

Phone Sharing brings mobile connectivity closer for millions

Given the chance, most people would like to own a mobile phone. However, in many emerging markets lower income consumers face financial barriers that make it impossible to own a mobile phone. But there is one way to increase opportunities for connectivity for these important entry-level consumers – phone sharing.

Phone sharing can take various forms from unofficial sharing between friends, roommates or family members to small businesses that allow consumers to make calls or send text messages for a minimal fee. This enables the lower-income consumer a chance to connect with family and friends without the burden of paying for a device or committing to a network service.

In rural communities throughout emerging markets, phone sharing becomes a way of life. For example, one member of the community owns the mobile phone and subscribes to the network service. Then, other members of the community can take turns using the phone. Nokia has developed unique, easy-to-manage solutions such as cost- and time-tracking to provide the phone's owner with a way to control usage. As well, some of Nokia's mobile phones that have the capacity for multiple phonebooks.

Phone sharing also offers the opportunity for entrepreneurship in many rural areas in emerging markets. Access to connectivity is available through Village Phones, microfinanced small businesses. The Village Phone kiosk also often serves as a meeting point in the village where people gather and communicate.

In urban centres in emerging markets, phone sharing becomes even more entrepreneurial. Enterprising local business owners have even developed mobile phone booths -- bicycles with phones mounted on them -- which can follow the urban flow of people to wherever they need to make calls.

Whether it's in a remote village or in a fast-paced urban centre, phone sharing is making it possible for more people to stay connected – for business or pleasure.

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A photograph of two men in an outdoor setting. The man on the left is wearing a red t-shirt and dark trousers, looking down at a mobile phone held in his hands. The man on the right is wearing a light green striped t-shirt and dark trousers, also looking at the phone. In the background, a light blue van is partially visible. The Nokia logo is overlaid on the right side of the image.

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