

AHDESA: Improved Cook Stoves for Tortilla Makers in Choluteca, Honduras



Original Proposal Objectives

- Implement in around 147 homes (approximately 749 people) improved stoves that use less firewood. The primary target is the women known as “Tortilleras”, or tortilla makers in Choluteca.
- At the beginning of the project, the target audience will be identified through visits to their workplace—such as street corners and markets. Then AHDESA will have a meeting with those interested to talk about the project and select potential participants.
- It is expected that those participating will use up to 60% less firewood and that the use of the stove (Eco Stove) will improve the working conditions of the tortilleras and the cooking process.

Initial Study

- Conducted a baseline study to identify the target audience. This was made with a series of indicators: sanitation, tortillas production volume, amount of fire wood used, places where they sell their product as well as the number of members in their homes among other things.

Project Promotion

- AHDESA worked with groups in neighborhoods to talk about the project (most groups at least 15 women). AHDESA has visited more than 250 women in 28 suburbs, to talk about the opportunity to acquire the Eco Stove.
- A small presentation was made at a local television channel, in the news transmitted at noon and at night.
- The project was presented to the community development of the city hall of Cholulteca hoping for coordination. However, this had a negative side, since the city hall wanted to give the project a political connotation.
- Flying and pamphlets were distributed as well as other printed materials in order to highlight the benefits the Eco Stoves.

Results to Date

- At this time, 72 units have been built and installed in homes of tortilla makers. AHDESA estimates that this number will double in the next few months now that targets have been identified. Some of those that have installed stoves have seen a 40 – 50% decrease in firewood needed.
- There have been some negative reactions to a technology that although physically similar to the stoves of their mothers and grandmothers, have some differences like the amount of firewood used and a different construction.

Lessons Learned

- The first evaluation has been positive: AHDESA has heard good things from the beneficiaries including fuel savings, beneficiaries talking about the stove with those that were initially uncertain or negative, and a cleaner kitchen environment.
- One of the lessons learned, is that a project can state that is beneficial by the project proponent, but in reality it must be accepted by the target group. “We must combat taboos, ancestral customs, consumerist influences and economic constraints.”
- Projects such as this that target more dispersed groups of individuals rather associations/cooperatives that join forces in a project, require more logistical leadership, support, and more monitoring and supervision.
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLlcJWXCHpQ>