

Stove+ Academy brought together French and English speaking stovers in Nairobi

Inspired by the Aprovecho stove camps, StovePlus Africa, a GERES initiative, financed a five day workshop called StovePlus Academy in Nairobi from 1.-5th December 2014. While Aprovecho's Stove Camps host primarily English speaking cookstove experts for a week, language, travel costs and visa issues remain a barrier for many Africans that would like to participate. StovePlus Africa's objective was to create a similar opportunity for African Improved Cookstove Entrepreneurs.

The Stove+ Academy brought 20 African Entrepreneurs and African energy program implementers to Nairobi as a joint francophone-anglophone learning and exchange experience. Participants who either already have existing energy businesses or are contributing to the implementation of projects were invited from West-African countries Ghana, Ivory Coast, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone, complemented by Madagascar and Kenya from East Africa.

The group was hosted by Teddy and Susie Kinyanjui at the Cookswell Jikos manufacturing facility where they continue the production of Kenyan Ceramic Jikos started by their father. They have expanded the product range to ovens and other outdoor cooking and heating equipment. As part of the StovePlus Academy's methodology to introduce a life cycle approach, participants visited the amazing woodlots at Woodland Trust to learn about the seed-to-ash cycle. The intention is for participants to observe various ways of doing business and decide how and what to incorporate this in cookstove-work. Participants designed and with a cookswell metal worker produced prototypes of new products that they could introduce into their businesses.



Photo 1: Designing a charcoal stove using secondary air

Classroom presentations and discussions focused on how to move towards mechanization and streamline production, how to organize and equip stove production facilities at different levels, learning from various examples in Nairobi like Burn Manufacturing. Site visits included the Jua Kali and the JikoJoy factory in Nairobi.

The main organizers Elisha Delate-Moore, Kevin Chambon and Christa Roth assisted with the translation and facilitated communication between participants normally facing language barriers. The multiple languages and perspectives from across the continent allowed for lively discussions.



Photo 2: Verifying that the rice is cooked during the CCT training

The activities also included learning about the controlled cooking test in a cookstove cook off and guided observations on how each stove operates. This proved once again to be a powerful and effective tool for all participants. In the end everyone agreed that the objective to increase continent wide collaboration and increase knowledge about the industry and strengthen African Entrepreneurs capacity to diversify the production improved biomass cooking devices across Africa was fully achieved.

The Academy ended with a dinner at Carnivore restaurant where attendees included Academy participants and representatives from Envirofit, Echo Mobile, the Kenya Clean Cookstove Association, the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, and SNV.

Throughout the academy and final events everybody had lots of fun!



Photo 3: StovePlus Academy Participants outside of Kenya Stoves

StovePlus Academy organizers hope that the next steps will include an annual Academy that presents different themes to participants. Future themes would include above and below the line marketing, access to finance, detailed testing when to use what methodology, and other activities that would be useful for entrepreneurs and implementers to improve their businesses and activities.