

GreenTech's Donation Scheme for Fuel Efficient Stoves in The Gambia

Improving Livelihoods and mitigating Environmental Challenges

Background Situation

The Gambia, located at the Westafrican coast, is landwise the smallest country on the African Continent and ranks among the poorest countries worldwide. Climate change is already taking its toll, as floods and droughts occur more often than in the past and the desert is constantly approaching from the north, turning life into a challenge of survival in some areas. As the population is rapidly growing, forests are cut not only to create space for farming, settlements and infrastructure, but also to cover the daily needs, especially for timber and fuelwood. The majority of Gambians cook with firewood or charcoal.

Most rural communities have free access to their forest, where women and children traditionally collect firewood for the domestic needs of the family. As the forest resources become scarce, firewood collection takes more and more of valuable time.

In the urban area, most families purchase firewood or charcoal, which is again coming from the rural area. Thus the urban consumption depletes valuable resources of the rural communities who deeply depend on their forest to cover their daily needs for food, fodder, medicine, construction material etc. Also in the urban area, the scarcity of firewood reflects in scoring prices, making it hardly affordable for the majority, who is living on the edge of poverty. Charcoal production is officially banned in The Gambia, as it causes extreme forest exploitation, as well as soil and air pollution. Nevertheless, charcoal can legally be imported from neighboring Senegal, whereby the exploitation of the neighbouring forest will eventually affect The Gambia as well, as ecosystems know no country borders.

Alternative fuels and fuel efficient devices need to be used to reduce the harmful exploitation of forests in and around The Gambia for fuelwood. Donations will help to kick-start the use of briquettes and fuel efficient stoves, especially for the poor population.



GreenTech's Response

Determined to tackle environmental challenges and to improve livelihoods, GreenTech Company Ltd started in July 2011 to produce fuel briquettes from groundnutshells as an alternative fuel to firewood and charcoal, whilst designing and promoting locally made fuel efficient stoves. The compatible cooking unit is highly efficient and saves the cooks (usually women) time, effort and finances. Indeed, switching from traditional cooking on charcoal to the innovative cooking unit of groundnutshell briquettes in fuel efficient stoves, can save 2/3 of the fuel cost, whilst the overall cooking process is faster and briquettes are a lot more comfortable to transport, store and handle than firewood or charcoal. Different to firewood, smoke is hardly visible during the cooking process.

Additionally, saving trees through alternative fuels, mitigates climate change, soil erosion and other environmental challenges. At the same time, converting groundnutshells in fuel briquettes is a form of waste management. Groundnuts are the main crop in The Gambia and the shells are abundant, whilst dumping space is limited. Weight wise, as many groundnutshells are dumped at the major dumping site, as charcoal is used in the urban area per year. With the accommodation of a second press Greentech would be able to convert this amount into briquettes.

Why donating a Fuel Efficient Stoves and a Starter Bag of Briquettes

The investment of 450 GMD (less than 10 Euro) for a locally made stove, seems to be a barrier for many households to try the innovative cooking unit, even though it can pay off in fuel savings within four weeks for the average household. Following, a household of twelve, cooking twice a day, can easily save up to 12,000 GMD/year (about 250 Euro, more than half of the average per capita income), when switching from traditional charcoal cooking.

Experience shows, that the start barrier is actually often not a matter of the cost for the stove itself, but understanding of financial management and planning, respectively spending priorities and mandates within the households.

Once a trained user is using the innovative cooking unit and understands the economic and environmental advantages, they usually remain it, providing the family with savings of time and finances that could then rather be used for health and education matters. At a price of 6 GMD/kg (about 0,12 Euro) further supply of GreenTech's groundnutshell briquettes are well affordable.

As a grassroot approach, this solution is convincing through its efficiency in simplicity. Innovative, but not too far from current cooking habits, it catches the attention of all generations.

After all, the use of the innovative cooking unit will mitigate environmental challenges, as deforestation, loss of biodiversity, desertification and climate change, on micro and macro level, locally and globally. Thus your donation will eventually even positively impact on your livelihood!

How does the donation scheme work?

If you decide to donate a fuel efficient stove and a starter bag of briquettes for 1200GMD (about 25 Euro), we provide two options: either you chose the beneficiary yourself or we connect you to a registered women group, who will chose a needy member to receive the donation.



Depending on your wishes and availability, GreenTech will arrange an official handing over, take a picture and publish your generous action on the GreenTech webpage (www.greentechgambia.com). GreenTech provides user training for the beneficiaries and follows up their understanding.

GreenTech is also planning development projects for entire rural communities. Please follow up the latest developments on the webpage, where you will also find information on previous donations: www.greentechgambia.com.

For more information, please contact GreenTech Management per e-mail info@greentechgambia.com or phone: ++220-6662622.