

## Access to smartphones in Kenya: the research case for mobile as AT



## About

This report presents findings from a study in Kenya that explored **how mobile technology can improve digital inclusion** for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) and Blind and Partially Sighted (BPS) individuals. To test the effectiveness of smartphones as affordable assistive tools, **participants were provided with devices and trained** tailored to their specific needs.

## Findings

- **Digital Skills Improvement:** 78.8% of BPS participants showed significant improvement in digital skills following the intervention.
- **Independence and Privacy:** BPS participants reported notable improvements in independence and privacy through the use of accessibility features.
- **Communication Access:** DHH participants benefited from enhanced communication tools with perceived helpfulness increasing significantly.
- **Accessibility Gaps:** The intervention addressed critical accessibility needs in Kenya, where 90% of people with disabilities in low-income countries lack access to assistive technology.

*"I think it gives you a sense of freedom. You are able to do things independently and freely, and even when you want privacy, when you have an accessible mobile phone, then you don't need people to do things for you. You have your privacy, and you have your independence. I think it's just a positive impact."*

**-Participant quote**

Overall, participants experienced **greater independence, communication, and access to opportunities**, highlighting mobile technology's **potential as a scalable, affordable solution** to bridge accessibility gaps in low-income settings like Kenya.

