

## CELLULAR 'BUSINESS-IN-A-BOX' EMPOWERS POOR INDONESIANS

### TELECOMMUNICATIONS

In Indonesia, 75 percent of the population — or 180 million people — live below the international poverty line of USD 2.50/day. Aiming to improve such statistics, [RUMA](#) is a social organization that deploys “business-in-a-box” solutions to qualifying franchises for a brighter economic future. Recognizing Indonesia’s high cellphone penetration rates, for example, RUMA’s first product is “Rumah Pula,” a telecommunications kiosk that enables the entrepreneur to sell prepaid airtime to his or her community. RUMA sells the business kit — which contains a phone, promotion materials and an operating manual — for USD 23 to future franchisees. A field officer is also on hand to train franchisees in running the business. To ensure it is serving the poor, RUMA conducts a questionnaire to determine a franchisee’s poverty level based on the Progress-Out-of-Poverty Index (PPI) methodology. RUMA is supported by the Grameen Foundation and by Qualcomm. In its first five months of operation, RUMA deployed more than 1,600 microfranchise businesses serving 75,000 consumers. More than 90 percent of RUMA franchises are currently operated by women; all are profitable. RUMA aims to launch a second business-in-a-box offering by the end of this year, and to reach financial sustainability by August 2011. One to get involved in — or to emulate in another poverty-stricken part of the world? (Related: [Solar-powered cellphone kiosks for Ugandan women](#) — [In Jakarta, healthy meals at sponsored food carts for kids](#) — [Fighting poverty through microloan guarantees](#) — [Sanitary pad franchise creates jobs & improves lives.](#)) Spotted by: John Greene

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