

Supporting healthier lives

Roida Kajiba delivers healthcare for the residents of Shitunguru. She has noticed improvements in people's health and wellbeing since the arrival of REDAVIA's solar mini-grid.

Roida has been in nursing for over 25 years, coming to Shitunguru four years ago to work at the local dispensary. Working alongside a doctor, Roida provides a broad range of medical services including delivering babies, dispensing medicines and vaccines, and carrying out HIV awareness and testing.

Shitunguru dispensary is connected to REDAVIA's solar mini-grid. The system uses battery storage to ensure that power is available 24/7 and, once the power is paid for, Roida can be confident that she will have light available for night-time deliveries: "Electricity helps at night when you have a pregnant woman, light enables me to deliver her baby more safely. It also helps us to boil and sterilise tools that were used before and gives us light outside the dispensary."

Roida is already noticing changes in people's health which she links to improved household air quality: "Before, when you lit a kerosene lamp it was smoky and caused chest pains. Now people are using electric lights and I see fewer children coming to the dispensary with lung complaints."

She also talks about the wider impact of access to power for children growing up in the village: "Children who will soon sit for exams can study in the evenings because there is power that doesn't cut off. They can also go to cinemas which they enjoy."

Roida's mum sold ice-cream when Roida was a girl growing up in Zambia, so when electricity came to Shitunguru Roida decided to establish her own ice-cream business: "When I started making ice-cream, it was something new in the village. The first time they tried ice-cream the children used to squish their faces because of the cold, but now it's normal." She now sells around 700 small pieces daily with schoolchildren as her main customers. "Personally, my favourite flavour is orange mixed with pineapple!"

Reflecting on having access to solar power Roida says, "the way I see it, we are entering a new era. The future Shitunguru will be different because everybody will use electricity."