

MOTO-empowering Ugandan women

Motorola's MOTOPOWER initiative provides a solar solution to recharge mobile use in Uganda, while offering women the chance to run their own businesses.



Nikesh Patel, senior sales director for Motorola Africa and Sophie Nansubuga shortly after she received her kiosk on 10 May 2007.

Sophie Nansubuga, 32, is a mother of two and a resident of Kawempe Division. She has been selected to be the first Ugandan MotoWoman. Besides receiving a stock of Motorola phones and basic training on handling the product, arrangements have been with the market authorities in Kawempe to offer a free site for a year for the housing of the kiosk.

Kampala - Motorola has begun the process to select 50 Ugandan women to spearhead the MOTOPOWER solar recharge project that will see them running their own kiosks. The booths will offer free, solar powered mobile phone recharge services for Motorola phones, powering up to 20 phones at a time. Each kiosk is charged 55W DC inverted solar panel.

While waiting for their phone to charge, customers will also be able to browse and purchase a variety of available Motorola handsets and operator SIM cards. In addition to sales, MOTOPOWER owners will generate additional income through the provision of on-site repair services and can also operate as a local "phone booth" for those who do not own or have access to a mobile phone.

MOTOPOWER it is designed to empower entrepreneurial women, by providing them with the foundations to manage their own sustainable businesses. The team will be provided with an introductory business start-up package including four Motorola handsets and a business skills training course.

"The MOTOPOWER initiative is the first of its kind to exist for women in Africa. Through this program, we are giving women the opportunity to run their own business, learn valuable entrepreneurial skills and generate a positive income," said Nikesh Patel, senior sales director, Mobile Devices business, Motorola Africa.

Uganda experiences one of the lowest levels of electricity in Africa. Deploying the kiosks will alleviate the power constraints currently deterring users from staying connected over long periods.

The Motorola handsets bundled for this scheme include the W208, W220, C123, C118 and the MOTO F3. These handsets feature the 'best of the basics' including SMS functionality, alarm clock, speaker phone, built-in FM radio, extended battery life and intuitive web browsing for easy access to entertainment, organisation and communication.

Motorola's focus on renewable energy sources is also evident further south on the African continent. Motorola is currently running a project in Namibia, with the GSM Association and MTC Namibia, to trial wind and solar power systems to support the African operator's remote GSM cell sites. This is the first customer based trial globally and is running through Q2 and Q3, 2007.

This renewable energy network solution provides a feasible and efficient alternative to using fuel generators when a main grid connection is not available or will take months or years to connect or finally, where electricity tariffs are expected to rise sharply in the next few years. Once installed, the cost of power is almost zero and wind and solar powered cell sites require minimal maintenance, unlike a diesel driven generator which generally requires, at a minimum, a monthly visit for refuelling and they can also be heavily prone to theft.

"Motorola's heritage is steeped in innovative communication solutions and we are constantly working to devise new solutions that will continue connecting the unconnected across the globe," said Ali Amer, vice president, Middle East, Africa and Pakistan, Motorola Networks & Enterprise.

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