

BOSCO Uganda

Battery Operated Systems for Community Outreach



HISTORY

In April 2007, BOSCO Uganda was launched as a solar powered, long-range wireless computer network covering locations in former Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps across Gulu and Amuru districts in northern Uganda. Low power PCs and VoIP phones were installed in schools, health centers and parish offices, bringing Internet, phone and Intranet connectivity to remote areas.

VISION

To provide innovative ICT (Information and Communication Technology) solutions using a collaborative and web-based approach to foster socio-economic development and peace building in rural communities in Northern Uganda.

MAIN PROGRAMS

- **Web 2.0 Training:** BOSCO Uganda trains ICT skills through the use of Web 2.0 tools such as Wikispaces and the Google Suite. Users are able to learn while contributing directly to the Internet.
- **Digital Ethnography:** Users are trained to produce photo essays and to use Picasa and Flickr to store their pictures. Sharing their story with the world has been a form of therapy helping users recover from the trauma of war.
- **Connecting community sites:** BOSCO Uganda has established a collaborative network through an internal (Intranet) content management site, a VoIP telephony system and a collaborative Wikispaces page (www.bosco-uganda.wikispaces.com).
- **Income Generating Activities:** Rural site users have been trained to type, scan and photocopy documents. Community members are then charged a small fee for these services. This has enabled user groups to contribute and support their Internet site.



Photos (top to bottom): Students using the Internet for research at the Pagak Peace and Information Centre; Latifa Okello, site manager at the Coope Internet Site; the view from the Pagak Peace and Information Centre.

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BATTERY OPERATED SYSTEMS
FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH

From the field: the Pagak Peace and Information Center



BOSCO Uganda first provided a wireless Internet connection to the Pagak Peace and Information Centre in 2006. Located on the Pagak Primary 7 campus, the centre started as a single computer station in a church, but has since expanded, with the assistance of War Child Holland, into a private building equipped with 8 laptops.

Chris Okeny and Simon Peter Okello have been working at the centre since its foundation. Both have a passion for information and communication technology (ICT) and are eager to share their skills.

Okeny, who is currently the site manager, was one of the first community members trained in BOSCO Uganda's unique Web 2.0 ICT teaching approach. Originally educated as a counsellor, he had learned basic computer skills in school. However, he comments, "I did not see the benefit of ICT until now." Training through Web 2.0 has shown him how to create and share information, collaborate on proposals, and meet new people around the world.

Okello, an ICT trainer, agrees. Web 2.0 training, he says, allows a user to immediately participate in the creative process behind the Internet. Students learn how to post stories and attach photos, which, Okello comments, "tell us a lot about their personal feelings ... [it] makes the expression of problems very easy."

Okeny and Okello also highlight how Internet access is helping economic development. Under Okeny's direction, the centre developed a proposal for farming tools and seeds which they posted on the BOSCO Uganda Wikispace. While it has not yet been funded, it has empowered users to conduct their own fundraising instead of waiting for assistance. *Photo: Okeny (left) and Okello (right).*

Our Technology

1. Sustainable power solutions with minimum running costs (solar power)
2. Low-Power (10-20W max.) computing equipment
3. Point-to-Point Wireless Internet Connection
4. Internal network system
5. VoIP (Voice over IP) Telephony
6. Linux / Free Open Source Software

Our Network

The BOSCO Uganda network connects 25 Internet sites deployed among the following types of organizations:

- 2 primary schools
- 6 secondary schools
- 3 rural ICT centres
- 1 National Teachers' College
- 12 local organizations
- 1 local government institution

Our Partners

BOSCO Uganda works in closer partnership with Horizont3000, UNICEF, War Child Holland, H&S Italia, the Gulu Archdiocese and the University of Notre Dame (USA).

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Website: www.boscouganda.com
Wiki: <http://bosco-uganda.wikispaces.net>