



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

Energy Efficient Stoves Can Empower Women

If women could spend less time collecting firewood, they would have more time to do other things – such as caring for their children, farming or even starting a small business.

Unfortunately, firewood is needed on a daily basis for cooking and heating -- and women and children often spend a large part of their day transporting wood from the forest to their home.

The introduction of energy-efficient stoves means less firewood is needed – reducing the cutting of trees and reducing the demand on women's labor.

The Southern Africa Development Community Gender Protocol makes note of a case study that found that the stoves contribute significantly to women's economic empowerment by making more time available for more productive activities.

The Weekly

Information Resource Bulletin

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- Bring listeners in the project area the latest information on natural resources, the environment and agriculture
- Focus on solutions, what works and what people can do
- Encourage listeners to share both their questions and solutions (African solutions for African problems)
- Raise awareness of issues that need to be discussed to affect public policy.
- Bring the latest solutions and practices that have relevance to this region from around the world
- Identify and link other NGOs working in the region share the project interests and goals
- Give the participating journalists guidance and tips on their reporting on these issues

Women Can Play Important Role in Formulating Environmental Policies

As a society, we use a tremendous number of trees – and one of the main uses is for firewood. Often times, when trees are cut, new ones are not planted to replace them -- and this leads to a shortage of trees. It means that people, particularly women and children, have to spend longer and longer in the search for firewood – as much as five hours a day.

Although some blame firewood collecting as a big contributor to deforestation in rural areas, a report by the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa, suggests the environmental impact of firewood gathering by women is minimal. The report indicates that activities undertaken by men – such as

logging and charcoal making – contribute much more to deforestation.

The paper argues that women are generally careful to conserve the trees in order to safeguard the future supply – collecting dead limbs, branches and twigs instead of the whole tree. That is, they realize they will be the ones who have walk farther and farther to find firewood.

The paper concludes that there is a need for the Zambian government and policy-makers to formulate and design gender-sensitive environmental policies and programs that will enhance the participation of women in environmental management and the protection of natural resources.

Activities for Journalists

Energy efficient stoves are not only good for the environment; they are good for families – particularly women and children.

Once a stove is installed in a household, there is less carbon emission – reducing outdoor and indoor air pollution.

Indoor air pollution is a significant cause of premature death in Africa – mainly among women and children. According to the World Health Organization, indoor smoke is a leading cause of childhood pneumonia, pulmonary disease and lung cancer.

The Carbon Neutral Company, through its Katete Improved Cook Stove Project, installed 25,000 free stoves in phase one of a project in Katete – in the Eastern Province, with plans to install another 50,000 in surrounding areas – including Chadiza, Petauke, Nyimba and Chipata.

The stove is made of metal and is insulated – and attaches to a brick enclosure – which makes it retain heat more efficiently and improves safety since the stable stove is less likely to be kicked over and it's not hot to the touch. The brick base also makes it less likely to be stolen.

Providing the free stoves to a household empowers both men and women. Women have more time to do things – other than collect firewood – and men are learning how to build and install the stoves – which generates income for the family.

There are a variety of stories that can be created on this topic.

Is anyone in your community using energy-efficient stoves? If so, talk to the family about how it has made a difference in their lives?

How has the stove empowered women? Men?

You might create a whole program focused on this

family and their use of the energy-saving stove.

Find out if energy-efficient stoves are available in your community.

Contact the Carbon Neutral Company and interview them about their cook stove project.

Ask the company what their main challenges were in implementing the project.

See if the company can put you in touch with someone in Zambia who builds these stoves for their community.

Ask the company the benefits of the stoves.

See if you can get one of these stoves and do a demonstration in your community.

Are there plans to make the free stoves available to other parts of Zambia?

Talk to local women's groups about what is being done to give women a larger role in environmental policies.

Are any Zambian lawmakers discussing integrating gender into environmental policy? If so, what exactly are they trying to do? What are the goals?

Useful Links

Information about free stove project at:

http://www.carbonneutral.com/images/uploads/projects/Katete_Improved_Cookstoves_Zambia_VCS.pdf, Email: info@carbonneutral.com

Good source of information: Vincent Ziba, National Coordinator, Community-based National Resource Management Forum, Zambia; Email: vinceziba@yahoo.com. Phone: 0966-246-924

Information on gendering environmental policy in Zambia:

http://www.ossrea.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=362&limitstart=5