



Empowering women and building resilience in South Sudan

Clean cookstoves

Location:

Wau, South Sudan

Partners:

HARD/Cordaid

Author:

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"Thank you for the support in giving us training on making energy saving stoves. It is dangerous to pick firewood near the camp, but with the new stove, I use less firewood. I have more income to help my family, and I am so proud that I can introduce these stoves to the people in Wau town and am so happy that many people accept this idea."

Rebecca (right) internally displaced person living in the Wau Protection of Civilians Camp.

Christine from Jur River county with her fuel efficient cookstove

Photo credit: Enkas Chau/Cordaid

Rebecca - an internally displaced person living in the PoC camp in Wau with her fuel efficient cookstove

Photo credit: Enkas Chau/Cordaid

Christine lives in South Sudan, a country characterized by expansive grasslands, swamps and tropical rain forests straddling both banks of the White Nile River. The country has an abundance of natural resources, but years of conflict and marginalization have left the world's newest country as one of the most underdeveloped. Climate change is further exacerbating poverty levels by bringing more extreme weather patterns, adding to recurrent hazards such as floods and drought already faced by vulnerable communities.

Projections indicate these impacts could worsen into the future as temperatures are predicted to rise and rainfall is predicted to decrease leading to more river and urban floods, heat stress, wildfire and droughts. These impacts will pose a serious threat to South Sudanese people's livelihoods in terms of water consumption and food security.

Christine lives in Jur River county, near to Wau town where the impacts of climate change are already being felt. The people in this county are agro-pastoralists and rely on agriculture and livestock keeping as their main source of livelihood. However, the county is already experiencing challenges from climate related hazards such as drought, ecosystem degradation, and conflicts. Early movement of cattle and their herders in search of water and pasture from the neighbouring State of Warrap, is leading to increased conflict over competition for water points and grazing land with the neighbours.



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Promotion of fuel-efficient stoves during the market fair in Wau town attracted a lot of interest from the local community.
Photo credit: HARD

In addition, the host communities and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) living in the area rely on firewood and charcoal for cooking and currently use traditional methods which are not energy efficient. This has not only resulted in increased ecosystem degradation due to the cutting down of more trees, but also poses a security risk to women who frequently visit the forests to collect firewood where they are often exposed to physical or sexual attack. Some studies (South Sudan State of Environment 2008, UNE) have estimated that the deforestation rate in South Sudan is about 1-2% per year. Furthermore, the local communities and government lack sufficient capacities in climate change adaptation and natural resource management measures to adequately address the challenges faced.

Reaping the benefits of clean cookstoves

Sustainable resource management is therefore crucial for South Sudanese communities like Christine's. Fuel efficient stoves are one way to encourage this by reducing environmental degradation caused by cutting trees, shrubs and roots for fuel and easing tensions over the use of and access to natural resources. They also reduce the time and burden of collecting firewood, therefore limiting women's exposure to gender-based violence. In addition, they have positive health benefits reducing indoor smoke and the risk of uncontrolled fires and burns to cooks and children.

PfR has been supporting this project with an objective of enabling the communities of Wau and Jur river county to adapt to the impacts of climate change by promoting the use of fuel-efficient stoves by as many people as possible. Thus, reducing the demand for firewood and charcoal, as well as raising awareness among policy makers, stakeholders and the local community on IRM concepts and practice.

Through local partner Hope Agency for Relief and Development (HARD) and with support from Cordaid, a practical training for community members was organised on the production of fuel-efficient stoves and briquettes. Training communities in the production of briquettes reduces the demand for firewood and charcoal as the briquettes are made from farm waste produce like groundnut husks, maize stalks and sorghum stalks. The stove is made from a mixture of river clay, ash and sawdust which enable it to retain heat and is designed with only one opening which controls the heat and reduces heat loss. Thanks to these qualities, these new cook stoves reduce the use of firewood by up to 66% per day.





Bernice Kitum – HARD Project Coordinator responsible for the fuel-efficient stove project.
Photo credit: HARD

“The PfR Partnership has been very helpful in supporting me with diverse level of technical expertise within the partnership like measures of climate change adaptation.”

Bernice Kitum (left) HARD Project Coordinator responsible for guiding the group members in the production of the stoves.

Interested community groups like Christine’s were mobilised through consultations with community members. Two fuel efficient stove groups were established in Jur River county and trained in how to build the stoves for mass production by Titi Foundation – a local community-based organisation specialising in the promotion of energy efficient stoves. 80 community members were trained, 30 men and 50 women. Three market fair days were organised to promote the benefits of energy saving stoves. In order to introduce this new product, a 50% subsidy was provided by the project and the stoves were sold at a cost of SSP1600 (approx. USD10), which is a similar price to the usual metal stoves that people are using. To date, the project has supported the beneficiaries to produce and sell 4,300 stoves. The production groups see the growing demand and have already set up a stall in the Wau Town market where they will continue producing and selling the fuel-efficient stoves.

Training on IRM was also provided to Government ministries, local authorities and NGO’s to raise awareness among policy makers and the local community on how to build community resilience through integrating climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and ecosystem management and restoration measures. The local authorities have realized the value of energy saving stoves as a means of climate change adaptation which has been successful in their context. While more people are adopting this new measure and reducing the need to collect firewood from the forest, it is expected to boost to the determination of the local authorities in enacting policies to protect the forest.

Key to the project's success was the relative calm in the country since the peace agreement which allowed the training to take place and the fact that the women involved are committed to the production and scaling up of the stoves. The stoves resonate with their needs; fuel for cooking is expensive and collecting it can be a time consuming and dangerous activity. The new stoves provide women with numerous benefits including income diversification hence communities were quick to get on board. The project also builds on the local skills of pottery and working with clay instead of introducing new or imported technologies or processes so is easy for people to replicate.

Christine is now able to pay school fees for her daughter through the small income she gets from the sale of the stoves. For her, resilience means cooking in a more sustainable and time saving manner, no matter the fragility of her context.