



Using IVR to reach and empower more women in Mozambique

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The Women IN Business (WIN) program has focused its work in the media sector to improve the image of female micro-entrepreneurs and broadcast gender-sensitive information so that women acquire the confidence and information they need to start and expand their businesses, and men's attitudes towards women will change for the better.

As part of its media initiatives, WIN used Interactive Voice Response (IVR) as a way to disseminate content relevant to women's economic empowerment to women and men micro-entrepreneurs. This blog post reflects on the efficacy of IVR as an information dissemination tool, highlighting results and lessons learned to inform the decision about whether or not it is an appropriate investment for a company or organization.

IVR is an automated phone system that allows users to access information using a voice response system that plays pre-recorded messages and menus. This information is accessible at any time on a toll-free number. At the moment of WIN's intervention, the 3-2-1 service of Viamo (IVR service selected by WIN) was available only to Vodacom users. However, during 2022 the service also became available to Tmcel users and is expected to be available for Movitel users early 2023.

Compared to radio and TV, IVR is a user-led platform which means users have to be actively seeking for the information to access, whereas radio and TV audiences are usually more passive. Additionally, IVR users can control or manage the broadcasting time of the information, given that the information is accessible at any time and can choose to be exposed to as many episodes as they want at once. Given these features, WIN wanted to test this channel as these factors could help in creating a greater impact.

WIN broadcasted on IVR a shortened three-minute version of the 26 episodes of radionovela Janete, which follows the character of Janete, an inspiring women entrepreneur who navigates the challenges of growing a business and limiting gender norms. WIN also broadcasted 26 shortened episodes of the radio and TV program Farmer's School (Escola do Agricultor), where good agricultural practices are shared with a gender lens.

With this partnership, WIN sought to reach female micro-entrepreneurs with an income of two to five dollars per day. By the end of 2021, Janete IVR had reached approximately 7,000 low-income women and 11,000 low-income men in Mozambique.

While this can be considered a good reach within the average of 15,000 to 30,000 monthly users Viamo has in Mozambique when compared to overall size of Mozambican population or the reach of Janete on other channels used (for example, the Radio Janete program reached approximately 38,000 low-income women and 148,000 low-income men), reach could still be maximized. This could be achieved through higher awareness of IVR in Mozambique, through radio or TV spots and other forms of advertising.

Nevertheless, the overall impact of the IVR broadcasting was relatively successful despite the smaller audience size.

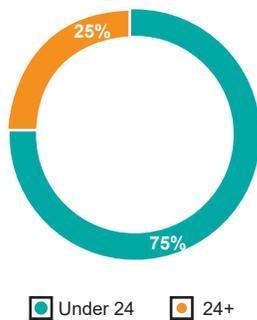
Media Source	Women Economically Empowered	Women who Adopted New Business Practices
Janete IVR	14%	20%
Escola do Agricultor IVR	6%	14%

Note: %s out of total reach of the show

WIN learned several lessons from the IVR pilot:

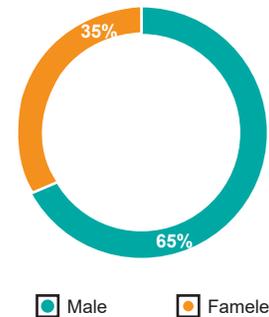
- An investment is required to promote IVR services amongst the target group in Mozambique. Viamo's platform sends an SMS message when a new episode is uploaded which helps retain current Viamo users but does not help grow the overall audience of Viamo in Mozambique. Without a promotional investment, the show's program is entirely dependent upon current customer base or other Viamo customers deciding to make this investment to increase their show's reaches.
- Regarding the audience reached, peak numbers were reported right after episodes were uploaded.
- According to WIN's endline, women listened to fewer episodes on average than men. This may be due to: lower levels of phone ownership, less availability to listen to content, and/or higher sensitivity to the limit on free episodes.
- Most Viamo users in Mozambique are farmers. However, Janete had a larger reach than the Escola de Agricultor content. This may be because users want to listen to content that is outside of their daily activities and utilize the platform more for entertainment than education.
- While the information was made available in three local languages, in addition to Portuguese, approximately 60-70 percent of users listened to content in Portuguese, suggesting that those with exposure to IVR and owning a phone are more literate.
- The following are observations of the profile of IVR users:

Fig 1 Viamo users by Age



The primary users of Viamo in Mozambique appear to be younger generations, with 75 percent of users under 24.

Fig 2 Viamo users by Gender



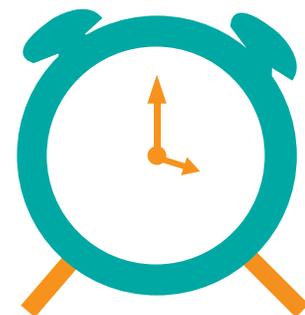
The majority of Viamo users in Mozambique are men, accounting for about 65% of users.

Fig 3 Viamo users by geographical location



Users were relatively spread out geographically, but the majority live in the Maputo, Sofala, and Nampula provinces, which may be related to the fact that Viamo has field activities in these provinces.

Fig 4 Time of access to the content



Women who used the Viamo service mostly accessed the Escola do Agricultor content from 6-10 am and 4-8pm.

- In relation to data measurement and monitoring, the Viamo platform is able to provide some interesting metrics, such as the number of episodes each user listened to in a given month. It also allows users to complete surveys through automated recorded messages that respondents answer using their keypad, but this has limited reach and capacity. Some open-ended questions are allowed, to which users respond using their voice; while this allows the deepening of some insights, engagement is lower than with other close-ended questions and may lead some users to drop out of the survey before completion as they don't understand how to respond to them.
- Several strategies can be used to engage survey respondents, namely giving them incentives to respond to the survey or communicating in advance that they will be called to participate. To ensure that women participate, survey calls should consider the particular routines of women and the best times to reach them. Viamo tested several schedules until the desired number of women was reached.

If an organization or company is looking to implement IVR, there are a few key points to keep in mind:

1. You must ensure that the budget is clear and detailed, stating exactly who will be responsible for each stage of the progress.
2. Identify which mobile network operators are integrated with the service providers.
3. Viamo is solely a dissemination platform, so it is solely the responsibility of the program or organization to develop and produce all content before it can be uploaded and broadcasted in IVR platforms.
4. Have all of the content ready at once for upload since the service provider can charge extra for each upload.
5. Converting radio episodes to IVR takes some time especially if they have a smaller duration or if local language versions are also being used.
6. For Viamo the minimum time the content can be available online is six months.
7. Organizations using IVR should decide in advance a plan for releasing episodes, for example, how many episodes will be released each week or month.
8. Plan to use other media platforms simultaneously to expand your reach and further disseminate your content.