



FIRST PERSON Powering a Small Business

USAID program provides solar lighting and helps improve the lives of a business owner and his community



Photo: IRG Ltd.

Be Honest Fishery proprietor, David Gbanwulue in Sinoe County

“The lights help all my neighbors. People come to read, to do their hair, to charge their phones. It’s very black out here at night and the light frightens away criminals,” said fishery proprietor David Gbanwulue of his solar lighting system provided by USAID.

Telling Our Story
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Be Honest Fishery lies in a tiny hamlet just outside coastal Greenville in Sinoe County where proprietor David Gbanwulue says he wants to attract customers with the name of his business, his personal motto.

The modernity of the solar street lamp and panels visible on the roof that generate light for his workshop and adjoining living space are a vivid contrast to the traditional village setting of the community.

Gbanwulue received a solar-powered system and a solar lantern along with other business development support from USAID in exchange for training a group of apprentices.

The availability of light generated by the solar-powered system allows him to operate longer hours from before dawn to after dark, to prepare the nets, carry his engine and equipment to his skiff, and to distribute the fresh fish to dryers and sellers who don’t have to wait for daylight to commute safely.

The solar lantern allows Gbanwulue to retrieve fish caught in the net and to fish at night adding variety to the types of fish he supplies.

As a result of his expanded business hours and more expansive fishing practices, Gbanwulue, who used to plead with schools to pay fees in installments for his 8 children, now employs 5 assistants and several market women full time. His assistants help him fish and the market women dry and sell the fish. Dried fish, because it lasts longer without spoiling, is also sold to customers from towns further inland.

Gbanwulue has expanded his living space and his younger children who used to walk 30 minutes to school now go by bicycle. Gbanwulue dreams of expanding his solar-powered system to be able to make ice to take on the boat to preserve catches, stay out longer, and save on engine fuel. For now, he is content with the benefits the lights have brought to himself and his community.

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