

Driving diverse local economies

Elly Mwasenga uses REDAVIA's solar power to deliver welding services in Isenzanya; he hopes to one day establish his own business.

Elly has been employed as a welder in his home village of Isenzanya in south-west Tanzania since May 2018. Before REDAVIA established a solar mini-grid in the village, he also worked as a farmer making his income seasonal and unreliable.

"Before this electricity, we had to go to Mlowo or Igamba to get enough power for our welding machines - both towns are about 30km from here. The extra costs had to be added to the customer's bill, making a new gate or motorbike repair very expensive."

Now connected to REDAVIA's solar mini-grid, the welding business has sufficient power to weld items such as hoes, gates and motorbikes for members of the community: **"Now, someone can have a gate made right here for a normal price and we are getting more customers coming from neighbouring villages."** The business has also diversified into car battery charging.

Elly still has his farm but now employs someone to work it for him, helping out around his welding commitments.

Elly says, **"Working as a welder is very hard, especially with the limited tools and resources**

we have here," but **"welding is like art, you like the product you make or feel good when you fix something."**

The business plans to expand with more advanced machines to make new tools, tables, kitchen-ware and wheelbarrows, all of which depend on the availability of power, **"the objective is to become a well-known brand of welding and fabrication."**

Music-lover Elly also uses REDAVIA power in his home, **"I am heading into a good life compared to the past. I haven't yet bought a sub-woofer (loudspeaker), but now I have electricity I have bought small household appliances which I didn't have before."**

Noting that other young people he knows have already connected their barber shops to the mini-grid or established their own small businesses. Elly now aspires to establish his own business in the future using REDAVIA's solar power. With electricity, business in Isenzanya is good.

"Truly this electricity is changing lives."