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Inveneo Provides Communications Network to the BOSCO Uganda Relief Project, Helping Thousands

Inveneo's solar-powered computer and telephony network gives Uganda's IDP camps access to technologies that can improve lives

San Francisco, California. April 17, 2007 – Inveneo Inc, a non-profit social enterprise, has partnered with the BOSCO (Battery Operated Systems for Community Outreach) Uganda Relief Project to provide access to computers, the Internet and VoIP telephony for Northern Uganda's Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. The BOSCO Uganda Relief Fund partnered with Inveneo to provide and deploy Inveneo's solar-powered Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) System to give Caritas and Catholic Charities, and the isolated IDP-camp communities they serve, a vital link to the outside world. This phase of the project serves nearly 100,000 people and provides a communications network of computers and telephones connected via long-range WiFi for multiple locations in seven IDP camps and the Archdioceses office in the city of Gulu.

Inveneo, with funding from BOSCO, has designed and installed a high-speed local-area network using long-range WiFi networking devices, ultra low-power computers and VoIP telephony for Caritas/Catholic Charities. The Inveneo network is powered via solar panels which power battery arrays. Internet connectivity is carried from the city of Gulu via the Inveneo WiFi network to the IDP camps up to 70 Kilometers away. The system is specifically designed to be operable on 12 volts with a range of power options, and is resistant to heat, humidity and dust – so that it can operate in environments where computing has traditionally not been found. It has been designed for ease of use for both users and administrators who are new to technology.

BOSCO saw the potential for communications to transform daily activities in the camps, where few phones and no power exist today. They were searching for a cost- and power-effective solution when they found Inveneo. This phase of the project will connect eight Archdiocese offices, two clinics and 17 schools. The network will be used for all types of communications needs, including logistics, emergency notification, school-teacher training, consultations between clinics and doctors, communicating with American and European donors, and getting out critical information on human-rights violations

"The Diocese will be more efficient in its support of the people with the new ability to communicate immediately with other offices in the camps and funding organizations in the United States and Europe," said Archbishop John the Baptist Odama of the Northern Uganda Archdiocese, where the IDP camps are located.

"Many of Uganda's adults, and especially its children, have suffered greatly due to a war that has lasted more than 20 years. We believe that providing affordable, sustainable communication technologies to the organizations which serve them, like those provided by Inveneo, can change the lives of these people in dramatic ways – simple ways that so many of us take for granted," said Ted Pethick, Navitor Systems of Indiana, the Technical Director and Designer of the BOSCO Project.

"Inveneo is dedicated to helping to improve people's lives through ICT solutions that help to connect them to world around them. ICT relieves their isolation and opens opportunities," said Mark Summer, CEO of Inveneo. "It can provide the ability for people to call the clinic when there's been an accident, it can enable camp teachers to access better teaching tools on the Internet, and it can simply provide much greater ability to perform day-to-day logistics for the Catholic organizations."

The BOSCO Relief Fund Project is planned to extend to 60 IDP camps in Northern Uganda within three years. These 60 camps (of the 104 camps in total) will become trading centers after the conflict ends and the people are able to return to their homes. The Inveneo systems will provide access to life-changing ICT, directly or indirectly to nearly two million people. The project has been funded by donors from the US to date. Gus Zuehlke of the Saint Bavo Catholic Church in Mishawaka, Indiana is the President and Founder of BOSCO and is leading the fund-raising effort. "The longer term plan is to extend the network to reach the homes of the people once it is safe for them to return," said Mr. Zuehlke.

The project has also gotten the attention of the Ugandan government. "We intend to make every effort to support this project, which gives a voice to our people that had been cut off from the outside world," said John Alituma Nsamba, the State Minister for Information and Communication Technology in Uganda.

About BOSCO Uganda Relief Fund

The people at BOSCO have developed a plan to provide Internet access, computers and Voice-over-IP telephone service in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in Northern Uganda. These camps were developed with the intent to provide safety in numbers. Sadly, 95% of the people in this area are living in absolute poverty and are unable to tap the vast natural resources of the area. Currently, two million people are living (and starving) in these IDP camps in the provinces of Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader. The goal of this project, code named BOSCO: Battery Operated Systems for Community Outreach, is to give these forgotten people, especially the children, a voice. This technology will link these people to the outside world and allow them to become their own advocates. For more information on the BOSCO Uganda Relief Project or to make a donation, visit www.bosco-uganda.org.

About Inveneo

Inveneo is a non-profit social enterprise whose mission is to get the tools of information and communications technology into the hands of organizations and people who need them most --those in remote and rural communities in the developing world. For more than 2.5 billion people living in these communities, gaining access to Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) -- either directly or via service organizations -- can transform their lives in simple yet profound ways. Access to ICT can help save lives (rural healthcare), provide better economic opportunities (agriculture, entrepreneurship) and provide a better future for their children (education).

To date, Inveneo has 20 projects completed or underway in Uganda, Rwanda, Ghana, Mali, Guinea Bissau and Burkina Faso. These projects serve schools (50%), economic development groups, telecenters, and relief camps in 66 communities. They will reach over 160,000 people, directly or indirectly, with life-changing ICTs. Our goal is to serve over 4,000 communities in the next three years. For more information, visit www.inveneo.org.

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