



Grameen Connections

In This Issue:

MTN villagePhone: Ground-breaking new venture is officially launched in Uganda.....1

E-Learning and e-Governance opportunities broaden horizons for the rural poor of India.....2

SEF of South Africa, CARD of the Philippines and African states-woman Graça Machel receive GF-USA awards..... 3

China's micro-finance industry is poised to have a major impact on the region's poverty. GF-USA President Alex Counts and volunteer Lynn Chia outline the regulatory changes that could make this a reality..... 4

Meet Pascuala, a single mother in Chiapas, Mexico who made a new start in life with a small loan from GF-USA partner AISol..... 5

What do an international banking executive, a dot-com expert and an accountant with a public affairs degree have in common? They're all volunteers with GF-USA..... 6

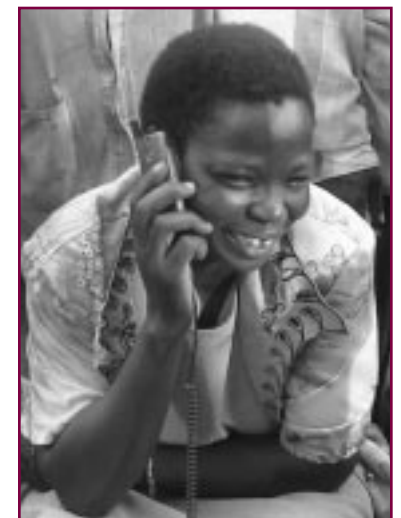
Creating Connections: Through international exchange trips, GF-USA links partner organizations together to build capacity and share knowledge..... 8

MTN villagePhone launched in Uganda

Borrower-owned phones will provide access to telecommunications services to 10 million within 5 years

MTN villagePhone, the first replication outside of Bangladesh of Grameen Telecom's successful Village Phone Program, was officially launched

in a ceremony on November 17, 2003, in Kayunga, Uganda. In attendance were representatives of MTN Uganda, the country's largest telecommunications service provider (with 350,000 subscribers), local government and civic leaders, and the Grameen Technology Center staff and volunteers who have been working since October



FOCCAS client Nulia Malma tests out her new Village Pay Phone.

2002 to roll-out this exciting project. MTN villagePhone is the product of a unique collaboration between Grameen Foundation USA (through its Grameen Technology Center), MTN Uganda and five local micro-finance institutions (MFIs)—FINCA, FOCCAS, SOMED, UMU and UWFT. In order to bring reliable, convenient and affordable telecommunications services to the poorest rural areas of Uganda, GF-USA has engineered this unprecedented cross-sector partnership and adapted one of the most successful blends of technology and micro-finance in the world.

“We can create a future without poverty as surely as we have created a present filled with it.”

Muhammad Yunus,
Managing Director of the Grameen Bank

continued on page 2



GRAMEEN CONNECTIONS

The Newsletter of Grameen Foundation USA

Chair

Susan Davis

Vice Chair

Yvette Neier

Treasurer

Paul F. Kane

Secretary

Robert G. Ottenhoff

Directors

A.K. Chowdhury

Jennifer Drogula

Bob Eichfeld

Richard S. Gunther

Lynn McMullen

Chris Pascucci

Steven C. Rockefeller, Jr.

James F. Sams

D. Wayne Silby

Janet Thompson

Muhammad Yunus

President/CEO

Alex Counts

Staff

M. Nurul Alam

John Anderson

Nigel Biggar

Peter Bladin

Sherita Coates

James Dailey

Irene Dominguez

Tamara Fields

Kenneth Fox

Dr. Ismael (Mike)

Getubig, Jr.

David Keogh

Valerie Lambert

Jacki Lippman

Fiona McDowell

Alberto Muñoz

Randi Nordeen

Barbara Norman

Joe Phillips

Craig Sarsony

Robert Sassor

Julie Stahl

Emily Tucker

Norma Valles

Barbara Weber

Tim Wood

GRAMEEN CONNECTIONS STAFF

Managing Editor

Fiona McDowell

Assistant Editor

Robert Sassor

Contributing Writers

Lynn Chia

Alex Counts

Randi Nordeen

continued from page 1

MTN villagePhone launched in Uganda

As of October 2003, 114 Village Phones had been deployed to micro-entrepreneurs who operate them as public pay phone businesses. Over the next five years, MTN villagePhone will deploy 5,000 phones throughout Uganda. Each phone will serve as many as 2,000 people, which means that this initiative has the potential to provide 10 million rural Ugandans with access to affordable telecommunications services.

Not only do these phones provide an income-generating opportunity for the entrepreneurs who operate them, they can also be used by farmers, shopkeepers and others to save both time and money. Whether arranging for newly harvested produce to be picked up and taken to the city or ordering supplies for a rural general store, it is estimated that a phone call costing ten cents can save the caller an average of one dollar in

wages or business that would be forfeited to make a day's journey into the nearest city. Even more importantly, the ability to phone a distant doctor or clinic in an emergency can even save lives.

To learn more about MTN Village Phone or the Grameen Technology Center, contact David Keogh at dkeogh@gfusa.org or (206) 325-6690, ext. 203.

