

Robi Axiata's imo Pack: partnering with a leading messaging app to drive mobile internet use among women in Bangladesh



By partnering with imo to deliver low-cost, high-quality voice and video calling, Robi made the internet more relevant and affordable for women in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has one of the widest mobile internet gender gaps in the world. Women are 52 per cent less likely to use mobile internet than men,³⁷ and a key barrier is a perception by women that the internet is not relevant to their lives.³⁸

imo is one of the most popular apps in Bangladesh for communicating with relatives, and makes voice and video calling, particularly overseas, much more affordable than regular phone calls. It is particularly relevant for wives and rural family members of migrant workers.

In April 2019, Robi Axiata partnered with imo³⁹ to launch imo Packs — discounted data packs valid only for imo use and sold via USSD.⁴⁰ This offering enhances the quality of service with imo by prioritizing Robi's customers on the imo network.

Currently, 1.2 million customers purchase at least one pack per month, with its popularity driven by heavy investment in TV communication targeted at women and a short 50-day “Robi best for imo” marketing campaign with messaging around bringing families together.

imo Pack strengthens the Robi brand and makes women feel more connected

Robi has clear commercial objectives with imo Pack, and views the partnership as an opportunity to drive acquisition and retention of customers, particularly women, supporting the operator's ambition to have the largest 4G customer base in the country.

Robi's partnership with imo is driving mobile internet use among Robi customers, particularly women. Within 45 days of the campaign, the proportion of active

imo users on Robi's network increased by two per cent, driven largely by female customers. Robi also saw an increase in the ARPU of low segment customers, driven by more data use and regular imo Pack purchases.⁴¹ The share of women in the Robi imo Pack base now stands at 30 per cent, compared to 27 per cent in Robi's overall mobile internet customer base. This clearly demonstrates that women are taking advantage of and benefiting from the imo Pack. Interviews with users suggests women are communicating with overseas relatives more frequently than they might otherwise have, as the service is accessible and affordable.

“I can contact my family any time I want for a very low amount of money and I don't face any problems and that's a blessing.”

Housewife with husband living in Malaysia, 30–35 years old, rural, Munshiganj

Robi's imo Pack shows the power of partnership. This successful collaboration demonstrates that Robi clearly understands the needs of not just its female customer base, but its customer base as a whole. As a society, Bangladesh relies on its migrant workforce, and imo video calling brings diaspora husbands, wives and entire families together.

“I would talk to my husband once every 3 or 4 days but now I talk with him every day.”

Housewife with husband in Saudi Arabia, 25–30 years old, rural, Munshiganj



41. Low-income customers have a preference for the least expensive pack and tend to buy two to three packs per month.

37. GSMA (2020), *The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2020*.

38. *Ibid.*

39. Robi established a one-year exclusive partnership with imo.

40. 350MB for BDT 20 (\$0.24) valid for 28 days and 1GB for BDT 53 (\$0.62) valid for 28 days.