



JUGEND EINE WELT

Kinfe's Story

KINFE is a 24 years old young man, who participated in the basic- and pico-solar short courses in Adwa. Because of his strong interest and good performance he was invited to also join the train-the-trainer (TOT) course in March 2017 in Adwa, held by Br. Chris, the technical director of the program "13 Months of Solar Power" in cooperation with 3 members of "Engineers without borders Austria". Kinfe has been the owner of three solar shops in the province of Tigray, even before he joined the courses.

He was telling us his story:

"Before selling solar equipment I was already running the shops, but I sold fridges and other electrical appliances and I did service on mobile phones and radios. Already as a child I manipulated my father's radio and finally destroyed it. But after the third radio I had learned a lot. Later I studied electrical engineering for two years at the university in Addis Abeba. To learn how to repair mobile phones and radios I attended a course in the capital, Addis Abeba, but I also acquired many skills by studying on my own. Because of the high demand I completely shifted the business towards selling solar lanterns and other solar equipment. In this field there is also less competition.



My sister is helping me in the shops and is also learning the trade. For the other shops I have shop keepers who are assisting me. The shops are situated in Adwa, in Worelaja, my home town about 20km away from Adwa, and in Shire, a regional capital in the province of Tigray. The shops are all strategically positioned close to the market places. ▶



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I saw an advertisement posted in town for the solar courses offered at the Don Bosco TVET centre in Adwa and I already knew Br. Chris who had been in my shop in Adwa before. The courses really helped me to understand the technology better. Before I assessed many things by guessing



and "trial and error". For example I tried to weigh the batteries to assess their state of charge before I learned in the course how to properly measure it. I found the courses very valuable to build my skills in solar technology and I also liked the occupational health and safety training for installations at heights. The safety standards are mostly not applied in Ethiopia but they can prevent many accidents.

While before I was selling mainly solar lanterns I can now also plan, sell and install bigger systems and I can also

consult my customers. I have already sold and installed 16 systems for churches and homes. The problems I'm still facing are that is a lack of finance to invest in a stock of bigger systems. I also have to buy and transport them to my shops from Addis Abeba which is quite expensive. To make business with the water and energy bureaus I also face the problem that they don't recognize my qualifications because they only know the GIZ-certificates but not the ones from Don Bosco. For the future I want my business to prosper and I will certainly also attend further training courses."

The solar short courses and the train the trainer course were conducted as part of the development program "13 Months of Solar Power", which is implemented by Jugend Eine Welt, the local partner organisation, the Salesians of Don Bosco and it is funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation (80%) and private donors.



To attend to Kinfe's problem of the lack of recognition of his certificates it is planned to network with the energy and water bureaus and to officially accredit the courses with the Ethiopian TVET agency.