In Rwanda, clean-burning cookstoves use crowdsourced biofuel

Much the way Nokero aims to eliminate the use of kerosene for indoor lighting in the developing world, so Rwandan Inyenyeri hopes to revolutionize the way cooking is done. Seeking to provide an alternative to polluting and forest-destroying brush-fueled cook fires, Inyenyeri has partnered with WorldStove to bring carbon-negative stoves into the majority of Rwandan homes at zero cost to rural users.

Named for the Kinyarwanda word for “star,” Inyenyeri launched in August with a plan to give away clean-burning LuciaStoves to rural Rwandans while selling them to those in cities. At the same time, the effort accepts eucalyptus twigs, native urubingo and banana leaves from rural consumers, who bring such biomass to a local hub; from there, fuel pellets are produced without the felling of any trees and for a price considerably lower than that of charcoal or wood. Biomass donors get free fuel pellets in return, as well as the biochar fertilizer that gets produced when such biomass is burned in a LuciaStove. Urban consumers, meanwhile, buy their fuel pellets, thus generating the bulk of Inyenyeri's revenues and helping to support what's designed to be a carbon-negative system. Either way, consumers ultimately will be able to return biochar to Inyenyeri as proof that they've been using the LuciaStove and receive credits that can be used toward solar lights, rechargeable batteries, school vouchers and more. The video below demonstrates the LuciaStove in action:

Aiming to establish some 300 locations by 2020, Inyenyeri is now working with support from the Rwandan Red Cross to distribute 230 LuciaStoves and 100kg per hour of pelletized biomass fuel for Rwanda’s poor. By using a revenue model based on fuel sales, the effort reaches rural consumers without subsidies or a microcredit scheme, it says. And when 40 percent of Rwandan households participate in the system, Rwanda will become the world's first carbon negative nation, the effort asserts. Social and energy entrepreneurs: one to get involved in?

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