

Cooking Stoves Save West Nile Vegetation Cover

“The use of ordinary method of cooking (three stones) has also affected the environment through destruction of trees in order to get firewood since the old method uses much wood fuel.”

The Story of Mr. Onukua Dison

From spending approximately 10,000shs per week on firewood to eating food at late hours of the night and then spending too much money on treating respiratory diseases. Mr. Onukua Dison aged sixty-one 61 years married with five (5) children living in Alivu Village, Arua District of West Nile Sub region is no survivor of these unpleasing living conditions. His family uses the three stone cooking technology that is commonly embraced in the local communities in the region.



The local three stones cooking technology(Atuluku) Dison used.

In fact, the household experienced numerous challenges from the use of the ordinary cooking method for instance household spending approximately 10,000shs per week on firewood for cooking, the household also used to have supper/dinner at late hours of the night since it would take much time for food to get ready.

The use of ordinary method of cooking (*commonly known as Atoluku in Lugbara dialect*) with firewood produces alot of smoke while cooking food hence spoiling the taste of the food and also forcing him not to appreciate the cooking of his wife. Domestic violence then became inevitable.

As the household head Mr. Onukua lived with fear of fire outbreak especially when his children cooked food alone without an elderly person’s guidance.



Outbreak of respiratory diseases which is entirely caused by smoke from the use of ordinary method of cooking was rampant; at least 3 times a week made Dison spend most of his earnings and savings on ensuring the family has good health. Nonetheless the use of ordinary method of cooking (*the three stones*) is greatly affecting the environment since to get trees destruction is required in large quantities to meet the demands of the three stone technology.

“Sometimes I want to sit beside my wife when she is cooking but I cannot because of the smoke produced from the three stones” – Dison expresses with disappointment.

RICE-WN with funding from World Wide Fund for Nature – Uganda Country Office (WWF-UCO) is implementing a four-year project from 2017 to 2020. The Clean Energy Project is with a goal of enhancing communities living in the Albertine Graben to have adopted sustainable and renewable energy alternatives to reduce dependency on biomass for their energy needs.

RICE-WN partnered with CREAM-WN, Vision for Humanity, ARCOD, Hear International, Nile Pro etc in Arua, CERID, PICOT in Koboko, FOSID and Global Aim in Adjumani, CUWEDE, NDNGOF and APEF in Nebbi, MADIFA in Maracha, MDFA in Moyo to identify (*based on a criteria*) community groups to distribute and sale the clean energy technologies.

Mr. Onukua Dison a beneficiary of the Project learnt about the clean energy products from a work shop at Christus Centre Ediofe organized by CREAM West Nile for the marketing of the Renewable energy product for the stakeholder’s benefits of environmental conservation through the use of energy savings cook stoves. In this work shop components of energy saving and environment conservation aspect were fully explained.

With clear understanding of the benefits he for acquired for his household an energy saving cook stove i.e. the (Big size) that uses both firewood and charcoal for cooking food for the household. The cost of this energy saving cook stove was 35,000shs but she paid 15,000shs as the first installment and for the balance he is paying 10,000shs after every one month now he has cleared to zero balance.

“My wife now feels free to even cook in the sitting room, and sometimes she carries the stove for me to heat my body in the bed room.”

With the energy saving cook stove that uses less charcoal and fire wood environmental conservation is unavoidable. The ambitious gentleman who wants to his environment green now lives happy life with his wife and children after the purchase of energy saving cook stove since he is able to sit with them waiting for food and sometimes even personally cooks the food when the wife and children are busy doing other household chores. The household is now able to save 6,000 Shs from the excess money they used to spend on wood fuel, part of it is saved in their VSLA group and part of the money to improve standard of living. The vegetation around and within his community appears normal to him due to reduced rate of tree cutting.

Since acquiring the cook stove, the taste of the food changed immediately since there is no smoke from the cook stove. The household has delegated enough time for farm work since they can leave beans on the cook stove and always finds the food ready after field work. They now feel free to even cook in the sitting room, and sometimes the wife carries the stove for him to heat his body in the bed room.



Mr Onukua Dison Cooking with the Energy Saving Stove

The clean and safe household has not experienced much challenges with the improved energy saving cook stove except the size not being enough to cook for all the members

The model renewable energy client would like to recommend on an increment in the size of the improved energy saving cook stove since the small size cannot accommodate the bigger source pans when the household receives visitors hence forcing the household to go back to the three stone cooking system.

He would like to encourage other households to acquire these products in order to reduce family violence and conserve the environment for better tomorrow. Not forgetting appreciation to CREAM West Nile and the development partners – WWF –UCO for the great effort towards saving their environment.