

Field interview: Mgowela Family, Membe Village

Lesley meets Filimoni and Elisia Mgowela, from Membe village in Chamwino District

Filimoni and Elisia Mgowela were among the first households in Membe to receive a new rocket stove in September 2007. They have lived in Membe since they were born and have four children, 3 girls and 1 boy. Filimoni is also a stove builder and very active in promoting the rocket stove in the village. Their response to the performance of the new stove, like other stove customers has been very encouraging. During efficiency testing at their house, the rocket stove used 40% less wood than the traditional stove. They were happy to be interviewed and give the following opinions on the new stove.

(Questions by Lesley Waller. Responses by Elisia are coded EM and those by Filimoni FM)

How did you hear about STT and the rocket stove?

EM: I heard through my husband who received a letter.

FM: I received a letter from our neighbourhood leader asking me to be a stove builder, as each neighbourhood was asked to provide 2 builders

What type of energy source do you use for:

- a) **Cooking?**
- b) **Lighting?**
- c) **Heating?**

Firewood for cooking and heating, kerosene and torch batteries for lighting

Why do you use these types of energy sources?

FM: That is what is available in the area

Before you had the improved stoves, what were some of the disadvantages of using the x3 stone fire, in terms of health, time, food preservation, and the environment?

EM: The three-stone stove used a lot of firewood. There was a lot of smoke and food took a long time to cook.

FM: The new stove is also safe for children, while the traditional stove was very dangerous, so the husband often had to look after the children while his wife was cooking so they did not get burnt.

Before you had the improved stoves, what were some of the benefits of using the x3 stone fire?

EM: It was cheap and easy to light and you can use any sized pot with it.

Now that you have the improved stoves, what are some of its benefits in terms of health, time, fuel use, food preservation, and the environment?

FM: There is no smoke and cooking time is reduced.

EM: It uses a very small amount of wood

FM: Because you use a small amount of fire wood it helps to reduce environmental destruction.

Now that you have the improved stoves, what are some of the disadvantages/problems associated with it?

EM: The only disadvantage is that you have to use the same size pots as were measured during the building.

How long did it take you to go gather firewood when you had the traditional x3 stone fire?

EM: I used to collect two bundles of firewood per week and now only collect one bundle per week.

What do you do with the time saved?

EM; I use the time to work on the shamba or for housework.

What are the problems of using firewood?

FM: The forest is far and so collecting wood takes a long time. When splitting wood into pieces, eye injuries can occur or cuts from using an axe. Collecting firewood can also be dangerous as sometimes men go to the forest to try and rape the women and occasionally there are wild animals, such as snakes, leopards and lions.

Is there a way to get your voice and opinions to the government about your energy needs?

FM: We can present our suggestions at public meetings and also to other district leaders when they visit the village.

What have been some of the main environmental changes that you have noticed in your village over the years?

In the past the environment was good, nowadays the environment has been damaged after people started cutting the forest for farming, hunting and fires made during honey collection.

How would you improve the current stove?

FM: We plan to plaster the stove with cement so that when the roof leaks, water will not damage the stove.

STT would like to thank Filimoni and Elisia for giving their time to conduct the interview. Thanks also to Justin for translating the responses into English.

