

Improving the livelihoods of low-income, informal shopkeepers and their dependents, while delivering health outcomes to their customers.



CASE STUDY | U Join



PROGRAMME DETAILS

- FUNDED BY:** TRANSFORM
- PARTNERS:** UNILEVER KENYA, Safaricom, mezzanine, vodafone, MasterCard, EY
- COUNTRY:** Kenya
- DURATION:** 2016 – ongoing

OVERVIEW

U Join is a mobile-enabled supply and demand digital platform for low-income shopkeepers (called dukas) in Nairobi. It aims to deliver sustainable, large scale social and financial impact in the following ways:

- **Building the businesses** of low-income shopkeepers via education and access to services
- **Delivering health outcomes** to their customers through demand generation, behaviour change interventions and affordable health products.
- **Increasing sales, and brand loyalty** as well as delivery of social marketing and social mission for corporate partners, through a scalable mobile-enabled digital platform.

THE CHALLENGE

More than 61% of the world's employed population – two billion people – earn their livelihoods in the informal sector, with 93% of the world's informal employment occurring in emerging and developing countries. 86% of employment in sub-Saharan Africa is informal and 80% of household retail is delivered via informal retailers. Yet informal retailers face complex challenges that prevent them from growing their business, stabilising the financial status of their business and their household income, and delivering a high level of service to their customers.

Consumers at the base of the pyramid (BoP) face their own complex set of challenges, including lack of access to reliable health information, quality products and services. They often struggle to afford everyday essentials, such as food, medicine, hygiene and household products.

The chaotic and disconnected "grey space" of the informal retail sector also represents significant challenges for the corporate consumer goods and pharma companies who operate in these markets. They are often unable to track data on informal retail sales, regulate quality or access the BoP for research, marketing or delivery of social mission goals.

THE SOLUTION

Every1Mobile has developed a digital supply and demand platform that builds the business capacity and income-earning potential of informal retailers in the global south, whilst delivering health outcomes to their customers, directly through the mobile phones in their hands. Figure 1 provides an overview of the 3 core pillars of the platform:



RESULTS ACHIEVED SO FAR

The pilot year results show the potential for U Join to enable participating low-income shopkeepers to nearly double their sales growth. Our expansion potential can drive social and financial inclusion to millions of consumers and retailers.

- **3,850** FMCG shopkeepers in Nairobi
- **25,000** consumers signed up for the loyalty scheme to receive e-Vouchers
- **150,000** e-Vouchers redeemed by consumers
- **8 business and financial skills course modules live**
- Internal impact evaluation demonstrates increased revenues of shopkeepers of up to **25%**, increased confidence in mothers to make healthy choices, and increased sales of corporate partner products.
- **3,000+** mothers and mothers to be accessing health and hygiene support, information and vouchered products via “sister” digital consumer-facing platform, U Afya.
- **Key partner and stakeholder relationships** established (Unilever Kenya; Mastercard; Safaricom; EY).



CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

“U Join as a blueprint for new behaviour change is clear: it is market-based, addressing multiple behaviours and using digital technology to reach out to communities.”

- Unilever



CUSTOMER TESTIMONIAL

“U Join has helped me get more customers and increase my sales and stock orders. Since I joined U Join, I have been able to order new stock twice a week compared to the past where I would order only once a week and the sales were low. I have been able to expand in terms of different products stocked at my shop and my customers are happy. I have also learnt a lot about business through the tips U Join gives us especially on customer service.”

- Mama Peter Olympic Kibera

Watch the short film

ABOUT OUR COMPANY

EveryIMobile is a digital and mobile services provider dedicated to improving lives through digital solutions - at scale. Founded in 2010, we have led and supported more than 50 projects in multiple sub-Saharan countries for clients and funders including Unilever, UK Department for International Development (DFID), USAID, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the UN, the World Bank, ONE, Old Mutual, Mozilla Foundation and the EU.

We are proud to be identified by DFID as one of three UK “cutting edge” Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs).

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