

Simon's Shop: Rwanda



Simon Musabyimana is 44 and lives in a small, rural village on top of a steep mountain in Kamonyi district, Rwanda. He and his wife have 6 children and had their Indigo installed by their local agent 2 months ago. Simon runs a shop from the front of his house and has one Indigo lamp here and the other in his living room – and he wants more.

Simon describes himself as **“a solar minded man”**, but never had the income or savings to be able to buy a solar system. There is no grid in Simon's village and since a devastating fire from a dropped candle threatened his home and family's lives, the only option has been torches. **“I had to take the batteries from my own stock. Every time I had light from my torch, it was a dent in my income”**.

“With torches you can only see what you are looking for – now I can see corner to corner and everything in between!”

Since having Indigo, Simon's customer network has increased greatly. He can keep his shop open 2 hours longer every evening, effectively adding an extra day of trading every week. **“Now people can see what I have, I invest in buying new products and things my customers want rather than just need”** he says, showing his range of colourful hair clips and different flavoured sweets, sitting next to a box of batteries and pencils. A range of colourful mobile phone cases sit on the shelf above, a 6-pack of soda drinks on the shelf below, and a row of battery powered radios lined up against the wall.

Simon's income is secure, and so is his home. Previously Simon always worried about another fire, or thieves coming to rob his shop. Now he feels safe to leave his children in his living room studying independently as he knows there will be no fires, spills or burns. He feels safer going to bed at night because word has spread so far about his light, no thief would risk being caught. Simon's entrepreneurial spirit continues to be fuelled as he hopes to branch out with a new business:

“I make more money with Indigo. I reinvest in my shop and I am saving to start a new bar next door with a second unit!”

Simon's smile stretches even further than his light – when asked why he was so happy, he answered:

“I can offer the city from my village – who couldn't be happy?”