

Gender Digital Divide in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs)

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Technology to our life

- If one day you lost your phone and internet, what is the one thing you absolutely couldn't live without?
 - Staying connected with friends and family (messaging, calls)
 - Accessing social media
 - Browsing the internet or news
 - Streaming music, videos, or podcasts
 - Using navigation/maps
 - Playing games or using apps for entertainment
 - Managing work or emails
 - Online shopping or banking

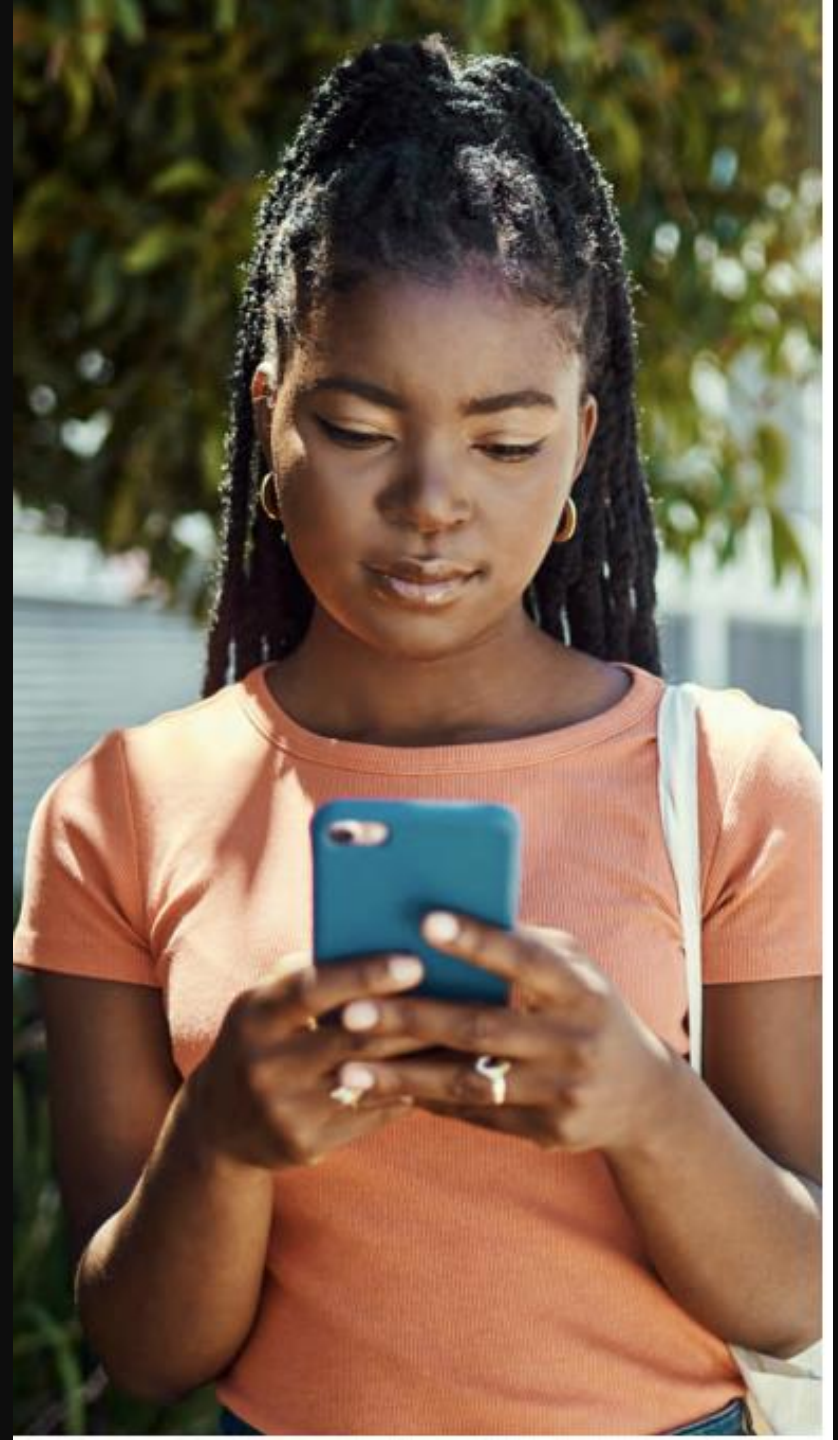
[Mobile phone usage explodes in Africa, spurring innovation](#)



<https://app.sli.do/event/kJU8ho4RYtiJ6KPwty2Vsq>

Outline

- The gender gap in mobile ownership
 - Understanding barriers to mobile ownership
 - The gender gap in internet adoption
 - Understanding barriers to internet adoption
 - Recommendations for mitigating gender disparities in mobile access
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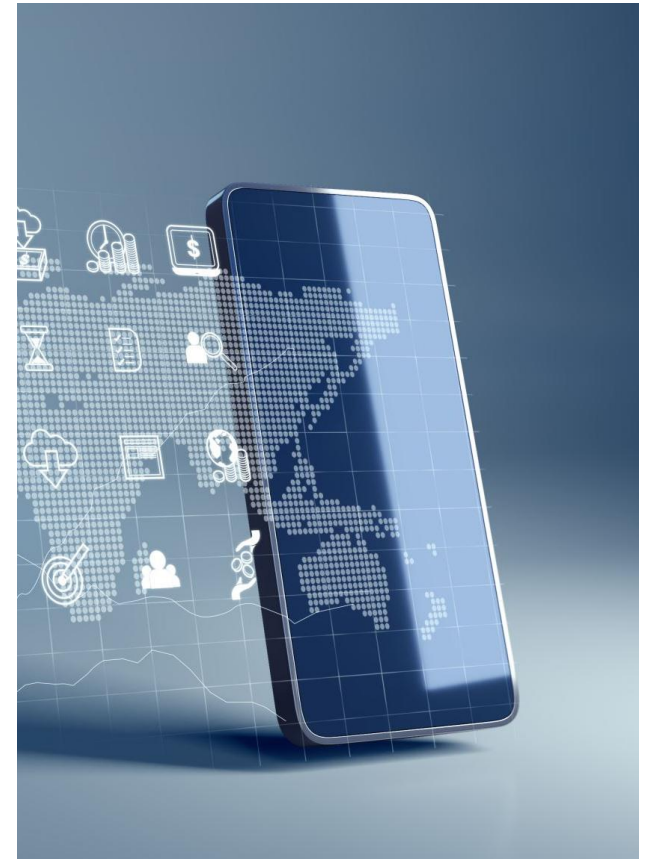
The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2023

- Jeffrie, Nadia. 2023. “The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2023.” GSMA.
- https://www.gsma.com/r/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/The-Mobile-Gender-Gap-Report-2023.pdf?utm_source=website&utm_medium=download-



Digital divide

- Mobile phone and mobile internet can provide critical information, services and opportunities from anywhere
- Access in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) is unequal and there are significant gender gaps
- Addressing the mobile gender gap is vital to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



The digital inclusion journey

- The mobile internet user journey starts with mobile ownership and progresses to mobile internet awareness, mobile internet adoption and, finally, to regular and diverse mobile internet





Mobile ownership

Overall LMICs in 2023

OVERALL LMICs

81%

Proportion of women who own a mobile phone

7%

Gender gap in mobile ownership

440m

Women who do not own a mobile phone

Progress has **stalled** in closing the **gender gap**



in **smartphone ownership**

Women are **17%**

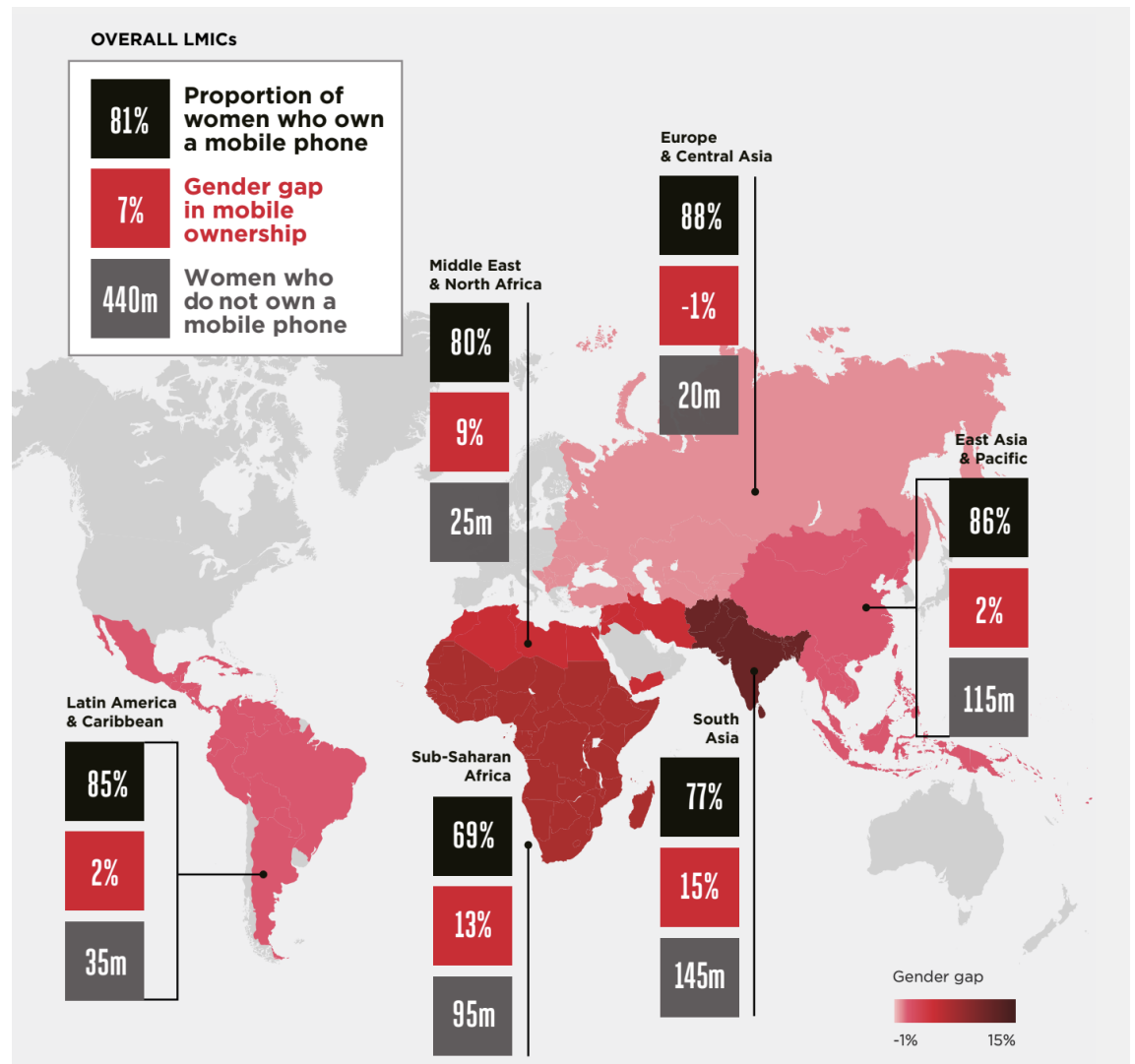


less likely than men to own a smartphone

250M

fewer women than men own a smartphone

Gender gaps across regions



Women tend to use their mobile phones for a narrower range of activities than men on a weekly basis



Most of women use their mobile phones to make calls



But small amount of them use mobile phones to watch free videos, receive information, utilize educational support, read news, utilize health services, and use for social networking

Barriers to mobile ownership

MOBILE OWNERSHIP

The top 3 barriers

preventing women from **owning a mobile phone** are:



1. AFFORDABILITY



2. LITERACY AND DIGITAL SKILLS



3. PERCEIVED RELEVANCE

Millions more women than men face these barriers because they do not own a mobile phone



Mobile internet use

Overall LMICs in 2023

A TOTAL OF
900M



women are still not using
mobile internet

ALMOST
2/3
LIVE IN



South Asia and
Sub-Saharan Africa



WOMEN
were more likely than men to report
REDUCING THEIR MOBILE INTERNET USE
IN 2022



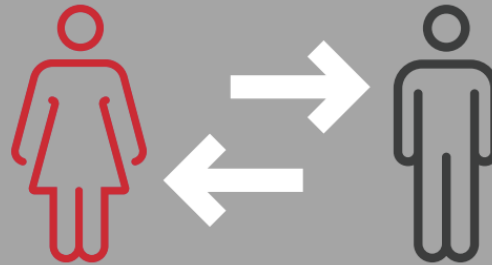
Especially
those who
live in rural
areas



and are less educated

Overall LMICs in 2023

THE MOBILE INTERNET
GENDER GAP REMAINS
RELATIVELY UNCHANGED



Women are **19%**

less likely
than men to
use mobile
internet



This means

310M



fewer women
than men use
mobile internet

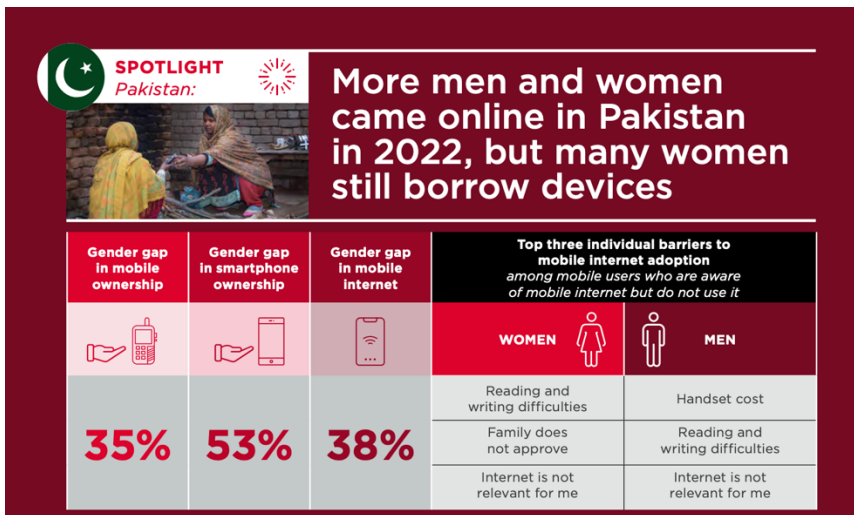
To close
the mobile
internet
gender gap by

2030

100M

**WOMEN A YEAR
ON AVERAGE MUST
START USING IT**

In some countries, women are more likely than men to access the internet on someone else's mobile phone



- In certain countries, a significant number of female mobile internet users either do not own a mobile phone at all or have only a basic model.
- Consequently, they access the internet using someone else's device
- This has implications for:
 - Privacy
 - Usage freedom
 - Digital independence"

Barriers of internet usage

MOBILE INTERNET ADOPTION

The top 3 barriers

preventing women who are mobile users and aware of **mobile internet** from adopting it are:



1. AFFORDABILITY (PRIMARYLY OF HANDSETS)



2. LITERACY AND DIGITAL SKILLS



3. SAFETY AND SECURITY

Millions more women than men face these barriers because they are offline

Perceive on mobile internet



Despite concerns associated with the internet, in almost all survey countries less than a fifth of mobile internet users reported a negative overall impact on their life

Most people who use mobile internet believe it has had a positive impact on their lives and use it every day, with little difference between women and men



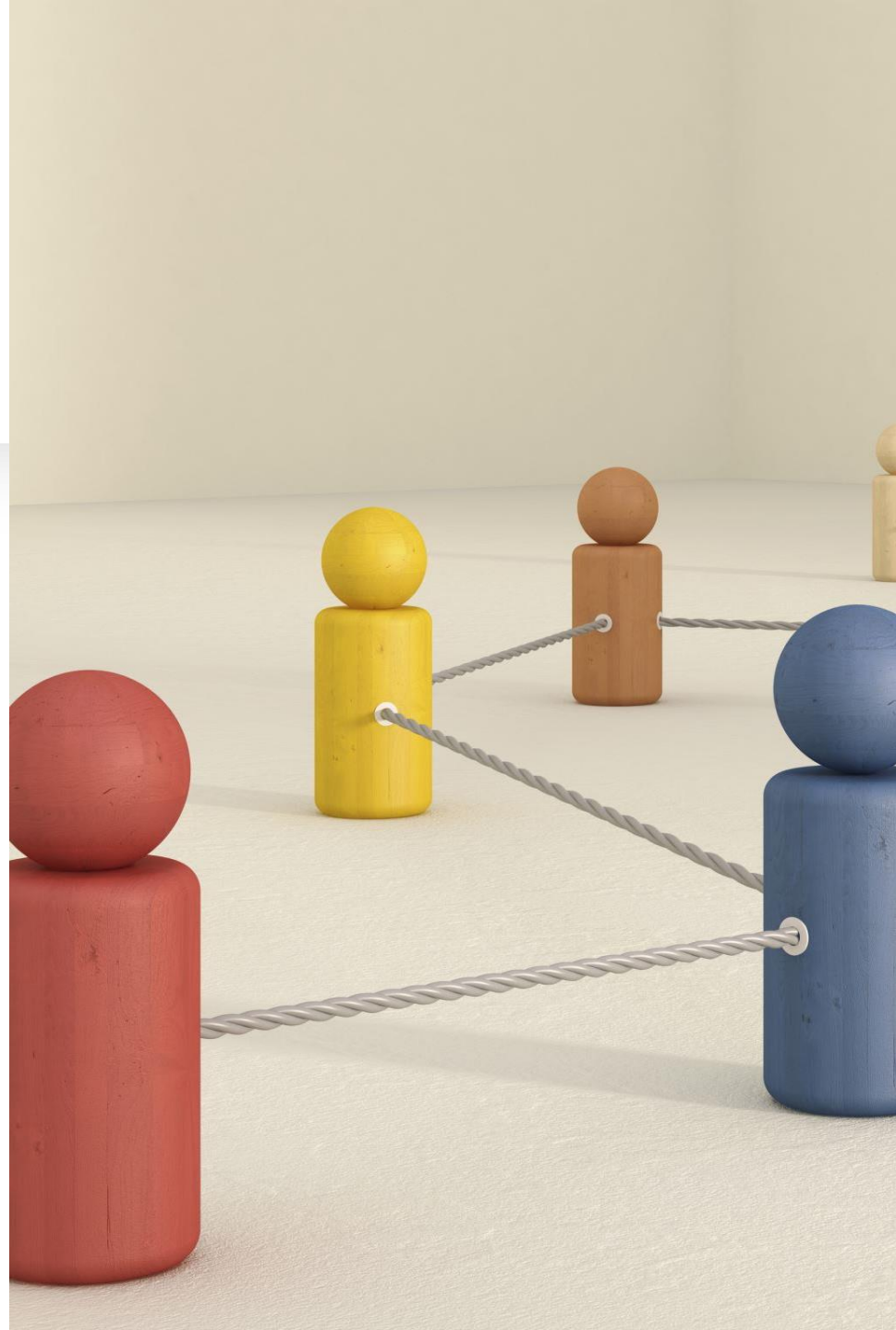
This suggests that once women use mobile internet, it improves their lives to a similar degree as men



Recommendations for All Stakeholders to
Close The Mobile Gender Gap

Regulators

- Make sure top leaders support gender equality and establish clear goals for fairness
- For instance, senior executives should actively push for gender balance by setting specific targets for women to hold leadership roles



Policymakers

- Understand the mobile gender gap by improving the quality and availability of gender-disaggregated data
- Understanding women's needs and the barriers they face to mobile ownership and use
- Implement target interventions



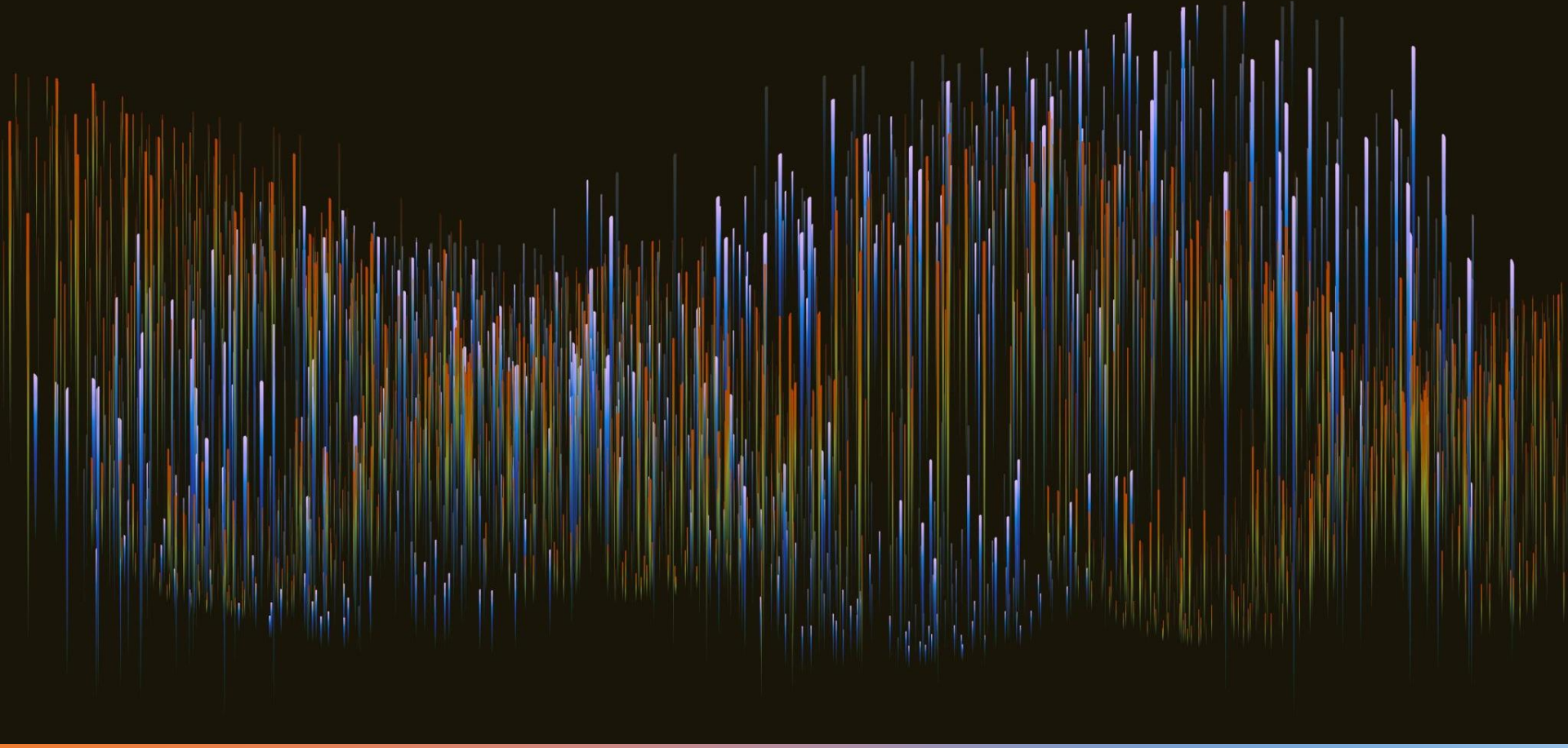
Mobile network operators (MNOs) and internet companies



Address women's needs and challenges when designing and implementing mobile products and policies



This involves tackling barriers such as affordability, knowledge gaps, safety concerns, and access to relevant content



Thank you

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GENDER GAP

The gender gap in mobile phone ownership and mobile internet use is calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Gender gap in ownership / use (\%)} = \frac{\begin{array}{c} \text{Male owners / users} \\ \text{(\% of male population)} \end{array} - \begin{array}{c} \text{Female owners / users} \\ \text{(\% of female population)} \end{array}}{\begin{array}{c} \text{Male owners / users} \\ \text{(\% of male population)} \end{array}}$$

Male and female mobile ownership and mobile internet adoption, by country

Percentage of total adult population

