

**Orange** | GSMA Thrive Africa

**Promoting  
digital  
equality  
in Africa**



In 2000, fewer than 2% of people in Africa were able to access the telecoms network. By 2015, that figure had soared to 60%, meaning that Africa achieved in just 15 years what it took France 85 years to do. Digital technology is enabling countries on the continent to move away from traditional industrial models, take shortcuts and ramp up economic growth. As a result, new, innovative business models are being developed, the entrepreneur community is booming and mobile technology is playing a decisive role in opening essential services to a considerable proportion of the population who previously did not have access. Nevertheless, access to digital tools differs significantly between countries on the continent. Indeed, isolated, poor or politically unstable regions, particularly in Central Africa, have very limited internet access compared with more developed countries in the north, south and west. Furthermore, marked inequalities persist due to geographic coverage, financial resources, know-how and gender. To successfully bring about the digital revolution, it is crucial to ensure essential digital services and the benefits they provide are accessible to all. This white paper shines a spotlight on five key ways to promote digital equality.

## Deploy the network for all



### The key

Develop submarine and land-based infrastructure to put in place the networks needed to successfully bring about rapid digital transformation in Africa.

**Connectivity, especially broadband, is a very effective growth driver for African countries. The continent took three years to move from 3G to 4G, whereas Europe needed 10 years to make the shift. Also, it is expected that people in Africa will own 1 billion smartphones by 2025, which will further boost mobile data traffic. To meet growing connectivity needs, we have to expand and improve network capacity, which will require substantial investment.**

**In order to reach this target**, Orange invests approximately €1 billion each year to develop networks on the continent. Already available in 17 of the 18 countries in which the group operates, the 4G mobile network is being actively deployed with 8,000 new 4G sites to be set up by 2023. As part of this process, Orange is innovating by installing pylons that weigh less and consume less energy to provide coverage in rural areas and antennas in vaster regions.

While the expansion of mobile networks is essential, broadband networks have also proved a very effective growth driver, which was further confirmed throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. In June 2020, the number of very high-speed fixed broadband customers surged in the MEA region to 550,000.

Furthermore, Orange is continuing to invest in its infrastructure outside France. A new backbone made up of a combination of land and submarine fibre optic cables is being deployed to connect eight countries in west Africa. This project complements other recent investments in MainOne next generation submarine cables connecting Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire to Europe.



### Orange supports the growth of businesses and the digital ecosystem in Africa

The B2B market is a core growth driver for Orange in Africa. Orange is investing heavily in fibre and 4G to help SMEs to grow their business and to expand Orange's capacity to handle the specific needs of major corporations and institutions. Orange is also extending its range of solutions – hosting IT apps, cybersecurity, remote working and smart services that harness the Internet of Things – to respond to the business challenges its customers face and to support them as they undergo their own digital transformations.



# 02

## Market handsets for every budget

**In Africa, the smartphone penetration rate remains low – 48%<sup>1</sup> in West Africa and 44%<sup>2</sup> in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2018 – as the cost of buying a handset is still too high for many.**



### The key

Design offers that are accessible to all, both in terms of price and features, for handsets, contracts and financing solutions.



## Encourage digital adoption



### The key

Teach people to use digital tools and expand digital education for all.

**Digital transformation has a major impact in all areas of the African economy, as well as in many professions. On the continent, where 50% of the population is below the age of 20, it is essential the younger generations learn to use new technology, to help them in both education and employment. Indeed, by 2030, 230 million jobs in Sub-Saharan Africa will require the use of digital tools<sup>3</sup>.**

**O**range draws on its core expertise to provide quality educational content that is accessible to all, promoting social and economic integration. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burkina Faso and Senegal, the group has launched mobile offers collating educational content in partnership with leading online learning platforms. To open education services to an even wider audience, Orange increasingly establishes partnerships with e-learning providers such as Virtual Universities in Senegal and Tunisia, the CNED and edX (the world's leading provider of MOOCs).

The Orange Foundation is deploying Digital Schools, a programme that offers educational tablets to primary and secondary schools. The idea is to give children fun and stimulating educational content, in particular in rural areas where schools may lack resources. Digital Schools is now working with 825 schools, thereby benefiting 200,000 pupils in 16 countries.

Teaching younger generations to use digital technology is absolutely necessary to transform jobs and business models. To support this process, the first Orange Digital Centers (ODC) were inaugurated in Tunisia and Senegal in 2019. These innovation and teaching units provide services free of charge to help people develop their business or digital know-how. ODCs include a coding school to teach people to become proficient in programming languages and to manage group projects, as well as a Solidarity FabLab, where people learn to produce and prototype ideas using digital tools. By 2025, all Orange's operating countries will have their own ODC to train a vast network and encourage people to share best practices.



### Guaranteeing access to education throughout Covid-19

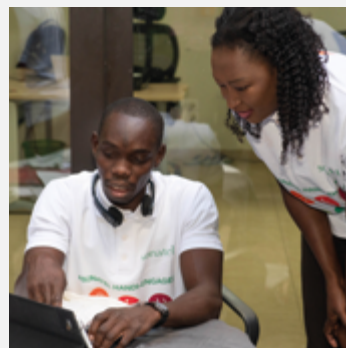
To enable young people to continue following the school curriculum with as little disruption as possible throughout the pandemic, Orange has offered them a free mobile connection to a range of school and university content. For example, in Guinea, the price of the Education Pass has been divided by seven compared with a standard internet pass to allow primary and secondary school pupils and students to continue their education. The Pass gives access to an online platform where people can remotely follow lessons prepared by renowned schools and universities. Furthermore, to compensate for the closure of schools and universities, 15 of our subsidiaries offered free connections to free educational content in French, English and Arabic. Through this scheme, over 2 million people signed up to Education contracts.

# 03



# 04

## Boost the entrepreneur community in Africa



### The entrepreneur community mobilised to combat Covid-19

Following the outbreak of Covid-19, a number of initiatives were developed to combat the spread of the virus. When the crisis hit, our Solidarity FabLabs starting designing items required, for example, by producing protective visors for healthcare workers in Tunisia. In Côte d'Ivoire, five Orange Fab start-ups joined forces to develop the Anticoro app to help people diagnose symptoms themselves or ask for help using geolocation.



#### The key

Design and develop digital tools to meet the needs of young entrepreneurs to simplify their business models, encourage creativity and research, simplify transactions and accelerate value creation across the continent.

**The entrepreneur community in Africa is booming. The figures speak for themselves – 72% of young people in Africa are interested in becoming entrepreneurs<sup>4</sup> and 22% of the working-age population will start or has started their own business<sup>5</sup>, meaning the continent has the highest rate of entrepreneurs in the world! The movement is flourishing, and digital technology has a fundamental role to play. Start-ups in Africa raised over \$2 billion in 2019 (an increase of 74% on 2018)<sup>6</sup>. Digital tools are central to the needs of entrepreneurs in Africa to offer them connectivity, payments solutions, training, marketing and communication.**

**O**range supports the most promising start-ups every step along the way by offering training, investment, mentoring and incubation. Strongly rooted in the local region, Orange Digital Centers foster ties with the local economy to enrich their programmes and connect students with entrepreneurs. In addition to the training courses they provide (see key #3), ODCs also include a start-up incubator known as Orange Fab. Start-ups receive support over a three-month period to develop their business. Certain start-ups also have the opportunity to develop national and international partnerships with one or more entities from the Group.

ODCs also connect entrepreneurs with Orange Ventures Africa, the Group's investment fund launched in 2019, which is allocated a budget of €50 million and is already helping to fund five start-ups in Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria and Ethiopia. In 2020, Orange Ventures Africa launched the "MEA Seed Challenge" to fund the most promising start-ups in Africa and the Middle East. At the end of this first edition, seven start-ups will be chosen to receive investment of between \$50,000 and \$150,000.

To identify young entrepreneurs, Orange organises competitions such as the Orange Social Venture Prize (17 countries in Africa and the Middle East), the Linguère Digital Challenge (Senegal), the Orange Summer Challenge (Tunisia) and a number of hackathons. The Orange Social Venture Prize in Africa and the Middle East celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020, recognising 51 national projects and five international projects, and awarding two special prizes (the Women's prize and a Digital Inclusion prize).

Furthermore, Orange shines a spotlight on start-ups by inviting them to international fairs such as Africacom, Africa's largest telco, media and technology event; VivaTech, the world's rendezvous for start-ups and leaders to celebrate innovation; and Women in Africa, which champions the continent's next generation of female entrepreneurs.

# 05

## Innovate to provide essential services



#### The key

Harness digital technology to design and develop innovative services to satisfy the essential needs of people in Africa to improve their day-to-day lives.

**Digital technology can act as a major driver of social transformation for countries in Africa. Although mobile technology is already widespread, access to certain essential services remains an obstacle for a significant proportion of the population in Africa.**

- **Energy: 645 million people in Africa do not have access to electricity<sup>7</sup>, i.e. 50% of the population. On average, electricity costs up to three times more in Africa than in Europe or the US.**
- **Health: in Africa, there is less than one doctor for every 1,000 people<sup>8</sup>.**
- **Banking and insurance: the informal sector accounts for 80% of economic activity in certain countries in Africa<sup>9</sup>.**
- **Agriculture: the population in Africa will rise from 1.2 billion today to more than 2.5 billion by 2050<sup>10</sup>, meaning there will be twice as many people to feed.**

### Health

Digital health in Africa is expected to increase 30% over the coming years<sup>11</sup>. Collecting data in real time enables public health bodies to deliver suitable and timely responses, even in the most hard-to-reach areas. Digital technology is also key in supporting healthcare workers, for example by raising awareness of public health issues, using SMS alerts to promote prevention and facilitating remote healthcare services such as telemedicine. In partnership with the Moroccan Ministry of Health and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Orange launched an eHealth pilot project to improve patient care.

### Agriculture

Africa represents the largest reserve of arable land in the world<sup>12</sup>. By 2030, it is expected that 200 million farmers in Africa will be using digital technology<sup>13</sup>. In 2016, to help the continent rise to this challenge, Orange launched mAgri, a mobile service for smallholder farmers, in partnership with Brastorne Enterprises. Brastorne is a young social impact company based in Botswana that combines a range of mobile technology to offer disadvantaged communities access to information and markets at low prices.

### Access to energy

Improving access to energy represents a highly effective way to drive growth in Africa where 60% of the population does not enjoy access to a reliable energy source<sup>14</sup>. As a telecoms operator, Orange is able to provide energy-efficient solar power equipment, making it possible for a wider population to study, work, enjoy entertainment and charge devices and appliances without having to leave home. Solar kits with or without energy-efficient TVs were installed in over 20,000 homes in off-grid areas in Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Madagascar.

### Mobile financial services

For over 10 years, digital technology has been improving access to banking services. This trend is reflected in particular in the success of Orange Money, a mobile money transfer and payment service. Since the service was launched in 2008, millions of people have been able to conduct financial transactions through our quick, secure and reliable service. Now, the focus has shifted to making financial services more widely available. That's why, in July 2020, Orange launched Orange Bank Africa in Senegal, a fully mobile and digital bank offering savings and micro-credit products that allow people to borrow amounts upwards of 5,000 francs CFA (around €7.50) using just their mobile. Any Orange Money customer who meets the eligibility criteria can open an account with Orange Bank Africa.

7. World Bank, 2018 | 8. World Health Organization, 2018 | 9. World Bank, 2020 | 10. Bearing Point, Africa's new green gold, 2019 | 11. Tech Care For All, 2019 | 12. Food and Agriculture Organization | 13. The Digitalisation of African Agriculture Report 2018-2019, The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation | 14. State of Electricity Access Report, 2017



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