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Press Release

For further information or to arrange an interview with Afrobarometer's investigators, please contact Sam Balongo, +254 733 424 906 ; +254 710 690 000.

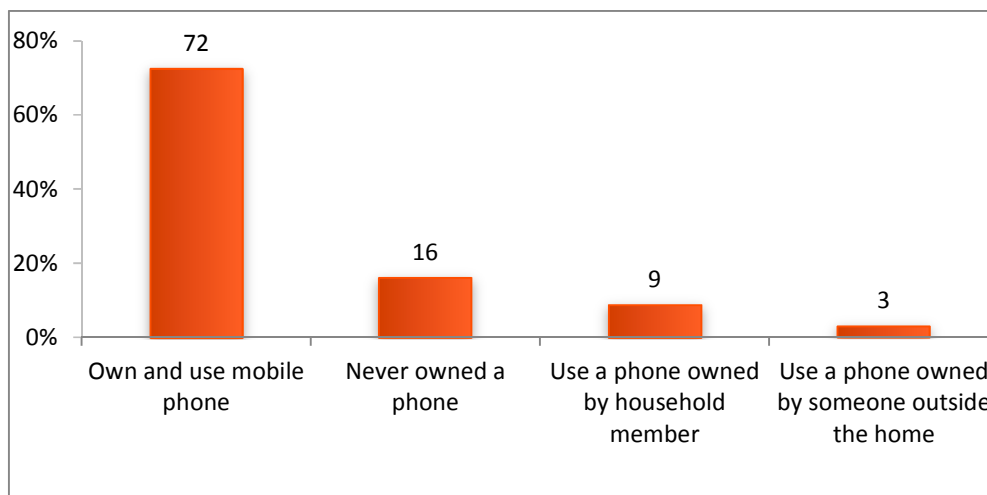
Africa Connects: Mobile Phones on the Rise in Africa, Internet Use Inching Up

Seven in ten Africans own their own mobile phones, with access essentially universal in Algeria and Senegal, according to Afrobarometer findings from across 34 countries.

The report, based on face-to-face interviews with more than 51,000 people, reveals that 84% use cell phones at least occasionally, a higher level of access than reported previously by the United Nations. Internet use is less common - with only 18% using it at least monthly.

These technological trends are detailed in Afrobarometer's report, "The Partnership of Free Speech and Good Governance in Africa," released today at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Nairobi. Written by Winnie Mitullah and Paul Kamau at IDS, the report identifies the countries with the highest and lowest use of information and communications technologies.

Figure 1: Cell phone ownership, 34 countries, 2011-2013



Participants were asked: 'Do you ever use a mobile phone? If so, who owns the mobile phone that you use most often.'



Key Findings

- 72% of respondents report owning their own phone, and another 9% report access to a mobile phone in their household; only about 16% of the population reports never using a mobile phone; (Figure 10).
- Access to mobile phones is essentially universal in Algeria and Senegal (98% each), followed by South Africa, Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya (93% each). Fourteen countries report access rates above 90%. In sharp contrast, Madagascar (44%) and Burundi (49%) both fall below 50%.
- Across the 20 countries for which data is available since Afrobarometer Round 4 (2008-2009), average rates of usage climbed by one third, from 63% of the population with access in 2008, to 83% today.
- Frequency of use has also increased: 44% in 16 countries reported daily use in 2008, compared to 65% in those same countries in Round 5.
- Countries experiencing the largest gains in access from 2008 levels were Burkina Faso, which saw an increase from 46% in 2008 to 90% in 2013, and Zimbabwe, where access increased 40 percentage points, from 51% to 91%, in the same period.
- Only Malagasy report no change; access there remained essentially stagnant at 44%, leaving the country in a distant last place among the 34 countries studied.
- Fifty-nine percent of respondents report using mobile phones to send or receive text messages, and 16% use them to send or receive money or pay bills.
- Kenya's status as a global leader in innovative uses of mobile phones to transfer funds and make payments is confirmed: 71% report using their phones to move money, far surpassing the next closest countries: Tanzania (40%), Liberia (39%), and Sudan (38%).
- Access to the internet is growing much more slowly. In the 20 countries where this question has been asked since 2008, access at least monthly has increased only 4 points, from 11% to 15%¹.

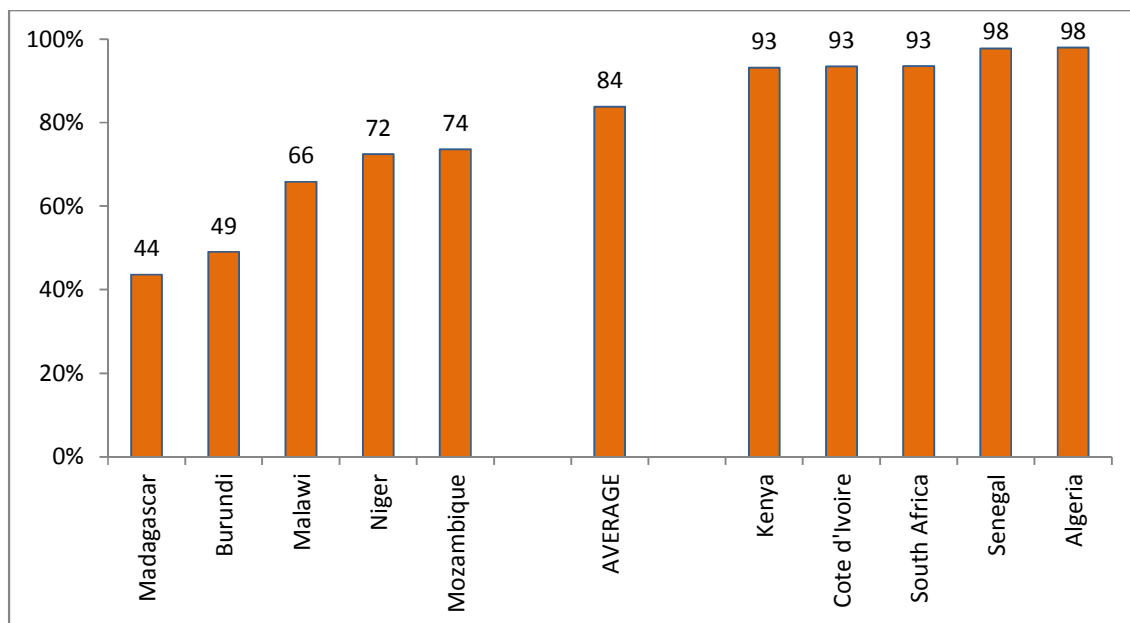
¹ If those who say they have accessed the internet less than once per month are included, the figures increase to 14% in 2008, and 18% in 2011-2013.



- North Africans' internet use far surpasses that of residents in other regions. Roughly one in three (34%) use the internet at least occasionally, compared with less than one in ten (9%) in West Africa.

Charts

Figure 2: Use of mobile phones, 34 countries 2011-2013

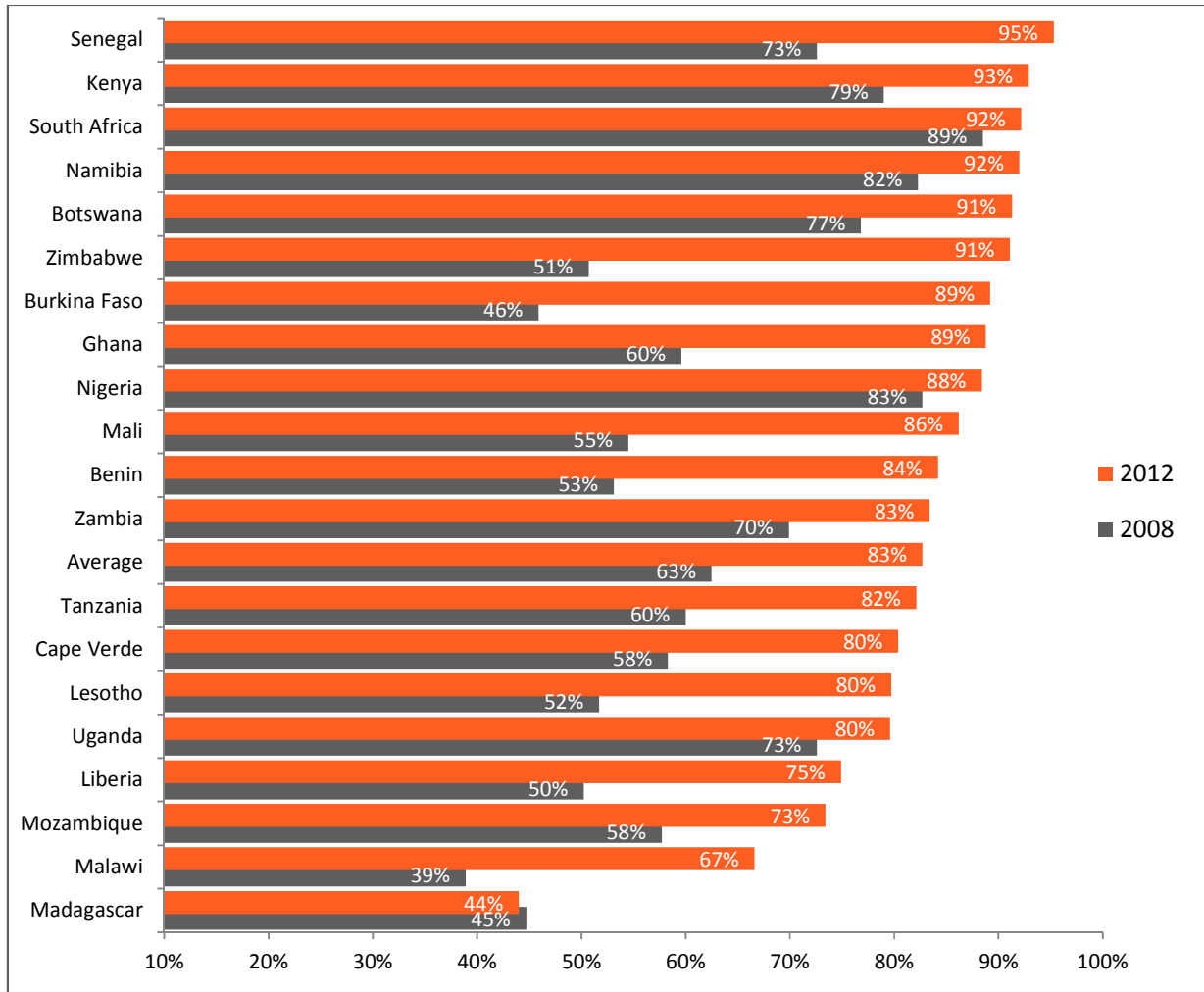


Participants were asked: 'Do you ever use a mobile phone?' (% yes)

* Full results for all countries are available in Annex 3 of the report. Average is for all 34 countries.



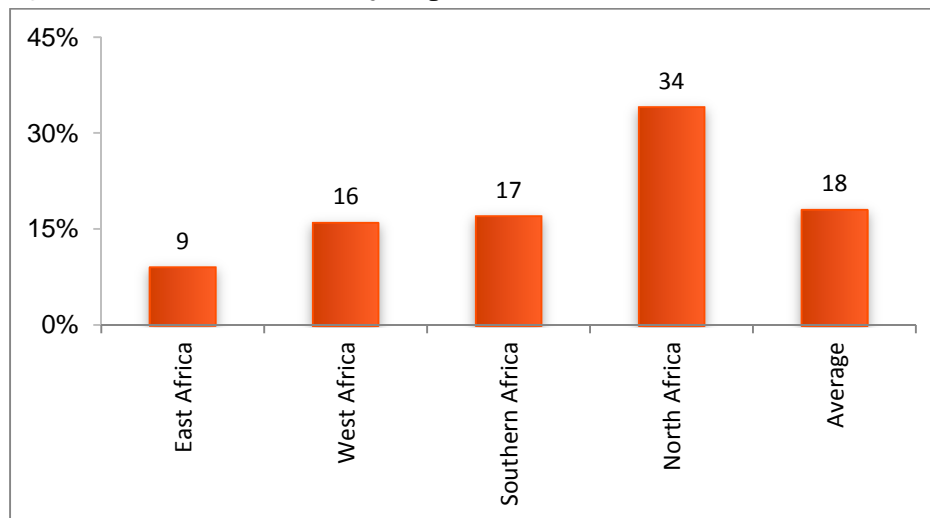
Figure 3: Increases in cellular telephone access/use, 2008-2012, 20 countries



Participants were asked: 'How often do you normally use a mobile phone to make or receive a call?' (% responding that they ever used a mobile phone.)



Figure 4: Use of internet, by region, 34 countries, 2011-2013



Participants were asked: 'How often do you use the internet?' (% using 'a few times a month' or more)

Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer (AB) conducts public opinion surveys that measure citizens' attitudes toward democracy, governance, the economy, leadership, identity, and other related issues. The AB is an independent, non-partisan, African-based network of researchers. The organization aims to give the public a *voice* in policy making by providing high-quality public opinion data to policymakers, civil society organizations, academics, media, donors and investors, and ordinary Africans.

Afrobarometer surveys are based on nationally representative samples. These 34-country results therefore represent the views of approximately three-quarters (76%) of the continent's population. Results from a 35th country, Ethiopia, will be available shortly. The total number of respondents in the 34 countries was 51,605.

Afrobarometer's economic management findings were released in Johannesburg, at the first of seven Afrobarometer release events in seven cities. Survey results on internet usage will be released in Nairobi Oct. 16; data on government services and natural resource management will be presented in Accra on Oct. 30; corruption results will be released in Dakar on Nov. 13; taxation data will be released in Lagos on Nov. 27; and gender findings will be released in Addis Ababa on Dec. 4. Our signature democracy figures will be presented in Bamako on Dec. 12.

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