

A Monthly from the East African Sustainability Watch Network and INFORSE East Africa

Yellow Power Women Innovate ‘Mother's Joy’ Improved Cook stove Using a Recycled Bicycle Sprocket as a Grill



Left to Right: Members of the Group with CAISL project staff; meeting JEEP monitoring team; the ‘Anyonga Pamegu’ (Mother's Joy) improved cook stove and the Rocket Lorena stoves constructed by the Group. (Photos: UCSD)

Women in Nebbi face many risks while looking for firewood. In Nebbi sub county, a group of women under the Yellow Power Women group have been working together to overcome these risks through the Climate Action for Improved Sustainable Livelihoods (CAISL) Project, where women beneficiaries have been trained in construction of energy efficient technologies including fireless basket cookers and energy saving stoves for example the rocket lorrena and the shielded firewood cook stove.

The Shielded cook stove saves firewood compare to the ordinary three-stone cook stove and produces much less smoke. This stove makes cooking easier, since one does not need to keep blowing air to sustain the fire or to monitor the burning all the time. The shielded cook stove can be designed in such a way that it can use charcoal, briquettes of firewood, thus accommodating varying fuel sources in the local communities. It is movable, such that one can cook within the kitchen or outside it. In addition, the design minimises accidents and burns, since it is insulated and structured for safety.

However, despite mastering the rocket Lorena and shielded stove construction, their kitchens continuously flood during the rainy season, disrupting daily life chores and plans. Undeterred, these women have leveraged their skills and creativity to innovate a ground-breaking solution.

Drawing inspiration from the shielded stove model, they have designed and built the "Anyonga Pamegu" (Mother's Joy) stove – a portable, flexible, and flood-resistant cooking solution. This ingenious design enables the women to move this stove easily to verandas during floods, and to continue cooking uninterrupted. The ‘Anyonga Pamegu’ stove is basically a shielded stove but with a deserted bicycle sprocket as a grill, that is locally available at a cost of ugshs 2,000 only. "The 'Anyonga Pamegu' stove has brought us joy and freedom. We can cook anytime, anywhere, no matter the weather", a member of the Yellow Power Women affirmed.

The "Anyonga Pamegu" stove has transformed the Yellow Power Women into beacons of innovation and problem-solving. Their story showcases the potential for local solutions to overcome seemingly overwhelming challenges, ensuring that adverse weather conditions no longer dictate daily life, while firewood use is efficient.

Through the CAISL project intervention (July 2023 – December 2024), Joint Energy and Environment Projects (JEEP) and Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD) in partnership with the Nordic Folkecentre for Renewable Energy have a primary target group of 2,296 persons (60% youth of 18-30 years), 30% women of 31-45 years and above) and 10% men who have been selected as Trainers of Trainers in their communities in Nebbi district. The focus of the project is on Nebbi District to make it a JEEP Model district in climate mitigation measures and built-up community resilience, accessibility to environmentally friendly solutions and advocacy skills.

Renewable Energy Conference 2024 and Expo Should Reflect on Realities of ‘Tiny Actions’ With a Cumulative Impact.



Transformation? : ‘Tiny’ actions like addressing deficit in energy for lighting count

From 31st October to the 2nd of November, 2024, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, in partnership with the National Renewable Energy Platform (NREP), will host the Renewable Energy Conference & EXPO (REC24 & EXPO) at the Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort in Kampala, Uganda. The event will consist of high level discussions, energy financing, technology development and deployment, knowledge management, research, capacity building and communities of practice, policy, planning, standards and markets.

The theme of REC24 & EXPO: ‘Transforming Livelihoods through Clean Energy Access’ is well-timed to reflect on. This is because the Uganda’s energy sector is undergoing policy changes while institutional reforms are anticipated in future. For example, the latest energy policy (2023) emphasizes the development of new areas such as; clean energy for transportation, and affordability of electricity through the reduction of tariffs which comes with benefits such as increasing per capita consumption. Also, this Policy has set among its objectives to increase electricity access and uptake of alternative modern forms of energy, enhance utilization of energy-efficient practices and technologies, promote the adoption of energy efficiency and conservation practices, promote sustainable utilization of biomass, attract investment with financial sustainability in the development and utilization of energy resources and enhance the management of the energy-related environment, health and social safeguards. In addition, the Uganda Energy Transition Plan (2023) - a strategic roadmap for the development and modernisation of Uganda’s energy sector is in place, and confirms the Country’s intention to reach net zero emissions in its energy sector by 2065, which paves the way for Uganda to explore a formal economy-wide target for climate neutrality.

Whereas these are commendable policy milestones, the devil is in the detail – how they will these be translated into tangible, time-bound actions? Already, Uganda’s population at 45.9 million is 91% dependent on biomass with just a fraction (4%) having access to clean energy sources for cooking says it all – action is needed urgently. Therefore ‘Transforming Livelihoods Through Clean Energy Access’ is a loud voice calling for an equal response to meet the needs of the a (youthful) population in dire need of basic needs and (green) jobs, that are motivated by energy ‘hotspots’ in rural areas. For example, through addressing the deficit in energy for lighting where majority of households (52 per cent) are reported in the Uganda National Population and Housing Census 2024 to be using *Tadooba* (local paraffin candle) as the main source while only about 20 per cent used electricity. Action here can unlock economic, public health improvement and social transformation

Though it could be taken lightly, possession of kitchens is still a challenge much as it defines where, how, what, when and how to cook. The Uganda National Population and Housing Census 2024 Report has also noted that overall, about half of the households (51 per cent) used outside built kitchens while 25 per cent used open space. More households in rural areas (56 per cent) cooked outside in built up kitchens compared to households in urban areas (34 Per cent). This has implications on household energy efficiency and related investment decisions at that level. As we contemplate on the ‘Transforming Livelihoods through Clean Energy Access’, a lot of firewood goes to waste as energy to warm the surrounding ‘air ’ and cumulatively becomes a liability to the country as trees are indiscriminately cut while landscapes are left plain, with a narrow possibility to yield adequate food for a growing population. Similarly, the lack of investment in a kitchen at the household level means less effort will be put in place when improved cook stoves or other higher tier stoves come in as options, as there is no motivation to have one, leave alone the safety of such an investment.

So, REC24 & EXPO on ‘Transforming Livelihoods through Clean Energy Access’ should be hands-on to reflect on the realities of the seemingly minute actions with a cumulative national-level impact. Business as Usual is not an option if Uganda is to reach net zero emissions in its energy sector by 2065. **Learn more about REC24 & EXPO from:** <https://nrep.ug/rec24/>

Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development Joins Call to Action: ‘Time to Mobilize and Transform Key Sectors for Biodiversity’ Ahead of the Colombia Global Biodiversity Conference



The 2024 United Nations Biodiversity Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity is scheduled to be held from October 21 to November 1, 2024 in Cali, Colombia on the theme, ‘Peace with nature’. The justification is that indigenous peoples and local communities in Colombia and around the world have lived in harmony with nature for millennia. Therefore, their traditional knowledge holds important lessons that the world must heed as we collectively seek viable ways to reconcile socio-economic progress with the health of the natural foundation that sustains all life on Earth.

Ahead of this important global event, Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development has joined a group of 54 organizations representing local and global NGOs, business networks, youth networks and academic institutions that work with food and agriculture, climate, circular economy, sustainable development, finance, trade, and more to issue a Call to Action titled, ‘Time to mobilize and transform key sectors for biodiversity’.

Key economic sectors like food and agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, mining, energy, infrastructure, trade, and finance are currently driving biodiversity loss, leading to inequalities and social-ecological conflicts. Yet, they need to play a major role in achieving the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) targets agreed upon, along with other sectors, such as health and education.

‘We urge Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to prioritize biodiversity mainstreaming and to integrate nature’s diverse values when implementing the GBF, both at the global and national level. COP16 presents a key opportunity to mobilize and enable key sectors to assume their share of responsibility and take bold, transformative action’, urges the statement in part.

At the national level, the signatories call on Parties to the CBD to take the following immediate actions with a human rights-based approach and with the meaningful participation of rights-holders such as Indigenous Peoples, local communities, Afro-descendants, women and youth in order to accelerate implementation of the GBF:

- Reform and implement sectoral policies and plans to facilitate a just transition for nature, climate, and people.
- Measure progress and report on sectoral commitments through participatory, evidence-based national monitoring frameworks.
- Involve relevant ministers and sectors in the development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and have these approved at the highest political level.
- Urgently identify environmentally harmful subsidies by 2025, to eliminate, phase out or reform them, and to scale up positive incentives, as all Parties committed in GBF Target 18.

‘We have just 6 years left to implement the GBF. Without transformative sectoral action, we will not succeed in halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030. The time to take ambitious and urgent action is now’, the Call to Action cautions.

The UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) ended in Montreal, Canada, on 19 December 2022 with a landmark agreement to guide global action on nature through to 2030. Chaired by China and hosted by Canada, COP 15 resulted in the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). At COP16 in Colombia, this will be reviewed for the first time.

[Read the Time to mobilize and transform key sectors for biodiversity - A call to action from: <https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/Mainstreaming-for-Nature-Call-to-Action.pdf>](https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/Mainstreaming-for-Nature-Call-to-Action.pdf)