



SUCCESS STORY

Installation of a Small Wind Turbine Increases Income

The use of power from wind turbine benefits not only entrepreneurs but also community members



Abdulahi and his wife in their shop

“I feel like I am the ‘powerhouse’ of the neighborhood.”

Abdulahi Osman ,
Shop owner

Electricity access in Ethiopia is very low even by African standard. The World Energy Outlook 2010 estimated national electricity access at 17 percent in 2009. Access in the rural areas of the country is even lower.

Abdulahi Osman is a resident of Hadew kebele in Fafan zone of Somali Region, which is an off-grid kebele. The main source of livelihood for Abdulahi’s family is growing maize and retail trade. Abdulahi says there are different business opportunities that people in the locality would like to engage in if it had not been for the two barriers to income generation: lack of access to electricity and financial services.

Undaunted by these barriers, Abdulahi started a retail business of sugar and rice with 1500 birr (USD 75) capital a few years back. Through hard work and support from his family, Abdulahi managed to be the major provider of fast moving goods in his village. He then expanded his business by providing mobile phone charging services through a small lantern. Although there was a high demand for this service, Abdulahi couldn’t do the charging in the evenings due to the low capacity of the lantern. The support of a USAID project, Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement through Market Improvement (PRIME), changed that.

In line with its objective of promotion of renewable solar and wind energy source to pastoralist households, PRIME partnered with a company called Wind Empowerment to promote small Wind Turbines for rural electrification and job creation. Through the partnership, PRIME constructed a wind turbine, and installed it in Abdulahi’s shop. At a capacity of over 1kW, Abdulahi is now able to charge 30-40 phones a day unlike a maximum of eight before the installation, generating an average additional income of 2500 birr (USD125) a month. He is also enjoying 24 hours of power. He says, “I feel like I am the “Power house” of the neighborhood”. Moreover, he bought a refrigerator, which resulted in an increased demand of soft drinks. The increased demand for his goods and services, requires more labor, and Abdulahi’s wife is helping with the selling activities. Together, they are planning to expand their shop space to be able to charge more mobile phones and start a barber service.

PRIME trained 20 polytechnic college graduates to scale up the benefits that these locally manufactured small wind turbines are giving to the community both in terms of job creation for young graduates and provision of access to electricity for productive/domestic use. Moving forward, the project plans to promote the uptake of small wind turbines after analyzing income per household and willingness to spend on energy services.