

5. Tostan – The Jokko Initiative

In 2009, in a partnership with UNICEF, Tostan added the Jokko Initiative to its core education programme which aims to teach the practical uses of standard mobile phone functions including the use of SMS texting as a post-literacy practice tool.

Tostan found that many of its programme participants had limited access to mobile phones, and limited knowledge of the range of its uses. This observation was coupled with the realisation that writing and receiving SMS text messages was an attractive and inclusive way to practice basic literacy skills.

Tostan uses mobile phones primarily as a teaching tool to teach and reinforce literacy, organisation and management skills and secondly as a social mobilisation tool to help to build local development initiatives. The Tostan initiative covered 15,000 participants from 2008 to 2011 from approximately 400 communities across Senegal and Mauritania.

The project is based on solar powered suitcases which acts as telecentres where customers can charge their mobile phones or purchase small amounts of credit through a phone-to-phone transfer system known as Seddo (from Orange) or Izi (from Tigo).

Implemented in partnership with the Rural Energy Foundation, a Dutch NGO, the Jokko Telecentre has three main aims:

- To provide a sustainable source of electricity to charge cell phone during and after the Tostan programme
- To act as a social enterprise for rural communities
- To provide a financial base for awareness raising activities organised by the Community Management Committees (CMC)

Each Telecentre consists of a locally assembled portable wooden suitcase, equipped with a solar panel and multiple outlets where phones and other small electrical appliances can be charged. CMC members can carry the suitcase around their villages and to surrounding communities, charging up to 15 phones per day. Weekly rural markets can be a particularly profitable location.

Figure 23: Solar Powered Suitcase and Community involved in the Jokko Initiative



Source: Tostan

Learnings from the pilot

The telecentres were piloted in 7 villages in the Velingara area of Southern Senegal. The pilot was launched with a four-day training workshop where participants learnt and practiced technical, social, and business management skills relevant to operating a Jokko Telecentre. CMC participants carried out a feasibility study, and developed a foundation in the basics of solar energy. The training culminated in an inauguration of the programme in Sare Dialo, one of the pilot villages, which served as a model for the 6 other villages which launched their own telecentres during the following week.

The monitoring process took place in two main sections. First, in the weeks following the training workshop, two Tostan supervisors visited each village to carry out support. The second phase of the monitoring process was a capitalisation seminar where the Jokko team, with support of staff members from the Tostan Kolda office, visited two villages and held a seminar, with a more qualitative discussion of the successes and

challenges of the telecentres.

Some of the indicators covered in the questionnaires included:

- Price of recharging one phone by the CMC (usually XOF100, US\$0.20)
- Number of phones charged during the last week (usually up to 105)
- Number of days per week that the CMC operated the telecentres
- Number of different villages visited by the CMC per week
- Amount of money realised per week from charging phones
- An estimate of the number of people who visit the telecentre per day (including customers and visitors who are simply curious)
- Number of people requesting contact information for the local distributor

Results

- Each CMC sets its own price, and the price of charging a phone ranged between 50 and 100CFA (US\$0.10 - 0.20)
- The average amount of money made per week from sales of telephone credit was 2200CFA, of which 360CFA is profit (US\$4.40, profit - US\$0.72)
- On average, CMCs charge 50 phones per week, incurring an average weekly income of 3750CFA. (US\$7.50)
- Most CMCs are open for business 7 days a week unless there is a lack of sunshine, or a preponderance of other household activities
- CMCs take the telecentres to between 3 and 5 surrounding villages. Some CMCs choose to remain stationary and instead, invite neighbouring villages to come and charge their phones
- About 15 different clients visit the telecentres each week (they do not necessarily all buy credit or charge phones)

6. Solar Sister Initiative

By Katherine Lucey, Solar Sister CEO
Solar Sister empowers women through economic opportunity. Using a women-centred distribution system for micro-solar energy products such as solar lamps and cell-phone chargers, Solar Sister brings clean energy access to BoP consumers in rural Africa.

In the past few years, great advances have been made in the technology and design of micro-solar products so that they are both available and affordable. They have been designed with features that specifically address the needs of BoP consumers, including building in phone charging capability. However, the lack of distribution systems and a gender-based technology gap means that this potentially life-changing technology is not yet accessible to the people who need it the most.

In rural Africa, the gender-based technology gap is particularly wide, and has devastating consequences as women and girls miss out on education and opportunity due to lack of access. Solar Sister provides the women with a 'business in a bag', a start-up kit of inventory, training and marketing support. The women become their own boss and often, create sustainable businesses. The women use their natural networks of family, friends and neighbours to provide an effective distribution to the most rural and hard-to-reach customers. Because women are 'built-in' to the system, they provide a critical link to the women consumers who often get overlooked by traditional distribution channels.

Using a market-based social enterprise model, Solar Sister has empowered over 100 Solar Sister Entrepreneurs in three East African countries: Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan. Solar Sister fills the distribution gap for clean energy technology including affordable solar powered lamps and mobile phone chargers. In the first year of operation, Solar Sister Entrepreneurs have been able to bring access to solar powered products to over 4,000 rural customers.

Solar Sister's goal is to build a network of 5,000 entrepreneurs across five countries in five years - benefiting over 1 million people with light, hope and opportunity.