



Power Up: Street Charging Services Kampala

How to Stay Charged Without Access to Mains Power

Jan Chipchase, Indri Tulusan

Introduction

Uganda is a country coping with severe energy crisis one that results in frequent power cuts. In addition, access to mains electricity in rural locations is limited. **Given that mobile phones require power, and access to power can be unpredictable – how do people keep their mobile phones and other electrical devices charged?**

How does people's behaviour change when there is intermittent or limited access to power? How can we better support users with limited and intermittent access to power?

There are **two forms of mobile phone battery charging services** in Kampala – either offered as an **additional service by phone kiosk operators** or as a **stand alone service**.

It costs 500 Ugandan Shillings (0.2 Euro) to have a battery recharged similar to the price of 2 or 3 phone calls depending on the tariffs. Whilst both services appear to thrive there are a number of barriers to use: customers cannot use their phone whilst the battery is being charged; the customer risks, or perceives the risk that their battery being swapped for an inferior one; a perceived risk of phone theft - some stalls have signs that suggest they are not responsible for loss or theft


A relatively sophisticated, but common mobile phone charging station in Kampala





This stall was located in a large bus station – business is likely to come from non-local, one-off customers

So slightly different setup to a kiosk services regular customers



As with most cities (from London to Lhasa) phone chargers are very much a commodity

Necessary to support different phone models

However, consistent customer preferences by default Nokia chargers are plugged in

The process for
getting a phone
charged is as
follows...



This charging service offers a number of features to re-assure customers that their phone is safe...

Inputting
#06 gets the
IMEI number



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The battery ID
can also be
noted down

The risk of being given
a worn or fake battery
stopped some of our
interview respondents
from using street
recharging services

However we doubt many
customers check the battery
number once it is returned.
However the process is re-
assuring



A receipt is written out

CASH SALE P.O. Box
Date: 28/06/2006

5 TULUSAN INDR1

PARTICULARS	RATE	AMOUNT
NO 11-1A		500
AL 351473105113207		
SN 06702461120318332		
Wafar		
TOTAL	5	

Thank You.

Goods once sold are not returnable.

IMEI

Battery ID

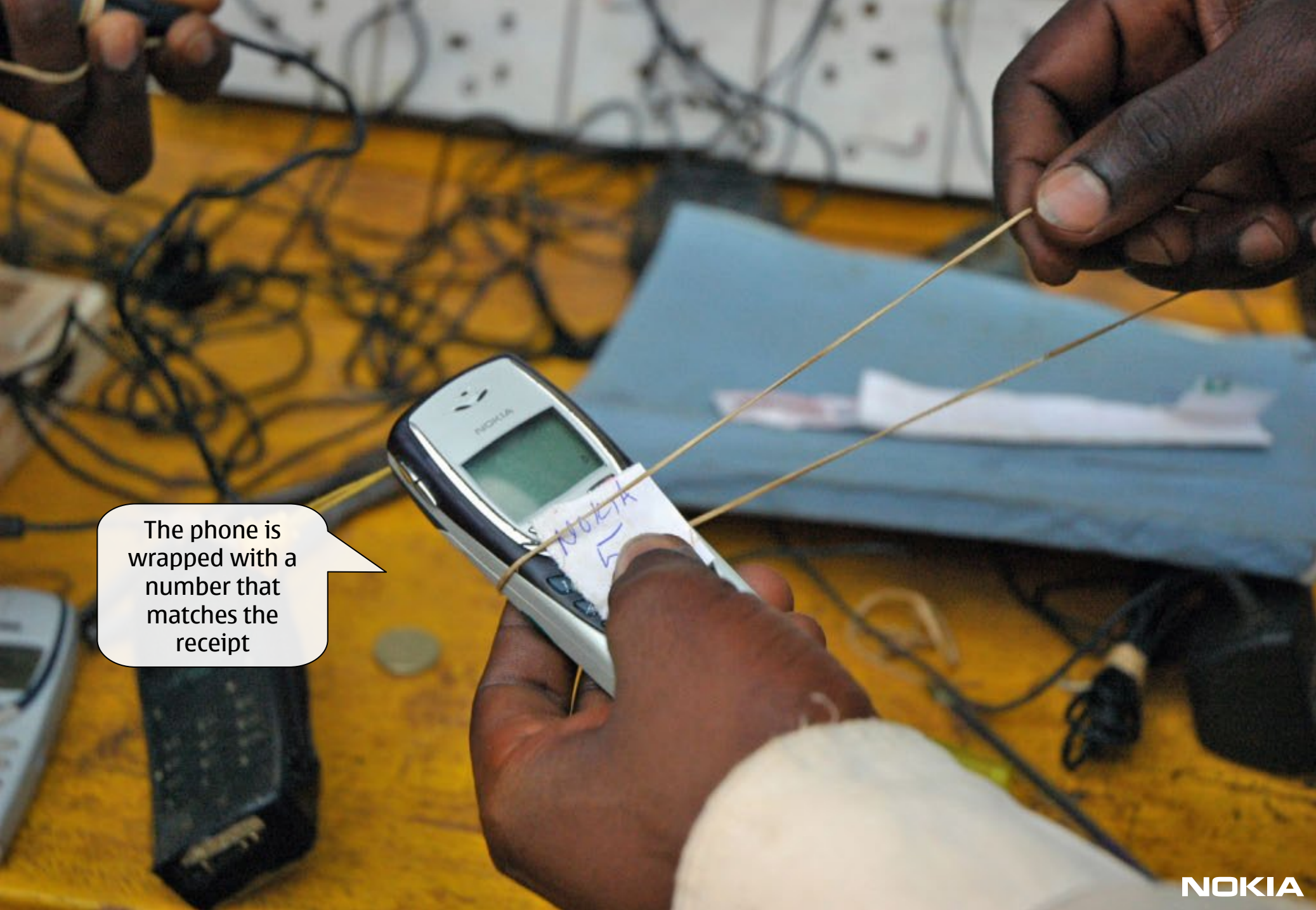
CASH SALE P.O. Box
Date: 28/06/2006

6

PARTICULARS	RATE	AMOUNT
		500
Wafar		
TOTAL	6	

Thank You.

Goods once sold are not returnable.

A close-up photograph showing a person's hands holding a silver and black Nokia mobile phone. A thin, light-colored wire is being held taut by the other hand, passing over the phone's screen. The phone has a small piece of white paper with handwritten text on it. The background is a cluttered wooden surface with various wires and papers. A speech bubble is overlaid on the left side of the image.

The phone is wrapped with a number that matches the receipt




The phone is
locked in the
cupboard





CASH SALE
TULWAN INDI
BUYER
DATE
AMOUNT
PAID
TOTAL

PHONE
CHARGING
500F



Charging cables
are threaded
though to a
secure storage
space

Batteries can also
be charged
without the phone
being present

Using the **elastic
band method** of
holding the
contacts in place





Cost to charge phone up
to 500 Ugandan Shillings
(0.4 Euro)

As a comparison a one
minute call costs between
200 to 500 Ugandan
Shilling depending on the
carrier



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Different stall

PHONE
CHARGING





The charging display acts as a advertisement for the services on offer

Phone kiosk operator charging services

The service is more straight forward than in the previous example – he is likely to have more regular customers

Charging phones are stored here

Interview microphone (not normally present)





/end

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