

# MTN Foundation improving lives

By Andrew Masinde

The MTN Foundation is a not-for-profit entity through which the mobile telephone giant implements its corporate social responsibility (CSR) investments.

Prior to the formation of the foundation in 2007, MTN Uganda, had been involved in far-reaching CSR as well as sponsorship activities that have impacted on the lives of Ugandans across the country.

With the formation of the foundation, MTN Uganda has reinforced its outreach to communities and interest groups, majorly focusing on education, health and national priority initiatives.

The MTN Foundation was established to focus and deliver the company's vision for communities across Uganda, focusing on education, health and areas of national priority.

## National priority areas

Following a successful 2015 MTN marathon which was held under the theme "Run for Kampala", MTN Uganda and partners handed over sh500m collected during the run, to the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). The money was for implementing the bio-sanitation water and sanitation project in five deserving government-aided primary schools in Kampala city.

The schools included Kisaasi Primary School, Kitebi Primary School, Kasubi Church of Uganda Primary School. Others were Naguru Katala Primary School and Nsambya Police Children's School.

Previous projects funded through proceeds from the marathon include water projects in Kotido and Nakapiripirit districts both in Karamoja region, Amuria, Kiryandongo and Kisoro districts. The money was also used to deliver Mama Kits for expectant mothers displaced by the war in Gulu district and free housing initiatives across the country in partnership with Habitat for Humanity.

The water projects aimed at creating access to clean and safe drinking water for the beneficiary communities included digging of wells, building of sanitation facilities and development of sustainability community Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) committees.

In November 2013, the MTN Foundation handed over 10 new booths, constructed in different locations along the 21km Northern Bypass route, to the Uganda Police Force. The booths, valued at approximately sh110m, have gone a long way in supporting the Uganda Police with

community policing as well as enhancing their emergency response activities in the area.

The foundation partnered with Community-Based Tourism Initiatives (COBATI), a non-profit NGO, whose main purpose is to support local people in Uganda to participate and benefit from rural community tourism initiatives.

The MTN partnership with COBATI was designed to empower and promote the unique culture and traditional way of life of the Nubian community in Bombo district, and Uganda as a whole, through the promotion of rural-based tourism.

## Education

In a quest for the creation of a bold, new digital world and its commitment to supporting education as a key enabler of development, the foundation introduced the first-ever MTN Internet Bus initiative.

The initiative aimed at bridging the digital divide between rural and urban communities by providing real time ICT training for learners, teachers and various community members in hard-to-reach areas across Uganda. To date, more than 25,000 people have benefitted from this project through computer and Internet education.

The MTN Foundation has partnered with various entities including learning institutions, public libraries and other selected community institutions such as prisons and community centres in setting up connected ICT resource centres across Uganda.

Some of the ICT resource centres setup include; KCCA, Mbale, Masaka and Kabarole public libraries, Murchison Bay Prison and Mukono Community. There were also 16 additional resource centres located in institutions of learning including Kawotto Primary School, Uganda Technical College Kichwamba, National Teachers College Munni, Uganda Technical College Lira, Hornby Secondary School Kabale, Shimoni Core Primary Teachers College and Busoga High School.

The foundation has also donated computers and internet connectivity to schools through the "ICT Clubs for Primary School" initiative. The project, which has been piloted in Kampala, has benefited, Bat Valley Primary School, Buganda Road Primary School, Kiswa Primary School, Kitante Primary School and Nakasero Primary School.

Following a successful pilot university scholarship programme aimed at supporting disadvantaged girls acquire professional ICT education, enabling more



MTN team at the SOS Children's Village in Entebbe handing over scholastic materials

## IN 2013, MTN GAVE AN ASSORTMENT OF ITEMS TO KILEMBE MINES HOSPITAL IN KASESE AS PART OF EFFORTS TO ASSIST THE AREA COPE WITH FLOODS

women participation in the ICT sector, the foundation introduced the 2016 MTN Foundation University Scholarship programme for girls. In partnership with the Forum for African Women Educationalists Uganda (FAWEU), the programme will

provide full support including tuition, accommodation, meals, scholastic materials and mentorship for 10 girls through university.

For 2017, the MTN Foundation has constructed additional classroom blocks in four Promoting Equality in

African Schools (PEAS) high schools across Uganda.

The projects located in the districts of Kabarole, Mayuge, Katakwi and Lamwo aim at increasing access to secondary education, especially in rural areas where there are no government-supported secondary schools. The project also aims to support access to education for girls.

Through a partnership with the SOS Children's Villages in Gulu, Fort Portal, Kakiiri and Entebbe, the foundation is supporting over 3,600 children with food and scholastic materials. The programme supports 20 public primary schools in the communities

where the children villages are located.

Other initiatives include the refurbishment of Gulu Prisons Primary School, Akaba Primary school in Nebbi and Kashuro Primary School in Mbarara.

## Health

The foundation has made several interventions in the health sector including the construction of the Lela Obaro II Health Centre in Gulu in partnership with Stanbic Bank. It has also provided material and financial contributions to a number of health projects including the annual Rotary Family Health Days initiative, Kisoro Hospital maternity ward drive, St Mary's Lacor Hospital cancer initiative, the Rotary Club Gift of Life heart institute, the AMREF maternal health project and the Nakasero Hospital fistula initiative.

MTN has in the past also offered assistance during disasters. In 2013, MTN Uganda Foundation, gave an assortment of items to Kilembé Mines Hospital in Kasese as part of efforts to assist the area cope when River Nyamwamba flooded following heavy rains. The donation included 100 hospital beds, 100 mattresses, 100 blankets and 100 mosquito nets that were handed over to the then health minister, Dr Ruhakana Rugunda. Other interventions include the donation towards the landslide victims in Bududa building homes for the families relocated to Kiryandongo.