

TRAINING ON SOLAR COOKERS FABRICATION NOTSE, 21-23 December 2007



Introduction

In view of extending the field work of the solar water pasteurisation project to additional regions of Togo and neighbouring countries, a special 3-day skillshare workshop has been organised in Notse, 120 km North of Lomé, Togo.

From Friday 21st to Sunday 23rd, 80 participants coming from 28 cities of Togo but also from Cote d'Ivoire and Benin enjoyed togetherness and brotherhood while building their capacities in understanding climate challenges of our world and individual actions necessary to tackle the problem. In the attendance, it was interesting to note board members of JVE, beneficiaries of JVE projects like the dam affected communities, sister organisations, honorary members, Togo university-based Solar Generation members but also interesting, 20 women and men drawn from the VO prefecture where the solar pasteurisation project is being implemented. The latter group served as the main trainer of the skillshare, under supervision of M Kameti Dodzi, the project field supervisor and mentorship of Sena ALOUKA, project Coordinator.

Friday 21st

Climate change and Renewables

After participants have been settled in their rooms and had lunch, M Kameti Dodzi introduced them to the background of solar cooking. Some points covered include the status of world natural resources today, the threat caused by global warming on world biological diversity, the continuous demographic boom, the negative sequels of the use of fossil fuel and the tremendous potentiality offered by the sun, wind, waves, underground heat but also the flow of small rivers. A series of question followed. The presenter explained how solar cooking can make drastic change in people's lives, especially in Africa where we do have abundant sun shine and the necessary human resource. One major output of the project is to enable communities not having access to freshwater to have their dirty water pasteurised and rendered drinkable. Testimonies from women gave more sense to this reality.

Thanks

A presentation of the solar water pasteurisation project and the skillshare sponsors was made with special focus on **NNV** but also **NORAD** for their permanent substantial financial. Participants stood to wave hands and execute the traditional 'WOMBOM' in sign of appreciation and congratulations for the outstanding progress made already in the communities. Other supporters and participants of the project were presented namely Makumba (JVE Belgium), Solar Cookers International, Solar Generation (Greenpeace International), Kozon and the Directorate of Energy of Togo which provided appreciable periodical technical know-how and administrative support. A big applause in term of gratitude was made with a big noise, supposedly thought to reach each of these gracious supporters.

The presentation of the various materials has been made and the actual training started.

First the women from the VO region helped the participants to learn how to prepare the glue with local material, mainly flour and water.

Practice followed teaching. Like one man, all participants prepared the glue and stuck the foil to the cardboard as the second step in the fabrication of solar cooking.

Saturday 22nd

In order to allow the glued cardboard to dry out, participants used the second day to meet in two groups essentially for an assessment of progress achieved by (1) the various solar cookers groups and (2) the organisation throughout the year

Capacity-building in group Management

This session was designed for women and men coming from the VO region. It was purposed to evaluate their appreciation, knowledge and ownership of the project. After an ice-breaking exercise, the trainer Madam Jeanne, sociologist took the group through a series of activities and brainstorming on the importance of the project. It appears that lot has already happened in the communities in terms of change of attitude and creation of awareness on the borderless opportunities offered by nature. Some heartbreaking stories were told concerning how the project changed some women's life and shifted them from a darkness of closed world to a new world of knowledge and self-sufficiency. Granted, it has been acknowledged the need for greater dissemination and monitoring of the use of the cookers in the village in project year 2008 but it was clearly accepted that already the project reached many of its goals, even to achieve unexpected positive results. To name just one, the new role the project women are playing henceforward in the villages thanks to the leadership skills acquired is wonderful.

The participants were then taken through a series of training with onsite exercise, such

- the group dynamic
- group management
- how to keep a group's account
- how to ensure participation
- marketing the solar cookits

The women appreciated the new understanding and skills endowed onto them and the privilege they have to be part of this incredible of people. Many were happy to have their name written in from of them, as in big summits.

Evaluating JVE activities in 2007

An official opening ceremony with the effective participation of the local District Commissioner and the representative of the Minister of Education took place early in the morning.

The officials were then showed how the cookits work, resulting in a great amazement from these men, who were witnessing 'a miracle'. The DC even enjoyed the presentation even to engage in a joke activity, praising our project.

The Executive Director presented a report of his participation to the Bali Conference on Climate Change with support from NNV. An interesting session of questions followed as participants were eager to understand the position of the US, the Western world, the Africa group but also the newly-added mechanism of *Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD)* and the idea of *technology transfer*. Books, calendars and other posters from Bali were distributed to all participants.

JVE board members then presented the report of the organisation activities in 2007, the financial status and the 2008 action plan which were approved. Needless to say, addressing climate change counts for 50% in the 2008 action plan. Promoting PV panels, building capacities in addressing extreme phenomena like flood and the extension of the Solar Water Pasteurisation project to five additional areas of Togo but also to Benin and Ghana are the main components of this program.

Later in the day, awards were presented to the best 5 JVE local branches of the year and a special award also was given to the youngest female participant. For having provided diverse support and free training in tree-planting and agroforestry techniques, five people have been approved as JVE new honorary members.

Video-documentary: putting images to the concept of climate change

After dinner, all participants gathered in the main hall for three short documentaries.

- climate change and biodiversity
- climate change in Togo, from a youth perspective
- desertification in Togo

Translation in local language has been provided enabling all attendants to understand the issues at stake. The quality of questions asked even by women certified that the message has well been understood.

Sunday 23rd

The day started with a reminder of lessons learned in the past two days related to the fabrication of COOKITS.

Participants were then taken through the three necessary steps in the making of the cookit

- 1- marking the dimensions of the cookits on the cardboard
- 2- drawing the lines of the limits of the cookits using two different colours (one for the internal and another for the external limits)
- 3- cutting the cardboard according to the lines of the cookits
- 4- Folding the cookit appropriately following the identified line, ensuring that the foil is kept in the internal part of the cookit.

The amazement and general feeling of accomplished mission took over the whole assistance. Cheers and loud noises were heard as various groups were showing their cookers as the best samples. A minimum of hundred cookits could be produced.

A group picture ensued as all participants were happy to show their production.

It was with a feeling of discovering a simple way of caring for our planet that each participant was allowed to go back with one cookit, some asking for more. It is expected that all participants will organise feedback training once in their respective cities. Two specially designed and colourfully signed are here to be sent to both NORAD and NNV.

Closing the skillshare: living testimonies

The general report of the training workshop was read and approved. Special t-shirts designed with logos of both NNV and JVE with all international representations was distributed to all participants, who were full of appreciation. Important to note, the Executive Director brought from Bali the Greenpeace-produced necklace (*Kyoto: just do it*) which serve as holder of the participant tag.

Some beneficiaries of JVE projects were invited to express their experience with the various projects. The most touching one was that of a lady from one of the community involved in the solar water pasteurisation project. She vividly explained how it all started and how progressively her status as women drastically changed in the village. At some points, the chief would refer to her all issues related to local natural resources management. She said that since the project started the rate of pulmonary and water related dwindled in the community. One sunny day she cooked the goat meat and served to several people who were surprised by the wonder of the cookits. She ended saying that the project shed light on women particularly and highlighted the role they can play in community development. If the project has brought about a real impact in their lives, it is the leadership skills and how gender-equity issues are now known to all in the villages.

The calendar of year 2008 has been reviewed again publicly and should funding allow, coming action must start in early January.

Lessons learned:

Leadership is like beauty, hard to define but once you see it, it is recognizable. Technology transfer under the UNFCCC framework must be made possible at the soonest and resources need to be provided for similar projects to be implemented in several other parts of the world. Colleagues from Benin and Cote d'Ivoire are looking forward to the availability of funding from NORAD and NNV but also from other partners in 2008 for them to be also engaged in this project.

When asked what their request for the project is, the women were unanimous: It is important to look into PV panels as a way of replacing kerosene in rural communities and install solar powered street lights in communities but also in market to increase commercial opportunities for women. Research should also be developed for stronger and more sustainable types of the solar cookers, especially in terms of heat conservation. A special attention should also be given to tree-planting and school community involvement in the project.

Important to note, the promise of the Norwegian government to donate **545 millions USD** in favour of the global action to address climate change for the coming years is to be praised. As more government will join in similar voluntary action, JVE members and its project beneficiaries expect to put in all efforts to join hand with all sincere people in fighting adequately the global warming, despite all obstacles from other interests groups.

The President thanked all for their participation and wished a successful trip back home and success in all future actions to all participants, who cheerfully stood for a loud WOMBOM for all our sponsors. Scheduled to end at midday, the last group of participants could leave the Notse Training Centre only around 5 PM.

The Rapporteur

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