

# CHANGING LIVES

## Helping local businesses



**Imani Ali tells Roughton how the new road has changed his life for the better**

**B**usiness is booming for 33-year-old bike shop owner Imani Ali. His life has been transformed. It is hard to imagine that this time last year he was just a pineapple farmer earning money by selling his produce at market. But, now he is making a living from various businesses and hopes to open more in the future. How was this achieved? The answer is simple: access.

Roughton International has provided design and consultancy services for the upgrading of the Bago to Talawanda road in Bagamoyo, Tanzania, to all weather standard under the African Community Access Programme (AFCAP). The road, which was previously impassable in the rainy season has been redesigned and constructed using the Environmentally Optimised Design Approach to provide reliable access for rural communities in all weather. This development has caused an increase in transportation to the area which businessman Imani intends to profit from.

A year ago, Imani, originally a farmer from Msinune, invested money from his pineapple farm to open a bike shop in Bago, at the start of the new road. Here he sells spare parts for bicycles and motorcycles as well as renting bicycles to the local community.

**I**mani, was hard at work when we met with him at his busy bike shop. Rows of bikes are lined up outside ready to be hired. Each decorated with different football stickers so you can tell them apart. Inside you can see various bicycle parts, food and drink for purchase. He says that he opened the shop because he saw the road was being improved and wanted to make money from it. "Before if it was raining people didn't go anywhere. If you had a bicycle you would just leave it and go on foot. There was no type

of transport," he recalls. "But, now the road is good people can use bicycles every day."

"All the time people are coming here to get a bicycle to go to Talawanda or Chalinze," he says. Within 20 minutes Imani has had four customers. Before the construction of the road this would not have happened. But, now more people are passing. "If they need to buy a pump, tyre or water they stop and buy," he says.

**T**he road has had a positive affect on Imani's income. "If the road was bad I would have made less money," he says. "But, now the road is good more people pass and it is good for business."

Imani lives approximately 5km away in the traditional village of Msinune, home to over 2000 villagers. Many of the residents here are farmers and rely on this road to get to the market in Kiwangwa where they sell their produce. But, before the construction it wasn't even called a road. It was referred to as a passing.

Imani, who has lived near the road all of his life, has no alternative routes to get home. He says: "Now it is good because the road is safer. I can get home very quickly compared to before."

"Before if it was raining I was using two to three hours. Sometimes you slip and slide in the rain," he recalls. "This time I can use up to half an hour because the road is good."

**H**e says the road has had a positive affect on his life. "I can make more money and use the money to open more businesses like this one."



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Imani Ali, 33,  
Msinune