



Case Study

co2balance in the community

Economic and Social Enterprise

Shimba Hills cover 250km² and lay approximately 40km south-west of Mombasa. The area was listed as National Forest as long ago as 1903, being one of the few large areas on the south coast that at the time was still well forested.

The fragile ecosystem of the area is surrounded by poor farming communities whose lifestyles often impact negatively on the ecosystem, especially due to harvesting of trees for firewood. One of the major challenges facing the district is the persistent and increasing incidence of poverty. 32% of adults in this district live below food poverty level, and 26% below absolute poverty. In addition to carbon savings this project creates opportunities for economic enterprise, if you know where to look.

One of the Gold Standard projects our customers have helped to support is in the Shimba Hills district of Kenya.



About co2balance UK Ltd

Established in 2003, co2balance UK Ltd is a leading, UK based, carbon management provider offering carbon calculation, management and reduction services to leading blue chip companies including, B&S, Toshiba Europe and Gaz De France. As a project developer co2balance UK Ltd creates African Gold Standard and CDM projects that focus on social, health and community benefits to the families within the project area, in addition to carbon savings.



co2balance UK Ltd.
1 Discovery House,
Cook way, Taunton,
Somerset TA2 6BJ
01823 332233



Time well spent

One of the most powerful benefits resulting from our stove projects is the amount of time saved by women through the use of the new stoves. For most women in rural Kenya, a typical day involves waking up at sunrise and walking to the nearest forested area to collect their firewood for the day. Often, women might have to walk for 2 to 3 hours to do this. Once home, they immediately begin preparing food for their families.

On a traditional open fire stove, cooking times for meals can be long. The co2balance improved cook stoves drastically reduce the amount of firewood used when cooking, with a corresponding reduction in fuel and in time spent collecting firewood. The new stove design is also highly efficient; as a result women see a reduction in cooking time as well. Some women can now have over an hour a day to themselves to get involved in other activities that can be of benefit to them.

We travelled to Rukanga a remote village in the region to meet with some women who are maximizing the time saved with the new stove, and using this new found time that they have, to get involved in income generating activities that benefit their entire families. We were welcomed into Rukanga by Florence Awuda and Mercy Mghambi Mwazighe. These women are both recipients of the improved cook stove. We spoke to Mercy and Florence about how they are spending the time they have saved as a result of the CarbonZero stove.

Mercy: "I am a member of the Rukanga Basket Weavers Group. I work with Florence and many women to weave beautiful baskets from Sisal. These baskets we can sell and make money. Now we have more time, we can make more baskets. If we make more baskets we can make more money not only for us but also for our family"

Florence: "Yes, Mercy is correct. You know I was spending a lot of time collecting firewood so I could only work on my baskets at night after I had prepared food and looked after the chores and family. Now I have time to even work on my baskets at the day time because I am not collecting, collecting all the time. And also to add to this it is very good because I have had time to learn new basket weaving techniques also. Now I can also make bottle holders and table cloths. I have more time to learn. This is good too"

Mercy: "It is a great group our Rukanga Basket Weavers and now we have time to participate properly. Its very nice that we can have all our chores and food ready on time but also have time to do something we like to do and also make some money for our family"

From these interviews it is clear that the women we work with are all motivated and determined individuals who want to cultivate change within their own lives. By simply giving them time to do so, and freeing them from the responsibility of firewood collection daily, they are able to take the initiative and get involved in opportunities to improve their standard of living, with both social and economic payback.