



Nurturing Seeds of Success through Promotion of Biomass Technologies

Biomass is the main source of energy for over 70% of the population in Northern Somalia. Somaliland and Puntland face serious environmental problems caused by removal of forest cover for lumber and charcoal production. To a large extent, this problem has been caused by heavy demand for charcoal by the urban population and the Middle East. Although there is some effort to control export and to reduce tree cutting, there has been little wide-scale success in addressing the problem.

There have been several efforts over the years to promote improved cook stoves in Northern Somalia. A number of small scale producers have continued to produce the stoves, but with minimal impact. In addition, there are several challenges to the growth of the sector, such as weak quality control, low production capacity, scarcity of capital for investment and low awareness among end users about the benefits of improved cook stoves. There is a need to support enterprises with simple tools and technologies to enhance their productivity and also support mechanisms for accessing funding.

Creating Partnerships, Fostering Linkages & Building Capacity

Funded by the European Commission and ADRA-UK, ADRA Somalia is seeking to tap into the improved cook stove industry's potential to reduce biomass energy demand for households and institutions; provide employment opportunities for men, women and the youth; and as a means of gender integration in the supply chain. In doing this, ADRA has been working with cook stove producer groups in both countries. So far, ADRA has trained a total of 54 artisans on better cook stove production techniques and after the training, ADRA provided trainees with funds to assist them purchase materials for the production of quality stoves. ADRA is also providing support for construction of kilns and working sheds, especially for the small producers who are currently using their homes for production of the stoves.

Barely over a year into the partnership with cook stove producers, there are already some notable results. The support provided to the cook stove producers by ADRA was instrumental in reviving production which had stalled due to lack of financing, and this is evidenced by the renewed activity by all the groups.

The cook stove business has proven to be a viable means of livelihood, and a majority of the groups have continued to re-invest funds received from the sale of stoves into the production of more stoves, which is an indicator that the business can be self-sustaining. The stoves are sold at fairly good prices ranging from US\$5-US\$10.

Although there is still work to be done, awareness on the improved cook stove is now beginning to take root as a result of radio advertisements and word of mouth. Local retailers are willing to stock the stoves in their shops and market stalls, and have confirmed that the stoves are a good product, which moves fast. In addition, ADRA in late 2009 partnered with

local NGOs in Somaliland and Puntland to organise mini-trade fairs in 4 major towns in order to boost awareness among the general public. These mini-trade fairs were a great success not only in terms of awareness creation but also in sales volumes too and based on this success, it is envisaged that cook stove producers will continue holding similar events jointly in future.

A critical mass of improved cook stove technicians is beginning to take root in the region, with 11,435 stoves produced and sold by the end of January 2010. Expertise is now locally available and those trained by ADRA are able to train others. The training of artisans locally is also likely to become a major source of income for the improved cook stove producers.

Challenges

Despite these notable achievements, there are several challenges that still exist. A majority of the groups expressed the need for working sheds, and all the groups are in need of improved kilns. ADRA is working with the producers on a cost-sharing formula for putting up the sheds.

Quality control is a challenge, as there is no proper system for certifying quality in goods produced locally. However, ADRA is working with the cook stove producers to encourage them to enforce quality control by benchmarking against each other and discouraging sub-standard stoves from being marketed. Some of the producers in Somaliland are in discussion to introduce branding, which will simply be a special mark on stoves that meet the basic quality.

The producers require further training in business and entrepreneurship in order to be able to engage in the business for the long term. Such training would enable them to develop production plans, set targets that would be appropriate for internal control and evaluation, begin saving schemes, and keep proper records and accounts.



Training of Cookstove Producers in Hargeisa, Somaliland



Cookstoves on Sale during the Garowe Energy Trade Fair 2009



One of the kilns constructed for Cookstove Producers in Hargeisa, Somaliland

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