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Project 'A Woman, A Stove, A Forest' : Promotion of Improved Cooking Stoves and Gas Stoves Thanks to Adapted Microfinance Services

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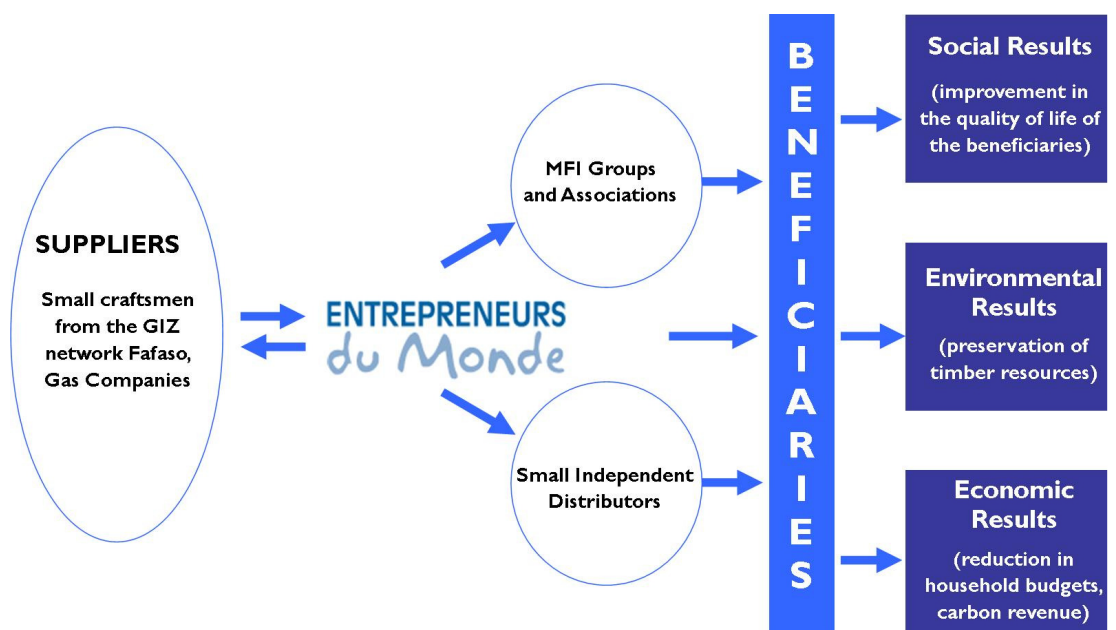
Summary :

Thanks to the introduction of savings and specific credit services *Entrepreneurs of the World* facilitates access to improved cooking stoves and gas stoves, allowing local businesses to develop. The resulting economic, health and environmental benefits are equally important.

Objectives:

Improve the living conditions of populations and fight against deforestation through savings and credit systems adapted to the production and supply of improved stoves and gas stoves. Raise awareness of the issue of sustainable development and reduce, by half, the household consumption of wood for cooking, with a positive impact on environmental protection and improving the health of families.

Methodology:



The project promotes three types of stoves that reduce or completely eliminate the use of wood from households or businesses:



Improved Stove in banco

Cost : self-produced
Savings in wood : 40%



Improved Metal Stove

Cost : Up to €5.00
Savings in wood : 40%



Propane Fireplace

Cost : Up to €40.00
Savings in wood : 100%

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Benefits of the Technologies Implemented:

Before the implementation of the project, women used mostly traditional stoves, consisting of three stones arranged around the fire to support the pot. This technique has the double disadvantage of causing over-consumption of extremely expensive wood and emitting noxious fumes resulting in severe respiratory disorders. *The World Health Organization* estimates that air pollution, linked to poor indoor combustion technology, is at the origin of 1.6 million deaths worldwide each year.

Improved stoves and gas hearths, therefore, meet a real need of the beneficiaries and create a real craze among them:

- **Savings:** An improved stove saves up to 35 to 45% of the mass of wood required for the preparation of meals, thus generating the equivalent of several tens of Euros in savings over one year of use. Although it is more expensive to purchase, the gas stove is more attractive because today gas is a cheaper fuel than wood.
- **Time Saving:** Improved and gas stoves also reduce by one fifth the time needed for preparing meals, freeing mothers for their income generating activities and the education of their children.
- **Preserved Health:** Finally, reduction of harmful fumes also contributes to improving the well-being of households.

Thanks to the portable stoves acquired under the project, families reduce their footprint on the timber resource – the forests – from 40 to 100%, while reducing their budget and preserving their time and their health.

The acquisition of portable stoves by the beneficiaries is facilitated by the establishment of dedicated savings and credit systems. *Entrepreneurs of the World* identifies suitable suppliers and connects them with microfinance institutions, producer groups, small associations and small retailers. The latter promote the portable stoves to their beneficiaries, with the support of *Entrepreneurs of the World*. Once the orders are taken, *Entrepreneurs of the World* pre-finances the production by craftsmen, transports the stoves to the MFIs and groups, and provides a credit fund, which allows for adjusting the payments to the household budget. The people who have bought stoves are shown how to use them and made aware of protecting the environment.

Results:

A total of 1,775 stoves were distributed during the first year of the project, of which 55% were gas hearths, 44% were improved metal stoves and 1% improved stoves in banco. Over their entire lifetime, these stoves will economize 25,000 tons of wood – the equivalent of 844 truckloads of wood – and more than 6,500 days of activity, which will be spent on something other than the preparation of meals!

Sources:

Information from the internal evaluation report of the project in May 2011. Data in this report were developed from a qualitative study that enabled the realization of thirty semi-managerial individual interviews and two focus groups with stakeholders of the project. The report also draws on quantitative data generated from the information system and project management.