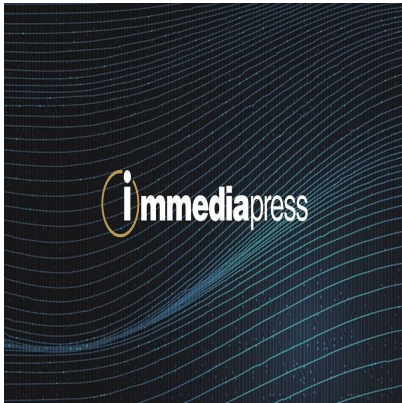




810 million women still not using mobile internet in low- and middle-income countries, compared to 595 million men

Descrizione

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Persistent barriers related to affordability, skills and safety concerns continue to limit women's digital inclusion in low- and middle-income countries

LONDON, June 10, 2026 /PRNewswire/ - The gender gap in mobile internet adoption narrowed slightly in 2025 according to the "Mobile Gender Gap Report 2026," published today by the GSMA. However, progress remains slow and uneven. Women across low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) are still 12% less likely to use mobile internet than men. This translates to 200 million fewer women than men, with the total figure for women not using mobile internet in LMICs sitting at 810 million.

Geographic disparities persist

Of the 810 million women still not using mobile internet in LMICs, more than two thirds live in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the regions with the widest gender gaps in mobile internet adoption, at 26% and 25%, respectively. The gender gap also tends to be two to three times wider in rural areas compared to urban areas across LMICs.

Barriers to getting online

The primary way people in LMICs access the internet is via mobile phones. Yet the gender gap in smartphone ownership in LMICs is 13%; around 210 million fewer women than men owning smartphones. The top barriers are affordability (primarily of handsets), literacy and digital skills. Women are disproportionately affected by these barriers, due to social norms and structural inequalities such as lower education and income.

Claire Sibthorpe, Head of Digital Inclusion at the GSMA, said, "While there has been a slow narrowing of the mobile gender gap since 2022, much more is needed to address persistent and significant gender gaps in mobile internet adoption and use. We live in an increasingly digital world and technologies such as AI are creating greater digital divides and inequities, elevating the need to ensure digital inclusion for all."

Closing the mobile gender gap

From 2023 to 2030, closing the gender gap in mobile internet adoption in LMICs could add \$1.3 trillion in GDP. Access to mobile internet can transform women's lives, giving them greater resilience in the face of economic, climate and political shocks.

More than 50 mobile operators have signed up to the GSMA Connected Women Commitment Initiative, to accelerate women's digital and financial inclusion, reaching over 90 million additional women with mobile internet or mobile money services since 2016.

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