

Digital connectivity is a necessity - not a luxury.

While mobile network coverage is growing, worldwide adoption is still only at 57%.

Over

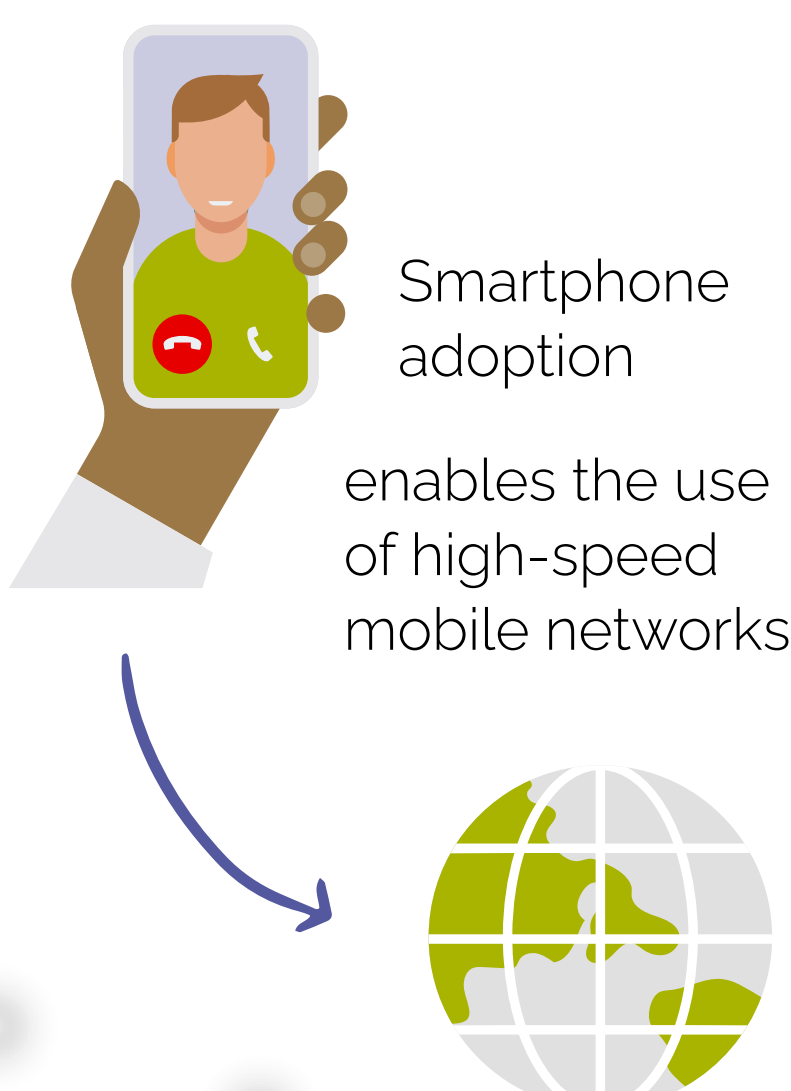
2.7 billion people

remain unconnected to the Internet.

That means **more than 1/3** of the world's population¹ does not have access to critical information and opportunities, from education to government services.

1 | ITU, 2022

Smartphone adoption is key to closing this digital divide.



which increases Internet usage that could boost both GDP and well-being.

Studies have shown that in Africa, for example, **10%** more people accessing high-speed networks would lead to an **average 2.5% growth in GDP.**²

2 | ITU, 2020

Smartphone ownership is lowest in emerging markets.

Only 45% of adults in emerging markets own a smartphone vs. **76% in advanced economies.**³

Findings show **women** in these markets are even less likely to own a smartphone.⁴

3 | Pew Research Center, 2020

4 | GSMA, 2022

Affordability is one of the key challenges to smartphone adoption.

Smartphones can cost over **70%** of the **average monthly income** in vulnerable countries, making them unaffordable.⁵

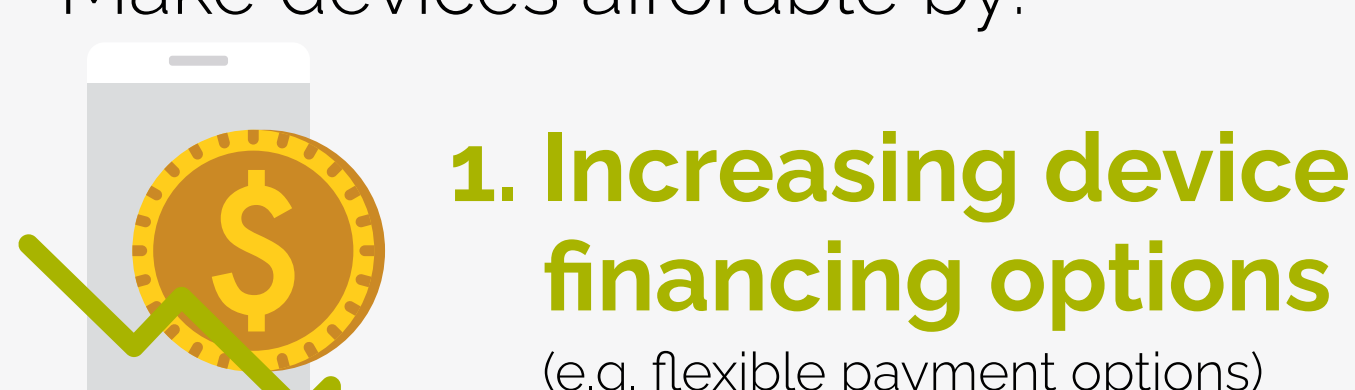


Additionally, **a lack of consumer awareness, local content and basic digital skills** erodes consumer confidence and limits the adoption of smartphones.

5 | A4AI, 2021

The Broadband Commission Working Group on Smartphone Access recommends **three key interventions to make smartphones accessible to all.**

Make devices affordable by:



1. Increasing device financing options
(e.g. flexible payment options)



2. Introducing fair taxation and import duties



and **3. Improving distribution to remote areas**

+ Investigating further the use of device subsidies and pre-owned smartphones.

This is outlined in a 5 point action plan:



1. Create partnerships across the digital value chain



4. Explore the use of Universal Service Funds and government subsidies



2. Improve regulation and quality standards for pre-owned smartphones



5. Model the benefits of reducing tax and import duties



3. Develop strategies to recycle mid- and low-tier price band devices

Making smartphones accessible to all will help to empower individuals and communities across the world.

For more insights, read the full report at: bit.ly/WGSmartphoneAccess