

**PODCAST TRANSCRIPT**

EPISODE TEN  
DIGITAL WORLDS

**Interviewer**

Zoe Hamilton, Senior Insights Manager at GSMA

**Guests**

Linda Ahimbisibwe, The Research People

Omar Mekassi, The Research People

Jason Siwat, The Research People

<b>Intro</b>	<i>You're listening to the GSMA Mobile for Humanitarian Innovation programme's podcast.</i>
<b>Zoe</b>	<p>GSMA's Mobile for Humanitarian Innovation team has been conducting mixed methods end user research in partnership with the research people and UNHCR in Lebanon, South Sudan, and Papua New Guinea. The goal of this research is to better understand how people in humanitarian settings use their phones, the implications of that use, and the barriers people face in wider digital inclusion.</p> <p>The findings that have emerged highlight the digital worlds that people create through their interactions with mobile phones and how those worlds vary based on local, political, economic, and social context. Digital inclusion brings with it both benefits and risks to users, and the research digs into these as well as the use cases related to financial wellbeing, misinformation, disinformation and hate speech, and digital leisure.</p> <p>With us today we have three researchers who led the research on the ground in Lebanon, South Sudan, and Papua New Guinea. Omar and Jason respectively led the data collection in Lebanon and PNG, and Linda helped oversee the data collection in South Sudan. They conducted qualitative interviews, participative research activities and focus groups for our qualitative phase, and then led teams of numerators in a representative survey during our quantitative phase. As such, they bring a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the research and the process of this research.</p> <p>So, thanks so much all three of you for joining us today. You really have the best understanding of how we collected this research and got to know the communities we were working with. Perhaps we can start by understanding these contexts a bit better. Let's start with you, Jason. Could you tell us a little bit about where we were working in Papua New Guinea? What's the context like there?</p>
<b>Jason</b>	Thank you very much, Zoe. So, the study site that's been prescribed for the research is the lowara refugee camp. It's situated in the Western Province of

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	<p>Papua New Guinea. It is, sharing the border with the Republic of Indonesia. Basically, the refugee camp is populated only by the West Papuan refugees who have fled from the Republic of Indonesia since 1984, and there have been a number of movements up to the recent one in 2019.</p> <p>So, the location is basically rural. It's remote. it's mainly subsistence farming, setting. The refugees there are expected to self-integrate, unlike in- in most other countries where there is government direct government support for integration. since arriving, they have been allowed, to live on the particular stretch of land, which is about 6,000 hectares, designated by the government with support of UNHCR.</p> <p>It is not connected to any source of electricity. Transport wise it takes about four hours to get to a nearby, riverside where you take a boat for one hour into Kiunga town, the nearest town. So, it's quite a challenging setting to live. Especially for refugees.</p> <p>So, most of the refugees basically live there for more than three decades, since 1984, and have generations who have lived and become more or less like integrate with the local communities. they have a lot of challenges with, accessing services in basic services from the town, especially to do with healthcare, and other banking services, for example, there is only a few persons of government authorities on the ground, but mainly it's the- the- the church who is reaching out to them through schools providing education services and health services.</p> <p>Some of the main challenges that you know, this- the people face when, in regard to using phone in the particular study site, one of one of the main thing that we identified was the level of phone illiteracy. Phone illiteracy level was quite high among- among the general population, but also among those who own phone but still do not know how to use the phone well, they can only write or read a message or take a phone call or make a phone call. But they are not using data functions of the phone or using it for other purposes.</p>
<b>Zoe</b>	Thanks Jason. And the fact that the location is so rural, does that have implication for connectivity? Do people have phones there?
<b>Jason</b>	There is a network tower that has been set up by Digicel PNG, who is one of the telecommunication provider in Papua New Guinea. This is not sustainable, or I should say reliable, because it is powered by generator and sometimes when the fuel is out, the- the network is off. It's also dependent on the weather. When it's,

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	<p>rainy or windy, it affects the coverage. So, there is not a very proper, reliable connectivity for communication as you would expect or you would find in most, urban centres.</p> <p>Other challenge is having a reliable source of electricity to charge their phones, because it's rural and it's not connected by electricity. People normally charge their phone using solar panels and solar powered batteries, which at times cause the phones you know, to damage the phone or destroy the phone.</p> <p>The high cost of actually affording the phone and the phone credits is another limitations on most of the people, buying or owning a phone for themselves. Even sometimes when they want to buy phone credits, there is no phone credit when they're available in the community. There are some trade stores who actually sell phone credits, but when they run out, it takes a number of days before they actually restock. So, this all contributes to the level of phone usage and accessibility to a phone in lowara.</p> <p>But in terms of ownership of phones, the ownership of phone is mainly by the mail population, and I would say it's not more than 50% of the population would have access to a mobile phone. Basically it's because of the affordability challenge given the location, the- the- the lack of economic activities that the people are engaged in, the- the transport challenge, that they have to, you know, access markets in town to earn some form of income. So, this all contributes to the relatively, I would say, less than 50% of the population owning a phone. And most of them are male figures or heads of households</p>
<b>Zoe</b>	<p>Thanks so much, Jason. Let's turn now to South Sudan. Linda, and we were working in South Sudan around Bor with internally displaced people. Can you tell us a little bit about what it's like there?</p>
<b>Linda</b>	<p>So, it's important to mention first that Bor was one of the epicenters of conflicts in 2013, and this resulted into vast displacement of civilians and some still reside in the POC, in the Protection of Civilian camp. So, it's a little bit close to the city, which is the Bor town about 70 kilometres away, and has o- a little over 2,500 IDPs, most of whom are newer.</p> <p>Besides the conflict, it also faces flooding, which brings in other people from other areas in Bor state and in wider Jonglei. So, because Bor is a little bit elevated, most people will come during the flooding season, which often lasts a couple of months. In 2020 I think was the descent of people due to flooding.</p>

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	<p>So, the residents of Bor and the IDPs, IDPs especially, have limited employment opportunities, because they are confined to the camps. And also, the host community have limited employment opportunities as well because it's really not a vibrant uptown place. It's just a small town within a rural area.</p> <p>Up until recently it was kinda similar to lowara in terms of accessibility. Normally affect the road and also because of conflict the road was not safe, so most accessibility was through a small aircraft. However, in the last two to three years a road has been built and Bor is a lot more accessible to Juba, that also makes it closer to the town, which, as we'll probably see later, has possibly an influence on how people use their phones.</p>
<b>Zoe</b>	<p>Great. Thanks. And in terms of how people use their phones, how would you say people are using their phones generally. Do they have phones?</p>
<b>Linda</b>	<p>Yes, that was one of the most surprising and most interesting finding, that phone ownership is really high among both the IDPs and host community, among both men and women and people of different ages. There's some differences in how younger people and older people use their phones. For example, younger people will use social media more, play games more, enjoy digital leisure more, whereas older people are more on the calling and, listening to music and, like, using the phones for their most basic, core functions. So, it's very interesting to see that come through the research.</p>
<b>Zoe</b>	<p>Yeah. Super interesting. One of the things that struck me was we- we saw quite a lot of offline use of- of mobile phones in South Sudan. Can you tell us a little bit about that? Why was that happening?</p>
<b>Linda</b>	<p>Yes, so I'll start with the phone users in the POC camp where we did the qualitative research is first of all the cost of internet bundles, which are really high and deplete quickly. Perception or reality that they are they're expensive and deplete quickly, and also internet challenges, where most people don't have access to internet, and also the fact that, charging is costly, and most people have to travel long distances to go to small kiosks where they can charge their phones. Some walking for more than one hour spending an average of 100 South Sudanese pounds to charge. All these reasons come together for people to encourage people or for people to use their phones offline, because that's where they can save the battery and they can also download once and not have to spend all that internet again.</p>

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	<p>The other reason is because media sharing was common, so it's very common for people to share music videos, other pieces of entertainment through offline apps like Bluetooth, like, vendor. So that way they'd have, entertainment on their phones, but they don't have to go online to access it.</p>
<b>Zoe</b>	<p>Right. Super interesting. Thank you so much, Linda. Finally, um turning to you, Omar the context in Lebanon, working with Syrian refugees in Akkar and Tripoli was quite different from the other two places we were working. Can you tell us a little bit about the setting there?</p>
<b>Omar</b>	<p>Thank you, Zoe. So, Lebanon is quite facing complex humanitarian crisis, and I would have to say that, since last decade till now, it has hosted one of the largest number of refugees per capita globally. That includes, like, around 1, 1.5 million Syrian refugees. And adding to that, especially in 2019, we had, like, an economic crisis that have been compounded by the currency deterioration, inflation, political instability, an explosion of the Beirut port even, and lastly the COVID-19. You know, all of these didn't help overall with the situation.</p> <p>And as a consequence, 9 out of 10 Syrian refugees, Syrian families, and one in three Lebanese families are now living in extreme poverties. You know, these are quite extreme conditions. There are quite challenging, and these are compounded and increasingly volatile environment for many Syrian refugees. And our research focused on Tripoli and Akkar, and these are in the north government of Lebanon. And why is that? Because these two areas are the most fragile, are the most volatile, and have the extreme poverty of both populations in these areas.</p> <p>So, that's in brief. And lastly what I would have to say in terms of the context itself, that most Syrian and Lebanese, those communities have faced steep deterioration in economic situations since 2019. That affected the food security, which affected at least one of four Lebanese households in north government, while Syrians are heavily reliant on aid now. Syrian refugees are more reliant on e-vouchers, they're more reliant on cash assistance, on humanitarian aid. That's about that in brief.</p>
<b>Zoe</b>	<p>Great. And do most people have phones in- in Akkar and Tripoli? And if so, what are the main use cases? What are they using them for?</p>
<b>Omar</b>	<p>I would have to say more than 90% of the Syrian refugees and more than 90% of the Lebanese, those communities have mobile phones in these areas. You know,</p>

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	<p>we were asking people on the ground "What do you use phones? What do you use all of these kind of stuff?" And they were shocked that we were actually the only ones that gone there and asked them that do you have actually a mobile phone? What do you use it for? Because it's somehow an asset. It's really valuable to them. You know, it's something that is intimate even to them. They were like, "Oh, you're asking me about something that we like, that- that- that is something that is quite intimate to us. And yeah, we would like to share with you. That's totally fine. Because, weirdly, as I said before the crisis was for more than 10 years, so a lot of research have been done there. But none of the research were actually focused on mobile phones, understanding the ecosystem and all of these kind of stuff.</p> <p>So, coming us to them and asking about that, it was somehow like they were quite happy that we're asking them that and they- they were sharing, like, what are the uses. And they were mostly using them for digital leisure, they were using it also to contact their families. You know, the refugees from neighbouring country from Syria and they're here in Lebanon, and they want to contact the people that are the closest to them. From their friends, from their family, all of these kind of stuff. I would have to say this is the main use of it.</p>
<p><b>Zoe</b></p>	<p>Interesting. What would you say? Were there any challenges for people in accessing mobile technology?</p>
<p><b>Omar</b></p>	<p>Yeah, there is. And it's quite common, even between both the refugees and the host community. First of all is the cost. So, the cost recently in Lebanon there was inflation and the economic crisis. So, every month we have a different pricing. Every month it's increasing. And that stresses out people. So that's the one. The second thing is the connectivity. So, the connectivity, the telephone signal tower they're not optimal. They're not working everywhere. And this is due because of power cuts. You know, like the cellphone towers, they don't have always electricity. So, people don't necessarily always have 4G or 5G in order they don't even have 5G. But they don't have mobile internet, mobile data, so they can access WhatsApp or other apps.</p> <p>And the third thing, and we said it's the most important, is charging. As I said, there is not a lot of power in Lebanon. So, people maybe have, like, a gap of two hours to charge their phone. And, you know, having only two hours to charge your phone while, I don't know, you're maybe even working, you're maybe doing something else, with all the stress happening it's not enough for you to charge your phone. So, I would say these are the main three challenges.</p>

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<p><b>Zoe</b></p>	<p>Thanks Omar. Now, in this research we- we wanted to understand both holistically how people were using their phones, how did they see their phones, what were the- the benefits and risks that come with digital inclusion. But we also looked into a few thematic areas, trends that we saw emerging within the humanitarian sector., to understand how people were using their phones in- in relation to these things-to both better inform humanitarian programming, and to help digital providers and mobile network operators better understand how they could engage in the humanitarian industry.</p> <p>One of the topics that we looked at was financial wellbeing, or how people used their phones related to finances, to managing their household or to receiving cash assistance as we're working within humanitarian settings.</p> <p>Jason, maybe I could start with you. What did you learn about how people in Papua New Guinea used their phones related to- to managing their money?</p>
<p><b>Jason</b></p>	<p>So mobile money is a relatively new concept. Recently, in the last two months ago another NGO group has tried to roll out a programme for assisting the refugees with mobile money cash vouchers through mobile phones. I was doing the research at the time. Around the same time when this programme has been rolled out. And from my engagement with the people, there is very, very, you know, limited understanding of people now to actually use this technology or use this service. Even though there was a great need to using it, you know, given the remoteness of coming of travelling to town to access banking services. Mobile money would be of great use to the communities there. But let's say the level of phone literacy is already very low, and then you introduce a phone for mobile banking and then... See, that's a very, very limited knowledge of people trying to, you know of people do not know how to use phone for mobile banking or mobile financial services.</p> <p>But I observe that it's going to change now with the introduction of this programme, by this particular NGO. People are starting to- to teach themselves or to educate themselves, and I believe this particular NGO would realise that there is a need to run some trainings, basic trainings, for the users to know how to actually use the phone and to use it for mobile purposes. Some of them were scared to lose their phone, thinking that if someone gets the phone, they will get their money. Most of them are elderly people, women who have maybe not gone to school a school at all. You know, there's a really big need for them to- to be</p>

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	<p>given more customised training, education awareness to enable them to actually use the service effectively.</p>
<b>Zoe</b>	<p>It's nice to hear that you're optimistic about the future of mobile in Iowara.</p>
<b>Jason</b>	<p>Mm-hmm, Mm-hmm.</p>
<b>Zoe</b>	<p>Thanks Jason. Linda, this is this is a thing that we also explored in- in South Sudan. Could you tell us a little bit about the uptake of mobile financial services and- and in general how people use mobile technology related to their finances in Bor in South Sudan?</p>
<b>Linda</b>	<p>Yes. Similarly, to Papua New Guinea, mobile money uptake and the use of mobile financial services was stuck and really low. And this was for a couple of reasons mainly the limited connectivity and access to mobile money, which is newly introduced in South Sudan. and then the high transaction fees, which often deter possible users. And also people's limited accessibility to cash. So, it was very low. Only about 6% of the people we surveyed have a mobile money account, either MTN or Airtel. Or Zain. So, it was really low.</p> <p>However, that being said, people depended on mobile money mobile inflows in terms of making phone calls to their relatives or, their connections within and outside of South Sudan who would send them money. Often somebody has to go to Juba to collect, that money.</p> <p>And another approach to mobile money, especially in the Bor POC camp, was for the few people that had mobile money accounts, they would receive money on behalf of others. So, they would go and withdraw it for them.</p> <p>Mobile money inflow remittances were mainly used for meeting basic needs, so food, health, health conditions, and managing debt, or future planning but strictly to manage- meet their basic needs. And yeah, all this being said, the attitude to mobile money was positive. there are many people who are excited about it and willing to try it if they were able to get accessibility to it. But also, in some few cases we found that people who did not use phones or who did not own phones had limited knowledge, or some completely did not know about mobile money, how it works, and yeah, the possible opportunities that were there.</p>



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<b>Zoe</b>	<p>Thanks Linda. That's super interesting. And- And nice to hear optimism as well in- in South Sudan. Even if it's for remittances and- and meeting basic needs, it sounds like in both contexts there's- there's an appetite and, you know, there's work to be done on- on building the ecosystem and- and building people's digital literacy. But nice to hear that there's some potential there, even if- if we have a ways to go.</p> <p>Next, I wanted to talk about the- the second theme that we spoke through the research, was misinformation, disinformation and- and hate speech. Some of these risks that come with being connected. Let's start with you, Omar. What do you think was the most interesting thing to come out from Lebanon related to this theme?</p>
<b>Omar</b>	<p>Thank you, Zoe. So, eh- it was super interesting actually, what we found out on the ground. We asked people about, you know what misinformation, disinformation, that you actually encounter. And they were like, "Oh. Yeah. W- We- We encountered it a lot," and then most of them were coming from the phone. And I would have to say the most interesting one is about resettlement scams. And basically, they would see, like, over WhatsApp, they would receive over SMS or on social media, you can travel to Canada. You can resettle somewhere else. And, you know, most the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, they- they're looking for that. They just want to go out. You know, the economic crisis is- is quite heavy in Lebanon at the moment, so they just want to go out.</p> <p>So, for that they would actually contact these people and these people will basically tell them, "Okay. You can come to this office. You know, it's totally legit, you can come here, and you can check us out, and then you will have to pay." So, the- actually the Syrian refugee would go, actually, to this office and basically this is fake office. You know, they have, like, fake furniture, fake flags, everything is quite fake there. And they come there to the office, and they see everything is quite legit. Someone is talking to them, like officially somehow. You know, wearing a suit and everything, and they would fall for this.</p> <p>And after, you know, like, falling for this, they- they would actually request them to pay a sum of money, which none of the humanitarian agency request. And all of the humanitarian agencies raise the flag do not pay for humanitarian aid, or do not aid, do not pay for resettlement. But they go along with it, with this scam that they got through an SMS or, like, WhatsApp, through Instagram, through Facebook. They go along with it, they pay it, and directly the next day the whole</p>

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	office disappears. It doesn't exist. So, this is one of the examples that's been happening in Lebanon. Thank you.
<b>Zoe</b>	Yeah, thanks Omar. Did you see any solutions to that sort of scam? Did you see anyone working to- to counter that sort of mis- and disinformation?
<b>Omar</b>	Yes. Recently I would have to say most of the humanitarian agencies are aware of these. You know, so they would send out, you know, a couple of SMS's, a couple of brochures, you know, a couple of awareness sessions about that. But I would have to say that it would have been it should have been taken to the next level and maybe even disseminate even through brochures, through WhatsApp groups, all of these kind of things. But yeah, I believe that humanitarian agencies are trying their best to- to encounter such disinformation happening.
<b>Zoe</b>	Interesting. Thanks Omar. Jason, I feel like we heard about scams happening in- in Papua New Guinea as well. Can you tell us about those?
<b>Jason</b>	<p>Yes. So, quite similar to the experience that Omar shared. In Papua New Guinea also, the scam is quite popular. mostly it's targeting people that- who, you know, have very limited understanding of what- what we know that this is scam. so mainly it's the- to do with money. You will receive a message, random message, from your phone and, you know, the saying that you have won this amount of money. Your number has been, you know, selected and you need to do something to redeem those- this amount of money. Sometimes just to do with a prize like a car or something, or a phone, and you would have to deposit certain amount of money. most of the people unfortunately fall for this kind of things and they would actually invest; deposit some amount of money into a particular bank account that has been given to them.</p> <p>And then they would follow up and, you know in the hope that, you know, they will receive this huge amount of money coming from UK, for instance many people actually have fallen victim to this as well.</p> <p>They are also popular now with WhatsApp and also on Facebook. You know, showing pictures off people holding cash, bundles of money, cash, and tell them, you know, you could make this amount of money in this- this period of time, only 24 hours, by depositing only this amount of money. You know, in Papua New Guinean Papua New people easily fall for this kind of things, and unfortunately, they- they operate in a land where it's quite difficult for the financial authorities to actually pin them down and prevent them actually doing that. So, there is a lot</p>

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of need for awareness for- for phone users especially, and in the remote areas as well.

In lowara, from my conversation with a number of people there, they have actually confirmed that they once were scammed, and they actually sent some amount of money in the hope of receiving more. But they didn't receive anything. So, I also took time to- to tell them that, you know, when you receive this kind of messages, they are scams. You should look out for certain things that will tell you it's a scam. If it's a reliable competition, for instance, you would see it being pub- advertised or, you know, in the radio, on newspaper. And for that you can take it as it's credible. Otherwise, no one gives huge amount of money for nothing, for doing nothing.

So, there is a lot of need for awareness. Not just in lowara, but all throughout Papua New Guinea. Even some educated working people are falling for this kind of schemes, especially to do with making money, fast money, pyramid scheme or these kind of things.

Another interesting thing with regards to misinformation which I wanted to share was regarding during the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Most of the people were- were really scared when they heard about it, because there were videos being shared and, those people who have access to watching videos on YouTube, they- they go, and they share the message with other people. So, those people who don't have the phone do not have the benefit to see the video themselves to- to actually assess whether it's true or not. So, they just believe what is being told to them.

So generally, there were people who were very scared about this disease. They think that if they get it, they will die on the spot. And when even the injection, you know, was introduced, most of them were scared also, because there were myths being spread that if you take the COVID-19 injection, it's a mark of the beast or- and you will die in the next three or four years. And there were a lot of people who were scared and did not turn up to take, the vaccination when it was made available to them.

**Zoe**

Thanks Jason. Yeah, it sounds like digital literacy needed on that front as well. Linda, we also looked at this theme in South Sudan. But my understanding is misinformation, disinformation and hate speech manifested quite different in South Sudan. Can you tell us about that?

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<b>Linda</b>	<p>Yes, definitely. So, in South Sudan, misinformation, disinformation especially the last two, disinformation and hate speech, were mainly around, fake information around the conflicts and the peace argument. So, there were very many stories of ethnic, political and tribal conflict that, possible came into public discourse and remained for a long period of time, often changing within every narrative. and this was mainly, of course, through Facebook, though, online social media, but Facebook was very notorious among the people we spoke to for, being a place where people expected to find like fake news or hate speech or disinformation, and were quite aware about that and, they often had to, check the credibility of the information they found. They would, like their friends or their other networks.</p> <p>And majority of people who also had access to the internet also confirmed seeing false information online. Interestingly, many people were aware about it and alert to it, so they often did not share it, or they had to first check its credibility before sharing it.</p> <p>In the POC camp especially people cited specific examples or, ethnic tensions and ethnic, messaging that was targeted to, like, spread false information against one ethnicity. So that was also how it manifested. And- But unlike PNG and Lebanon, there was very little evidence of scamming.</p>
<b>Zoe</b>	<p>Interesting. Now, the third theme. Let's stay in South Sudan for a moment. On- On the flip side of creating tension we also wanted to understand how people use their phones for- for fun, for leisure, to relax. I think that sometimes within the humanitarian community we focus too much on mobile technology as- as a channel-within our- our own purposes of delivering a- a specific service or- or information to our target audience. But it- it's important to also understand holistically how people use their phones not just to do things to serve specific purposes, but also to- to unwind, did we see that at all in- in South Sudan? Or what came out in that context?</p>
<b>Linda</b>	<p>That was a very interesting finding in South Sudan. Digital leisure was very important to phone users, and some non-users as well. So, first of all, it was very common, as I talked about earlier, for offline engagement and offline use of phones. And most of this was through entertainment, listening to music, playing games. for some people reading and, yeah, sharing information. So, people regard their digital leisure and entertainment as very important, especially in the POC camp where we saw more use for digital leisure, and this was actually just</p>

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	<p>the fact that people had less ways to entertain themselves. The fact that they don't have so many employment opportunities, so many different activities, so they spend a sizeable amount of time on their phone. And for some people, checking their, social media up to four times a day, and that was, a finding among the collectors. So that was very important.</p> <p>Also, different ways people interacted with their phones for entertainment, like finding ways of entertaining themselves cheaply or using less in less electricity for charging. So, they did this, through- through learning how to make their batteries last longer. and then also, there were some officers in the POC camp, like where people would go to charge their phones. So, in those areas some people would stay there longer so they can use their phones while they have good access to internet, and they can use their phones while they can charge them as well. So that was also very important finding in South Sudan.</p> <p>The fact that younger people use their phones for entertainment, and older people as well had their own different ways of using their phones to entertain themselves. So, as I talked about earlier, through, music, through listening to especially religious and traditional songs. And this also had some positive wellbeing effect on both of them.</p> <p>However, interesting to note and important to note was the divide between people who had access to money and those who did not, whereby people would access money through remittances and also through, like, odd jobs, had more ability to afford airtime and to charge their phones. So, they spent considerably more time on, their phones for digital leisure and social media than those who did not. And it's also very common for people the ration how they spend, time using their phones for entertainment.</p> <p>And another important thing to mention is that the same way the same benefit and the same way that phone users use their phones for entertainment is similar to non-phone owners, because they shared phones for the same purposes. And in some cases, many people aspired or wanted to own phones so they can also spend time on social media, so they can derive some benefit. So, the primary factor in their wanting a phone. So yeah, was very interesting finding in South Sudan.</p>
<p><b>Zoe</b></p>	<p>Omar, did you see the same in Lebanon? Do people value their phones for this leisure purpose?</p>

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<p><b>Omar</b></p>	<p>Yes. Thank you, Zoe, and they did value the phone. You know, it's quite an intimate item for them. They keep it quite near them a- and they use it all the time for- actually for leisure. They use YouTube, they use games they- they use Facebook just to scroll around, just to connect with friends. They're consider even connecting with friends as a way of leisure. You know, just hanging out on a WhatsApp group, talking to people, exchanging information, exchanging pictures, having fun, is digital leisure for them. That's one of the things.</p> <p>Not only they use it that way, but only you know, like them holding the phones and communicating with their families back in Syria let's say You know, the grandchildren, they would talk with their with their grandparents. Everyone would talk with their families in Syria. So, this by itself, you know, keeping the- the communication, you know, opening a WhatsApp video with- with the families there keeps them incredibly happy. And this is a form of digital leisure that they have on a daily basis even now. Thank you.</p> <p>And when we actually asked them that question, they were a- super happy that we actually asked them the question that, yeah, it is meaningful for them. Yes, it is something that they look forward. You know, they come from work all day and they just want to zone out on the phone for half an hour. So, it is incredibly meaningful and it's an incredible asset. Not for just connecting with people, but for entertaining themselves and lifting that putting them in their better mood, I will have to say. Thank you.</p>
<p><b>Zoe</b></p>	<p>Based on the research, did you notice any impact of- of COVID-19? Has the pandemic affected people's phone use, Omar?</p>
<p><b>Omar</b></p>	<p>It did affect them drastically, I would have to say. They would get some information about COVID, what are the new regulations. So, they would follow up certain news and they would follow up certain Facebook pages, so they are able to be kept up to date with the latest news a- around COVID.</p> <p>So, I would have to say there is an increased use of the phone during COVID yes, but also there is an increased use of entertainment also during COVID. Because people are now, you know watching videos because of the stress of COVID. They're entertaining themselves. You know, kids are also at home, so they're also, you know, utilising this phone at home for example, to study online. So, for example, we have a limited amount of phones inside the house, so someone would have to take the phone for the kid and you, and the kid will use it for a couple of hours in order to study online.</p> <p>So yeah, there- there is multiple impacts that happened during COVID. Thank you.</p>

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<b>Zoe</b>	Thanks Omar. Now, I have two last questions for- for all of you just to- to wrap this up. And I- I really appreciate you- you giving your time today. I wanted to ask, what was your main takeaway from the research? Is there really one thing that's going to- to stick with you, that you learned over the course of this process? Maybe Jason, we could start with you.
<b>Jason</b>	One of the sort of, interesting takeaway for me generally is that, I've come to realize the- the resilience of the refugee community. I mean, in- in this particular context, being remote and also not being directly supported by any sort of government assistance, or programmes, these people continue to survive and live for more than three decades. And even with the distance that you need to travel into town to access medical or banking and other services, these people continue to, you know. When they need those services, they walk for hours to get into town and access those services. And I think that's one of the thing that I take away, is the- the- the resilience of refugee communities, you know, when they- they feel that there is something they need, they- they- they go for it. Whether there is support or there is no support, they still find a way to- to you know, to find an answer to their issue. So that is that is something that I learn from conducting this research and being with the people there. Thank you.
<b>Zoe</b>	Thank you, Jason. What about you, Omar? Is there one thing that's really going to stick with you from this research?
<b>Omar</b>	I would have to say both the digital part, digital leisure part, and the misinformation part. You know, all the misinformation out there and disinformation out there, how they're quite, I would say, they're more advanced and they're trying to scam people through the most intimate thing that they have, which is the phone. You know? So, this is one of the key takeaways that I can take from the study and how it is out there and how we should maybe even tackle this issue more and more and improve the way, especially in humanitarian sector.  But the second thing is also digital leisure, how is it quite important for everyone. For Lebanese host communities, for refugees, for everyone. Without that, really, I wouldn't know how would people cope with COVID, cope with the economic crisis, cope with all the complex humanitarian issues we're facing in Lebanon. Thank you.
<b>Zoe</b>	And Linda, same question.

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<b>Linda</b>	<p>Yes. I'd like to definitely agree with Omar that the findings on digital leisure was very important and it definitely would stay with me, considering the fact that, first of all, we saw strong evidence that the way people use their phones for leisure definitely improves their digital skill. That was a very interesting finding, people learning about phones, learning how to use phones on their own and getting very savvy at how to use phones with limited internet, limited electricity. That was very interesting. And also, the opportunities that this presents. The fact that in Bor there was very high phone ownership, very high phone use. So, the opportunities that lie in there for digital literacy, for even education, for service delivery, that was very interesting.</p>
<b>Zoe</b>	<p>Great, thanks. And I have one- one small, quick question to wrap this up, that I'm going to ask all three of you again. Based on your experience with this research, if you could advise humanitarians to do one thing differently in their humanitarian programming, what would it be? Let's start with you, Omar, this time.</p>
<b>Omar</b>	<p>So, I would say using a mixture of both innovative and traditional ways in order to tackle these issues. So, innovative I mean maybe with the latest technologies. You know using WhatsApp, using Facebook, using Instagram Stories, all of these kind of stuff for information semination, awareness all of these kind of things. That's the one.</p> <p>I take a person myself, I usually go back, for example, to traditional things. I like SMSs sometimes. So, I would have to say using both the innovative ones and the traditional ones in order to put out the information and the messages that they need, to get it out especially for humanitarians. Thank you.</p>
<b>Zoe</b>	<p>Jason, what about you?</p>
<b>Jason</b>	<p>Thank you, for me, I think one thing I would like to say about this is to let the... If you want to help the people, like in this case the refugees, you have to allow them to tell you how best you can help them. I think commonly, you know, many humanitarian organisations, they would have programmes and thematic areas, priority areas that they work within the confines of those things. And sometimes there is little bit or there is no flexibility to adapt to the real situation on the ground.</p>



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	<p>So if there is a real intention, a genuine intention to help particular group of people, I think it would be best to let the people tell you what help or programme you will, you know, invest into to actually help them solve their problem, or to help them, you know, get rid of their situation. So that is something that I want to... I can say on this.</p>
<b>Zoe</b>	<p>Great. Thanks. And- And last but not least, Linda, if you could advise humanitarians to change their- their digital programming in one way, what- what would it be?</p>
<b>Linda</b>	<p>I would definitely look into the high phone ownership and use. I think there's definitely very many opportunities there for humanitarians. Mashin, who is the researcher that conducted the research on the ground suggested using phones to offer psychosocial support to IDPs who of course have experienced, hardships. So, this would be through the digital leisure. They enjoy entertainment. So, through games, through the content they consume online, to offer some bespoke, some specific type of psychosocial support.</p> <p>And also work together with the local- we are calling them mobile money dealers- F in the POCs, to boost, their mobile money earning, or to boost like, to give them a sort of grant which can generate more money within the POC economy. Because even the mobile money dealers themselves have talked about making very small margins, because the numbers of people transacting are very few. So, a one-time grant would be able to first of all support people to meet their basic needs, but also boost the general mobile money economy within the POC especially.</p>
<b>Zoe</b>	<p>Great. Thanks so much, Linda, Omar and Jason for those answers and for joining us today. It was really great to hear more about the research and the context where the data was collected. Our new research is available on our website. It includes further information as well as recommendations for the digital humanitarian community and you can check it out for more information and further details. Thanks again.</p>