remotely.

8. MTN Group Limited. (2021). *Sustainability report for the year ended 31 December 2020: Leading digital solutions for Africa’s progress.*

Data Smart's success was not without challenges, however. MTN cited monitoring and evaluation (M&E), commission structures and resourcing as some of the main issues.

Monitoring and evaluation:

Tracking adoption and usage consistently across multiple markets was particularly difficult, as some of the people who were trained were not using MTN's network and some did not ultimately join. A major win for the campaign was that MTN expanded their customer base, which was more difficult to track than the conversion of existing non-data MTN customers into data users. Monitoring and evaluating the impact of the training was complex but vital, as evidence from early implementations showed the success of the scheme in driving usage. This was crucial to bringing other operating companies on board and scaling Data Smart.

Commission structures:

Since MTN wanted to embed Data Smart as a core aspect of their operating companies' business models, it had to consider incentives carefully.

Designing the commission structure was also complex as there was limited evidence on the level of incentive needed for a sufficient return on investment (ROI) to justify the campaign. Trainers often needed a monetary incentive as they had competing interests (e.g. selling devices and SIMs). Customers often had commitments to existing plans and packages, which also made it difficult for them to change their data use. MTN needed to ensure the amount of commission agents received and the amount of free data given to customers (in applicable markets) were in line with expected growth in data revenue, among other considerations.

Resourcing:

Running the Data Smart campaign required considerable resources at both the group and operating company level, including the coordination of sales and distribution, marketing and analytics. Long-term planning was essential to ensure sufficient resources were available, as was syncing with the business planning cycle of the operating company to ensure plans were aligned.



Brand ambassadors training customers at a market

Potential for scale through peer-to-peer sharing: evidence from MTN Uganda

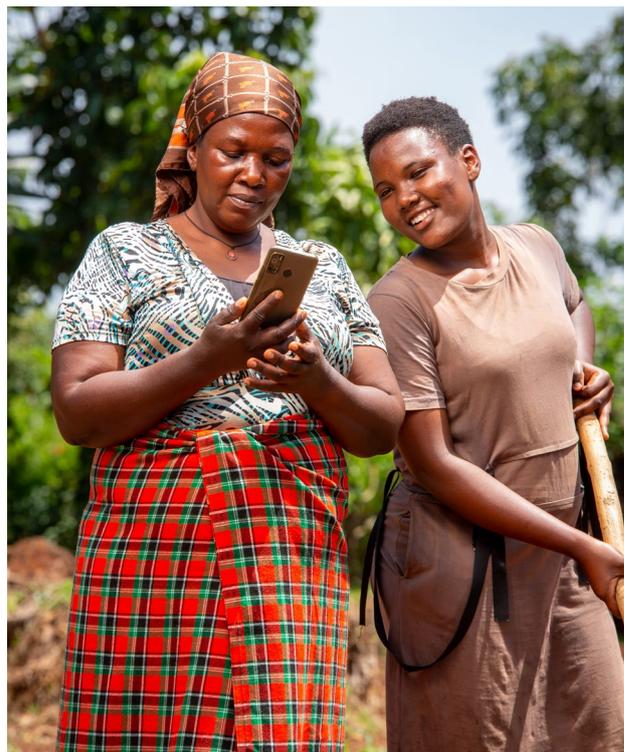
To better understand the potential reach and scale of digital skills training, the GSMA conducted research in partnership with MTN Uganda to determine whether people who received training using the MISTT were likely to pass on this information to others. The research sought to better understand the multiplier effect: how many people would indirectly learn how to use mobile internet?

The analysis was based on data collected in 2019 in Uganda during a three-month pilot of MTN's Data Smart campaign. The research investigated which elements of MISTT are most compelling and useful to customers, as well as the content most likely to be transferred to others. While further investigation is needed, these preliminary findings provide valuable insights on the impact of MISTT, as well as important aspects that can inform the design and structure of future MISTT deployments. The research revealed the following key insights:⁹

1. Customers who recalled having the MISTT training reported sharing their new knowledge with an additional 1.6 people (on average).
2. Customers are more likely to share what they learned when it is relevant to their daily lives, but there are still barriers preventing effective learning and sharing.
3. The “feel-good” factor can trigger a multiplier effect, specifically, a digital skills multiplier effect occurred spontaneously and when sharing felt good.

Based on these research findings, it is recommended that:¹⁰

1. Visual resources are provided for learners to take home, which will improve retention and allow them to share information more easily with others.
2. Trainees should be incentivised and rewarded for training others, such as providing discounted or free data to those who share what they learned with others.



9. GSMA. (2021). *Multiplying the Impact of Mobile Internet Skills Training*.

10. *Ibid.*

Key recommendations

The lessons and insights of this case study will shape the next phase of Data Smart, the development of the MISTT and the GSMA's and MTN's broader work on digital inclusion. The following recommendations draw on these lessons and insights and may be useful for other companies and organisations implementing digital skills training, particularly MNOs.

1. **Localise content and training to make them more relevant and accessible.** Meeting customers in their own community and showing them how mobile internet can meet their unique needs and interests is a critical part of the process. Concerns about how to control data usage (and thus costs) and stay safe online need to be addressed for customers to consider adopting data services.
2. **Create a system to measure impact accurately.** A system that can accurately monitor the uptake of training and evaluate the impact on customers' data usage – automated where possible – improves efficiency and is essential to reaching scale. To better understand the needs of new mobile internet users, data needs to be disaggregated, including by gender, rural/urban residence and age.
3. **Find the right incentive structure.** Getting this right for both trainers and customers is a complex but important task. Effective incentives include monetary compensation for trainers and free data for customers (depending on regulation). Pilot tests can help to evaluate the level of compensation needed.
4. **Define and identify target customers.** Accurate customer segmentation improves the efficacy and efficiency of training. Examples include focusing on geographic areas that have recently been covered by mobile internet or pairing the training with an affordable handset offering.
5. **Make it easier for people to remember and share what they learn.** The impact of the training can increase exponentially if they share what they learned with peers.
6. **Use all available channels and mediums.** Incorporating IVR, SMS, web, radio, TV and social media can reinforce and amplify in-person engagement and provide an alternative when physical interaction is not possible.

For more information on the findings of this report and how they could be applied to your work in promoting mobile internet skills and digital inclusion, please contact the GSMA's Connected Society Team at connectedsociety@gsma.com.





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