

# In the News



Local entrepreneurs build a demonstration cookstove, as part of a local market assessment in their cookstove enterprise training. Photo by Eva Demaya Centre

## Malawi Conference Boosts Low-Pollution Stoves

Firewood and charcoal provide more than 90 percent of the energy needs of the residents of Malawi, a small landlocked nation in southern Africa. These fuel sources affect livelihoods, health and natural resource availability. With the population increasing in this densely populated country, Malawi is seeking cleaner cooking methods.

Compared to traditional open-fire cooking, clean cookstoves transfer heat to the pot more efficiently, offer more complete combustion, burn less wood and feature chimneys that prevent smoke from venting into the user's kitchen. More information is at [cleancookstoves.org](http://cleancookstoves.org).

The State Department, U.S. Forest Service, Peace Corps, USAID, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. African Development Foundation and several development partners decided to help: In April, they held a two-day conference on clean cookstoves in Malawi that was organized by Christopher M. Nyce, economic and commercial officer at the U.S. Embassy in Lilongwe, Malawi, and Peace Corps volunteer Brian Smyser.

Mission Malawi's cookstove entrepreneurship project has made improved cookstoves available in rural areas and boosted economic development. The project, initiated by Smyser with U.S. African Development Foundation aid channeled through the Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund, trained seven Malawians as cookstove entrepreneurs. Speaking at the conference, Ambassador Jeanine Jackson

noted the value of clean cookstoves in protecting lives and promoting development through entrepreneurship.

The conference also highlighted strategies to increase use of clean cookstoves and expand that market, and fostered collaborative dialogue on technical matters and Malawian implementation strategies, including financing, marketing, entrepreneurship, supply chain management, health protection and performance testing. Attendees included entrepreneurs, project facilitators and public and private stakeholders, including leaders of Malawi's departments of Energy, Environmental Affairs and Forestry, and the Ministry of Health.

At the event, representatives of the Kenyan groups Practical Action and Global Village Energy Partnership International discussed East African cookstove initiatives.

As a result of the symposium, the government of Malawi has committed to collaboration on cookstoves and plans to sign on as a partner of the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves by mid-2012.

Malawi's Deputy Director of Energy Lewis Mhango said his department is excited about taking leadership on clean cookstove initiatives and by the formation of a nationwide cookstove stakeholders' task force. Bringing field experience in cookstove promotion and enthusiasm for Malawi's leadership in enhancing their adoption, he dubbed himself a "seasoned veteran on improved cookstoves."