



Information Availability & Capability

# Unclear or difficult process to open an account

This barrier refers to account opening requirements and processes that may be cumbersome and prohibitive for some customers typically related to documentation, ID, contracts, and other prerequisites. In some cases, the time to open an account may be longer than anticipated due to lack of transparent communication.

### Why is this barrier important?

Evidence found for this barrier is almost always related to Prerequisites or Social Norms such as access to ID or legal inequalities for opening an account. The lack of access to the foundational elements required to open an account causes the difficult process to open accounts. While there is little evidence pointing to the *process* of opening up an account posing a barrier, the evidence points to the needed elements and documents before opening an account as a barrier.

### Connected Barriers



*Prerequisites*  
 Broader legal constraints  
 Digital/Foundational ID  
 KYC requirements



*Social Norms*  
 All barriers in this category



*Information Availability & Capability*  
 Digital literacy  
 Basic literacy and numeracy

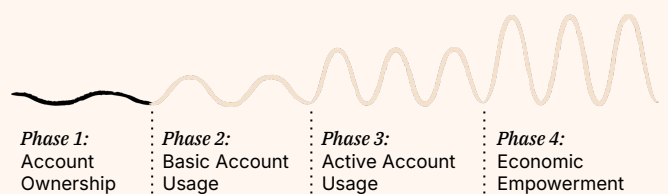


*Product & Service Quality*  
 Navigability of user interface of the digital product

### Most Relevant Segments



### Customer Journey Relevance





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### Key evidence relevant to this barrier

- A survey conducted by FINCA DRC revealed that “women have less information on financial products compared to men” as shown in the inability to name more than one or two basic products.” 22% of surveyed women were unable to name more than two products from each category (loans, savings, mobile banking and insurance) versus 14% of surveyed men ([2020](#)).
- A World Bank field note ([2018](#)) states:

“In Uganda, women lacked information on the sources of credit. When asked why they borrowed from a particular source, the most quoted reason by women was that it was the only available option – always by a higher percentage than men. When asked why they didn’t use a financial institution, 35% of women indicated that they didn’t know about it – 10% more than men. This finding points to financial education and informational campaigns about financial options as a fundamental way to drive up the level of financial inclusion for women, at least in the case of Uganda.”
- USAID’s [The Role Of Trust In Increasing Women’s Access To Finance Through Digital Technologies \(2018\)](#) states:

“The USAID-funded mSTAR program in Bangladesh worked to migrate USAID Implementation Partners to DFS. This included programs working with women entrepreneurs. In its work, mSTAR took on the role of helping to develop end user trust in DFS. Although mSTAR found that most program staff owned mobile phones and were aware of mobile money, most did not use it or limited their use to basic products and services such as personal transfers. mSTAR cites the broad lack of awareness of the intricacies of DFS and limited use as generating a lack trust.”
- “One of the most common reasons for women not using DFS is the lack of knowledge and understanding of how these services function and the benefits of using them. Particularly, in MENA DFS are still new and trust and lack of awareness of such services limit uptake by women.” ([Seep, 2020](#)).
- 38.3% of respondents of FSD Kenya’s [FinAccess Household Survey \(2021\)](#) cited “lack of information” as the reason for not having a savings and credit co-operative society (SACCO) account.
- The IFC’s survey on the women’s mobile financial services market in Bangladesh offers the following evidence ([2018](#)):
  - Only 16% of all women interviewed feel confident in their ability to make optimal financial decisions .
  - Only 10% of female MFS users know how to change their personal identification numbers (PINs).
  - Only 20% of female MFS users understand the terms and conditions of using MFS.
  - Only 10% of female MFS users compared service providers before choosing one.
  - Only 10% of female MFS users indicate that they are aware of their rights as users.



## Exemplar

### *Narrowing the Gender Gap in Mobile Banking - bKash in Bangladesh*

In recent years, Bangladesh has also been home to several large, innovative providers of mobile banking services, however, gender gaps persist in access to these services. Lee et al. conducted two connected field experiments in Bangladesh designed to examine gender gaps in the adoption and use of mobile banking, and estimate their broader impacts. "The study focused on migrants and their families, one of the main targets for mobile banking in

Bangladesh. Members of the sample were mostly very poor and had limited education, however, mobile banking providers had done little to encourage their adoption." The first experiment examined the impact of training programs on the enrollment and use and bKash, while the second experiment addressed the role of family networks directly in the uptake and use of mobile banking (Lee et al., 2021).

#### Key Activities

- Identifying 815 household-migrant pairs - "migrants in Dhaka who had left Bangladesh's northwest in search of jobs in the capital and the migrants' families [most often their parents and siblings] who remained in the rural northwest and were dependent on the migrants' remittances."
- Use of an "encouragement design in which households were randomly assigned to receive a short training session on how to enroll in and use bKash, as well as receiving basic assistance with the enrollment process."
- Randomly assigned a sample of migrants to "receive training and marketing about bKash before their originating families in the rural northwest were introduced to bKash. Another sample of migrants receive[d] training and marketing after their originating families. When this second group of migrants made their choices, they had the possibility of knowing whether their families had also decided to adopt or not."

#### Outcomes/results

- "The training treatment increased the adoption and use of mobile banking by migrants, with increases by women of similar magnitude to those by men."
- "While adoption rates are similar for women and men, active use of bKash is lower for female migrants than for male (61% versus 71% respectively)."
- "Exposure to training, averaged across men and women, sharply increased the use of bKash accounts. While 21% of the control group used bKash at the endline, the treatment group's rate of bKash use was triple that level (47.5% higher)."
- "The increase in bKash usage by similar amounts for men and women suggests that the relatively low rates of technology use by women can be countered by effective interventions."
- "While the training experiment increased bKash adoption and use, impacts on levels of remittances were smaller for female than male migrants, consistent with lower earnings by female migrants."
- "Female migrants exposed to any family-network treatment were 15% more likely to adopt bKash, thereby closing the digital gender gap, and the overall impact for female migrants is statistically significant at the 10% level."



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### Key enabling environment factors for intervention

- “The experiments took place against a backdrop of high take-up of bKash; the adoption rate for the sample that received training was 68%.”
- Good brand recognition for bKash and high general interest from population sampled.
- Migrant population sample was employed, participated in a DFID-funded training/employment program.
- “99% of individuals sampled had access to a mobile phone.”
- Young migrant population, open to technology, for which reliably sending remittances back to their rural-based families is a key obligation.

### Key design elements and principles that led to successful outcomes

Exposing female migrants to marketing messaging along with messages stating their family/network’s interest and use of mobile money, even if this wasn’t necessarily the case for their families.

### Potential for scale/replicability

Potential to scale and replicate messaging regarding family and networks use of DFS in addition to pairing DFS launch and marketing with training on it’s adoption and use.

### Challenges encountered during the program

Lee et al. found that both women and men in the training experiment reported worsened self-reported health (physical and mental). “For women, those challenges added to a broader set of health challenges reported by women across the sample, in treatment and control groups. These unintended consequences of technology adoption also reflect a wider set of gender gaps that deserve attention.”

### Recommendations from the research

Evidence shows that the technology is embedded within a broader set of social and economic constraints and possibilities that are attached to wider inequalities. The research results on remittances highlight the need to target systemic inequalities and gender gap in wages.

### Additional Exemplars

- Mobile Money Cash Transfer Experiment in Niger
- Mobile Phone and Livelihoods of Women Project
- Paving the Way for Women from the Inside Out (TARA Program)
- Mobile Financial Services for Female Entrepreneurs (MFS) Program
- Business Women Connect Program
- Mobile-Linked Bank Accounts
- The Impact of a Formal Savings Intervention in Sri Lanka
- BETA Savings Account in Nigeria

GRID Impact and SIA’s analysis revealed that this barrier along with 11 others require further research and examination as to how they affect the customer experience, other barriers and overall WEE-FI. More in-depth analysis can be found in the larger Barriers & Exemplars Analysis compendium deck.