



FACT SHEET

Simply affordable: Refurbished PCs help boost the business of small-scale entrepreneurs in underserved communities

A Pro-poor Approach to ICT

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and Microsoft launched a joint initiative to make refurbished PCs available to SMEs in a safe and sustainable way.

In June 2008, the first pilot was successfully established in Uganda through the opening of the Uganda Green Computer Company, a local computer refurbishment centre of excellence with the objective to provide affordable technology solutions for rural entrepreneurs, create domestic job opportunities and enhance Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills.

Fast Facts:

The Challenge in Uganda

- 2% of the population use a PC
- 7% of the population have internet access
- 67% of Ugandan SMEs do not own a PC due to high costs

Solution

UNIDO and Microsoft assisted with the establishment of a PC refurbishment centre in Uganda to bring affordable computers to local businesses in a sustainable way.

Benefits and Impacts

- Unprecedented access to quality hardware: 10,000 branded PCs at \$175 USD
- Increase in SME productivity through access to information & ICT skills
- Promotion of local employment and economic growth: 50 new jobs at the centre more through SME business growth
- More than 700 SMEs received ICT training through PC refurbishment distributor network
- Recycling solutions at the end of the PCs life time



"Fostering entrepreneurship is critical to economic growth in Africa. No economy can thrive and be competitive without dynamic SMEs," said Kandeh K. Yumkella, Director General of UNIDO. "We are enthused by this project because PC refurbishment centres provide one of the missing links for many small businesses in the country."

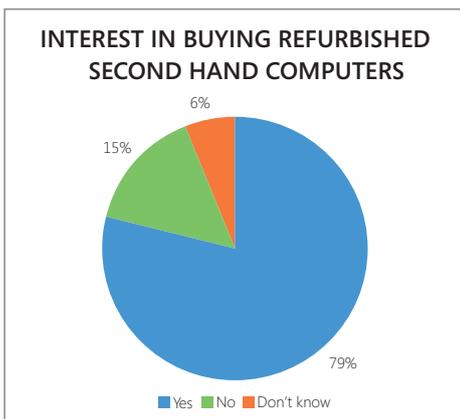




ICT for SMEs

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in less developed countries are encountering substantial barriers in bridging the digital divide and reaping the benefits of ICTs. A cornerstone of the local economy, SMEs often lack access to affordable hardware, relevant software and adequate ICT training, in turn affecting their ability to successfully grow and compete.

Recent studies suggest that interest in purchasing refurbished second-hand computers amongst the SME community in Uganda is as high as 79%.



Public Private Partnership

Partnerships with global actors help SMEs acquire know-how and resources that enhance their competitiveness.

“We have been working with UNIDO over the last two years to help create business opportunities for SMEs in Africa,” said Michael Rawding, Corporate Vice President of the Unlimited Potential Group at Microsoft. “Our investments in sustainable PC refurbishment practices and programmes in Uganda are all the more rewarding given the potential we see for ICT to foster innovation, create jobs and accelerate the competitiveness of local SMEs.”

ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS

UNIDO

- Acts as a neutral broker
- Fosters alliances to promote sustainable industrial development
- Facilitates the Millennium Development Goals

Microsoft

- Transfers cutting-edge technology and know-how
- Promotes managerial best practices
- Creates linkages to global markets

Government

- Develops enabling ICT policy framework
- Incentivizes the development of the ICT sector
- Provides in-kind contributions

The refurbished computer initiative has resulted in the delivery of an integrated ICT solution.

INTEGRATED ICT PACKAGE

- Quality refurbished computers
- Affordable price – \$175 USD
- Genuine Microsoft software
- 1 year warranty
- After sales support
- Recycling solutions

To sell PCs to SMEs the Uganda Green Computer Company relies on a distributor network of District Business Information Centres (DBICs), which UNIDO has established throughout the country to provide SMEs with access to the Internet as well as business advisory services. These centres play a crucial role in providing local ICT support services, training and maintenance for rural SMEs.

The Uganda Green Computer Company

Funded by local private and public sector investors, the Uganda Green Computer Company's business model was designed with commercial and environmental sustainability at the forefront.



The centre provides a full lifecycle solution from the time the PC's arrive in Uganda until the time of their responsible disposal through local, regional and global recycling channels.

DISTRIBUTION NETWORK

The DBICs offer:

- ICT training for the end user
- Technical & maintenance support
- Take back service for PCs at the end of their life

Based on the success of this project, UNIDO and Microsoft are supporting the opening of local refurbishment centres in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, in line with their common goal to enable sustained social and economic opportunity for underserved communities around the world.

SUCCESS STORIES

THE UGANDA GREEN COMPUTER COMPANY

SAVENET SACCO



SAVENET SACCO is a Savings and Credit Cooperative Society founded by Mr. Charles Turimulugendo and twenty close family and friends. The members use SAVENET to deposit savings and so create a pool of funds members can borrow from to improve their livelihoods. Its success has led to expansion with 180 members currently and they have employed a Manager as well as a Cashier/Loans officer.

Ms. Lillian Ezaru, Manager of SAVENET SACCO uses the Jinja District Business Information Centre (DBIC) for Internet

surfing. She saw a poster at the DBIC advertising the sale of "Green Computers" by the Uganda Green Computer Company. The computers are sold at \$175 USD, including a one year warranty and genuine software – Microsoft Windows and Office. Previously SAVENET was not able to afford a computer but with this refurbished computer offer on the market, Lillian was able to convince the SAVENET Board to purchase a Green Computer. The computer has made work more efficient with improved records management and retrieval. It is used for making reports, updating ledgers, loan portfolios, maintaining of other records, and typing of official documents.

"It was always a challenge to keep track of our 180 members. This computer has changed our lives. We are more efficient and can provide better services to our customers. And since we have purchased the computer I am even able to finish my work quicker which allows me to spend more time with my family."

"There is a significant market in Uganda for refurbished PCs, but until now no one has addressed the issues of affordability, training and recycling in a way that makes sense long-term," says Patrick Bitature, chairman of Uganda Green Computers Co. "It will help develop a local and regional industry for responsible and profitable PC refurbishment and recycling for the future."

FORTUNE GENERAL MERCHANDISE ENTERPRISES



About two years ago, Mr. Mukisa opened his first shop at the Mbiko trading centre along Jinja-Kampala road and within a year

another shop on Kutch road in Fairway building in Jinja town. He registered his business as Fortune General Merchandise Enterprises and deals in farm produce and general merchandise. Mr. Mukisa employs five people.

It was through a radio advertisement on Kira FM that Mr. Mukisa came to know the Jinja DBIC was selling refurbished Green Computers. He visited the DBIC to learn more about the offers available. The lowest priced Green PC was \$175 USD for a Pentium PC with color monitor, genuine Microsoft software, and a one year

warranty. Mr. Mukisa was convinced that by acquiring a Green Computer he could manage his business better so he decided to buy one. He already had an employee with PC skills to operate it. The computer is mainly used for record keeping, accounting, letter writing and the daily tracking of the business operations e.g. monitoring the purchases, sales, creditors, stock records, etc. Mr. Mukisa plans in the future to also get an Internet connection.

"A new PC would have cost me over \$700 USD. This Green Computer is a fabulous deal. Now even I can afford to have one."



FACT SHEET

MR. KENNETH LUYINDA



Mr. Kenneth Luyinda completed a Diploma course in Veterinary science at the Arapai Agricultural College in Soroti two years ago. On his return to his home district Masaka, he started rearing pigs and goats. He presently has 17 pigs and 20 goats.

During his free time he has attended an introductory ICT training course.

Mr. Luyinda's mother, Ms. Violet Nbankema owns a retail shop in Masaka town where she sells shoes, clothes, cosmetics, etc. She travels to Kampala at least twice a month to get her supplies.

Recently Mr. Luyinda passed by the Masaka DBIC on his way to his mother's shop. Outside the DBIC was a big poster outside offering computers by the Uganda Green Computer Company at an affordable 299,000 Ugandan shillings (\$175 USD) including Microsoft Windows, Office and a one year warranty. Mr. Luyinda, in consultation with his mother, purchased

the Green computer to be used for both his and his mother's business.

Mr. Luyinda uses the computer to have records of his animal stock e.g. costs, sales, etc and he helps his mother to get more organised in managing her shop e.g. purchase prices, stocks, sales, expenses, etc. He is planning in the future to get Internet connection so that his mother can communicate with her suppliers in Kampala prior to her going there in order to make her visits to Kampala more efficient.

"I used to think that computers are only for big companies who can afford technology. Now that I own one, I cannot imagine my life without it any more."

GLOBAL PRIMARY SCHOOL AT MASAKA



Mr. Robert Tunomugisha is the Head Master at the Global Primary School near Masaka. Robert used to hire computers from Masaka town, but a friend told him about the affordable Uganda Green Computer Company refurbished PCs being sold at the Masaka DBIC. Robert was particularly interested that in addition to the original software and warranty, the Masaka DBIC was able to provide onsite training for an additional fee. He purchased the PC and two training packages;

Introduction to computers, Microsoft Office applications. The computer is presently used to maintain staff/ student register, end of term reports and for other administrative purposes.

"The DBIC does not just sell PCs. It also sells training and support to go with the computer. This really makes a difference for people who have little knowledge with information technology."

