



Mairead Cahill (UK)

Host organization: M-KOPA (Nairobi, Kenya)

Fellowship role: Commercial & Business Development Advisor

Fellowship duration: Feb – Dec 2012 (full-time)

Degree: MSc European Politics & Policy (LSE)

Professional experience: 9 years in the corporate and start-up sector, with a focus on the technology, media and telecommunication sector

Summary

Mairead successfully launched M-KOPA’s marketing and brand strategy, which increased their customer penetration and sales targets. In addition, she ran product pilot programs whose results enabled M-KOPA to better target and service low-income customers with safer, more affordable and accessible solar energy, ensuring better sustainable quality of lives for Kenya’s rural poor.

The problem M-KOPA aims to tackle

- The majority of Kenyans don’t have access to electricity, and are dependent on inferior substitutes such as kerosene
- The upfront costs of solar energy home systems make it unaffordable for many consumers



M-KOPA’s solution

- Use mobile technology and an innovative payment plan to provide affordable and high quality solar home systems
- Superior consumer experience through a marketing and distribution partnership with Safaricom

“The LGT Impact Fellowship gave me the opportunity to be part of an emerging market start up bringing innovative energy products to low income consumers.”

M-KOPA’s challenges

Successfully launch M-KOPA in Kenya and build a customer base through marketing, sales and distribution, customer service, a CRM, billing platform and key partnerships



Opportunity for a Fellow

Provide commercial expertise and support to the M-KOPA team on strategy, business development, marketing, brand and customer research and insight

“This is an unusual pursuit that it will test you at all levels. Be patient and not too hard on yourself when you face inevitable challenges.”
Mairead

Mairead's achievements ...



- Development and launch of M-KOPA's marketing/ brand strategy and campaign execution
-> Increased customer awareness of M-KOPA and supported sales of M-KOPA Solar.
- Designed and secured external funding for multi-year customer research program
-> Provided key customer feedback to inform product development, marketing, sales and service plans.
- Analysis of customer payment and behavioral data from pre-launch pilots to inform launch plans
-> Helped inform the final launch plans on pricing and proposition.

What's next?

Mairead remains passionate about the opportunity for business and innovation to drive social impact and economic development, and is currently exploring her next career move

...contributing to M-KOPA's impact



- Successfully launched M-KOPA Solar and achieved sales targets and very high customer satisfaction scores.
- Extended marketing and distribution partnership with Safaricom, Kenya's leading mobile network operator, to accelerate customer growth.
- M-KOPA's positive impact will grow significantly in 2013. The company has achieved 10,000 sales by end of Q1 2013 and is now ramping up to reach 100,000.

"Thanks to the LGT Impact Fellowship, Mairead brought experience to M-KOPA that we wouldn't otherwise have been able to get at such an early stage in our company growth."

Jesse Moore, Managing Director, M-KOPA