



# Strategic community investment

A refreshed approach



# Driving sustainable development through our core business

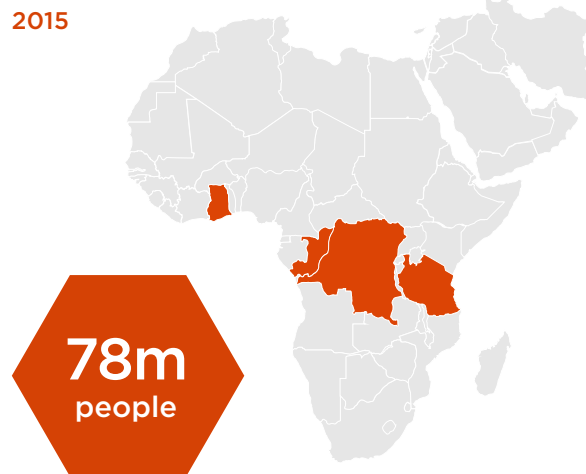
At Helios Towers, our purpose is to drive the growth of mobile communications across Africa and the Middle East. As a leading telecoms infrastructure company, the greatest impact we can have on communities is through enabling mobile connectivity, which can drive all 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).

## Enabling mobile connectivity

Our infrastructure-sharing model enables mobile network operators (MNOs) to roll out and densify mobile coverage more quickly and cost-effectively and with a lower environmental impact. In turn, this means that individuals and communities in our markets can experience the life-changing benefits of mobile more rapidly.

### Population under the coverage footprint of our sites

2015



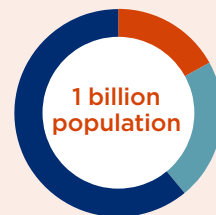
2021



## Bridging the digital divide<sup>1</sup>

We are tackling a vast mobile infrastructure and connectivity gap. According to the industry body GSMA, over half of the population of Sub-Saharan Africa are not mobile subscribers. We are addressing this gap by growing our business, delivering connectivity and improving access to a mobile network and mobile internet.

### Mobile internet coverage and usage gap in Sub-Saharan Africa



Of the 1 billion population:

- 17% are not covered by mobile internet
- 22% are mobile internet subscribers
- 61% are covered but do not use mobile internet services

### Rural-urban and gender gaps



Rural populations are **54% less likely to use mobile internet** than urban populations



Women are **37% less likely to use mobile internet** than men

<sup>1</sup> [GSMA The State of Mobile Internet Connectivity 2022](#)



# Focusing on strategic community investment

Our business of advancing mobile connectivity positively contributes to a number of fundamental human rights and freedoms by enabling access to life-enhancing services, education and healthcare – particularly for some of the most vulnerable communities in the countries where we operate.

As part of our Sustainable Business Strategy, we will focus on strategic community investment – using our core skills and expertise to help our communities benefit from the life-enhancing services made available to them through mobile connectivity<sup>2</sup>.

## Our impact areas



<sup>2</sup> Our community investment strategy has been informed by GSMA research on mobile internet connectivity as well as our Sustainable Business Strategy, which was developed with significant engagement from internal and external stakeholders.

<sup>3</sup> IFC Strategic Community Investment: [A Good Practice Handbook for Companies Doing Business in Emerging Markets](#)

## What is strategic community investment?

### International Finance Corporation (IFC) definition:

Voluntary contributions or actions by companies to help communities in their areas of operation address their development priorities, and take advantage of opportunities created by private investment – in ways that are sustainable and support business objectives.

While the biggest contribution a company normally makes is in the positive impact of the business itself – through employment, contracts, its supply chain and payment of taxes – voluntary community investment programmes offer an important additional avenue for enhancing positive impacts and socioeconomic benefits<sup>3</sup>.



# Education, skills and digital inclusion



## Societal need

Despite the progress made in recent years, many African children are still out of school, and some who are in school are not acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills, with the poorest children being the most excluded<sup>4</sup>.

In terms of digital inclusion, nearly 20% of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa doesn't have access to mobile internet. Over 50% that have access do not use mobile internet.

Significant gender and rural-urban gaps also persist. Women in Sub-Saharan Africa are 37% less likely to use mobile internet than men, while rural communities are 60% less likely to use mobile internet than those living in urban areas<sup>5</sup>.

## Our vision for impact

To bridge the digital divide, we engage with schools on education and information and communications technology (ICT) skills improvement projects.

As women and rural populations are significantly less likely to use mobile internet, we will prioritise projects that drive positive impact for these groups and communities.

## Corresponding SDGs



### SDG 4 Quality education

- **Target 4.4** – By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship



### SDG 5 Gender equality

- **Target 5.b** – Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women



### SDG 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure

- **Target 9.c** – Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries

<sup>4</sup> Transforming Education in Africa.pdf (unicef.org)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gsma.com/r/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/The-State-of-Mobile-Internet-Connectivity-Report-2021.pdf>



# Access to power and amenities



## Societal need

Only 47% of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa have access to electricity<sup>6</sup>. Even those who have access to electricity are often dependent on unreliable grid connections. Lack of access to electricity represents a major barrier for mobile subscribers when it comes to conducting business and maintaining social connectivity.

## Our vision for impact

To help people use their phones and benefit from mobile connectivity, we have free phone-charging points for community use at a number of our sites where grid power is not readily available. As part of our community investment strategy, we will prioritise providing access to clean power and amenities, in particular for rural communities that are currently off-grid.

## Corresponding SDGs



### SDG 7 Affordable and clean energy

- **Target 7.1** – By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services
- **Target 7.2** – By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix

<sup>6</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.ELC.ACCS.ZS?locations=ZG-EU-US>



# Climate and carbon

## Societal need

Of the 10 countries that are most vulnerable to climate change, seven are in Africa<sup>7</sup>.

In 2020, just 9% of all energy generated in Africa came from renewable sources<sup>8</sup>.

The need for better and more abundant energy is evident in many walks of life: from households relying on dirty fuels for cooking to farmers lacking energy to harvest their crops, and from health clinics struggling to power operating rooms to businesses contending with power outages<sup>9</sup>.

Encouraging cleaner energy and building resilience to the impacts of climate change is critical for the wellbeing of our communities.

## Our vision for impact

We want to encourage utility providers to connect more of our communities to the grid to reduce their reliance on fuel.

A number of our markets have also been involved in tree planting, which not only helps to mitigate the effects of climate change but also supports the transition to a regenerative economy. Furthermore, we will explore carbon reduction and sequestration projects, supporting climate action locally.

## Corresponding SDGs



### SDG 7 Affordable and clean energy

- **Target 7.3** – By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency



### SDG 13 Climate action

- **Target 13.1** – Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries
- **Target 13.3** – Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.afdb.org/en/cop25/climate-change-africa>

<sup>8</sup> [This is the state of renewable energy in Africa right now | World Economic Forum \(weforum.org\)](https://www.weforum.org/publications/this-is-the-state-of-renewable-energy-in-africa-right-now/)

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2022/Jan/IRENA\\_Market\\_Africa\\_2022.pdf](https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2022/Jan/IRENA_Market_Africa_2022.pdf)



# Our investment process

Our business and our people contribute to community-based organisations and initiatives through investments of time, funds and services. Our approach is to focus on long-term strategic projects and partnerships that align with our community investment strategy and our corporate values of Integrity, Partnership and Excellence.

We look to support projects and organisations that are aligned with at least one of the three pillars of our community strategy, while supporting rural communities and/or women.

Prior to making, or agreeing to make, a contribution to a community, our teams must submit a completed proposal, including clear objectives, deliverables, monitoring and evaluation. Each request is considered on a case-by-case basis and no contribution may be made until the final written approval of the Regional CEO.

We follow a strict process of due diligence before approving any community investment proposal.

We check if it is in accordance with our [Code of Conduct](#) and Integrity Policy. We also conduct due diligence on any third parties we may be working with.

Project implementation is led by the OpCo Community Champion and the cross-functional working group.

Impact measurement is key to understanding how we are creating value for the communities we serve and supporting socioeconomic growth and development. We will set out clear metrics to measure the impact of each project and explore opportunities for colleague involvement.

## Governance

Our Group Sustainability function supports the implementation of the community investment strategy. Each of our operating companies has a designated Community Champion responsible for facilitating project proposals, review, approvals and monitoring. They also record and report impact measurement and share progress as part of a quarterly Community Champions Forum.

Our community engagement strategy also supports:

- the UN SDGs; and
- the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact, of which we are a signatory.

The Group Head of Sustainability reports to the Board and the Audit Committee on progress through regular sustainable business updates.

## Community project review and approval process



## Donations policy

In addition to developing and implementing strategic community investment projects as described above, Helios Towers does occasionally identify additional opportunities and organisations to support as part of our community investment. Donations are contributions in money or in kind to a charitable or community organisation without the expectation of financial return.

Examples of donations include emergency relief donations to recognised charities, or employees volunteering time to charities or community organisations.

Helios Towers does not allow or tolerate donations being used for corrupt purposes or to obtain undue business influence. We do not make corporate political donations. To engage in any donation activities, we have processes and rules to follow:

- The proposed donation must be in line with our values and the principles set out in our [Code of Conduct](#) and must be permissible under all applicable laws and regulations.
- The donation must be made to a bona fide organisation and not to an individual; there must be no possibility that the proposed donation could be seen as a means of trying to bribe a third party.
- The proposed sponsor partner or beneficiary organisation must go through third party due diligence prior to approval.

- There must be a written request for and an agreement to give donations between the company and the recipient organisation, clearly stating the purpose of the relationship and the value of the donation.
- The donation agreement must be drawn up and approved by the Legal team and signed off by the relevant Helios Towers entity CEO, or responsible officer.
- All donation activity must be accurately recorded in the company's books and records.
- In respect of donations provided, Helios Towers must obtain acknowledgement of receipt from the recipient organisation of the funds or items provided, together with confirmation that they are being utilised for the purposes requested. Helios Towers also retains the right to audit the use of any funds/items provided.

We do not support political donations or contributions in support of any political parties or organisations or community investment activities that are not in the spirit of supporting all religions and faiths.