



HELPING BUSINESSES IN TANZANIA

Vick Makundi tells Roughton how the new road will improve her business

Northern Tanzania, on the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro, amidst the mayhem of Lawate market, a row of shops sit on either side of the Lawate to Kibongoto road. It is here that Roughton is currently providing consultancy services for the upgrading of the road.

Vick Makundi, a 30-year-old tailor, is hard at work in her fashion shop with her small team of workers. An array of colours and fabrics hang neatly on the wall ready to be transformed into customised clothing. There is no electricity. Workers use coal irons and manual sewing machines. The process is slow and demanding but no one is complaining.

Inside Vick Fashion you can hear the friendly chatter of workroom gossip and scissors slashing fabric. But, outside, labourers are working hard to upgrade the problematic rural road to all weather standard to provide reliable access for the community all year round. Vick says: "We are grateful for this support because there will be no transport problems anymore."

Characterised by steep gradients and red volcanic soils, which are firm but slippery when wet, the 13.5km road immediately becomes impassable when wet. "The road was very very bad, there were no cars going through it and if you wanted to go up you have to go on foot because of how slippery it was," she recalls.

The unreliable condition of the road means that Vick, who normally accesses the road by car, is "sometimes forced to walk

on foot" which makes her late for work. "Sometimes customers come to look for me and they miss me. If I was to make 2 dresses in a day I only end up making one because of the time lost," she explains.

Vick's biggest problem is transport. Sometimes, "we have to wait for market days to get transport," she says, which limits the number of customers she receives. Roughton International has redesigned the road under the African Community Access Programme (AFCAP), using an Environmentally Optimised Design Approach, to facilitate safe and sustainable rural access on a budget. Vick is hopeful that the new road will bring improvements. "There will be no problem of transportation anymore and people will be getting wherever they want and there will be more customers," she says.

"My life will be very good and very successful. I will get many customers, there will be a lot of business going on because so many people will be coming," she adds.

"My income will increase because customers will increase," she says. "The money that I get I will build a house and send my children to school and expand my business."

Vick, who has lived in Lawate for five years, has already noticed the difference the road is making. "Now there are no problems because they have put gravel unlike before when it was slippery," she says. "I feel very good and more than that I am very happy."