

# Green Entrepreneurs Bring Clean Cooking to Ethiopia



*This feature is an outcome of infoDev, a multi-donor program administered by the World Bank Group, with a focus on entrepreneurs in developing economies. This piece was originally published on July 21, 2017.*

If you drive west of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the soil turns into a deep russet red, and the terrain unfurls, undulating into mountains and valleys. It's an eight hour journey to the city of Gimbi. From there, you must climb high into the surrounding mountainside to reach a farming village in Haru district, where Asegedu Tesfaye and Ganeti Anana, wife and husband, live.

On a sunny day in May, Asegedu and Ganeti welcomed some visitors to their home in their remote village. There, they showed off their new fuel-efficient cookstove received from the local farming cooperative three months ago. "It's been very useful for our lives since we got it," they said. It's improved Asegedu's eye and respiratory health, as well as saving them time every week in collecting firewood.

## Gogle

The maker of those cookstoves is Gogle, an Addis Ababa-based company founded in 2009 by engineers, Teramaj Terefe and Addisu Sime, to modernize Ethiopia's cooking wares. "You drive all over this country, and the majority of people are still using three-stone fires," said Teramaj, the chief executive, referring to the campfire-like method of using three large stones to prop up cooking ware over a wood fire. The method -- often practiced indoors -- produces a lot of smoke, harming the health of its tenders and affecting air quality.

The engineers created a low-smoke cookstove that efficiently burns charcoal briquettes, as well as wood. It wasn't easy at first for Gogle, which struggled with low production capacity. "One of the NGOs could come to you and order something like 1,000 or 5,000 cookstoves," said Terefe.

In 2014, Gogle won a grant from [the Ethiopia Climate Innovation Center \(ECIC\)](#), enabling it to buy the machinery to expand its production capacity. Since then, the company has supplied several NGOs (including Horn of Africa, Oxfam, and WorldVision, among others), as well as wholesalers and the Oromia Coffee Union of Cooperatives, which distributes cookstoves in Gimbi.

Along the way, Gogle grew its staff to 28 people and increased demand to suppliers, including charcoal dust producers in the Afar region (for the charcoal briquettes) and women groups producing clay liners in northeast Ethiopia and Hawassa regions (for the inner lining of the cookstoves).

Gogle expanded at a good time. The briquette market in Ethiopia is heating up — briquettes are viewed as a better alternative to charcoal cooking in terms of cost, efficiency, and health effects. As there are very few briquette producers in Ethiopia, they're poised to capture more of the market as briquette demand increases.

## **Coffee and Refugees**

Gogle's end-users include both urban and rural communities. In places like Gimbi, the farming cooperatives and the local government have a strong incentive for farmers to switch over to clean cookstoves. Not only is it a health issue, but also a business one: Coffee is one of the major crops in the region, and a large portion is exported to Europe and other developed markets. Coffee labeled with 'Fairtrade Climate Standard' and 'Gold Standard' certification -- requiring farmers participate in carbon reduction practices and programs -- fetches the highest price. To get certified, Gimbi's farmers must switch to the fuel efficient cookstoves, as a way to reduce deforestation from wood gathering and improve air quality.

Another significant customer is NGOs like the Gaia Association, a UNHCR-backed NGO, which distributes cookstoves to refugee camps. Desalegn Getaneh, managing director of Gaia, has worked with Gogle for almost two years. Desalegn was clear about the quality of Gogle's stoves. "They're the most expensive," Desalegn said. "The only reason they supply us is because the stoves are good quality."

Gaia recently handed Gogle an 8,000 briquette cookstoves order for a refugee camp along the Somalia border. Gaia has already distributed about 500 Gogle cookstoves (which burn both wood and briquettes) in other regions, with another 1,000 on the way.

## **Turning the Tide**

Gogle does have challenges, though, related to both financing and adoption of their cookstoves.

While urban customers — the bulk of Gogle's current customers — have access to a wide variety of clean cookstoves, from electricity to ethanol and gas, the vast majority of Ethiopia's population lives in rural areas, with three-stone fires as the preferred cooking method. Convincing these people — approximately 80 million — will be the ticket to both Gogle's success and real climate impact.

There are promising signs that the tide may turn, though. An increasing number of people are adopting these new cookstoves, convinced by the health, cleanliness, and time-saving benefits.

Gogle's main barrier to growth now is financing, to purchase raw material and modernize their workshop. They are running at only 25% of capacity due to raw material and manufacturing space constraints. Their cookstove machines have the capacity to produce 500 cookstoves per day, but currently, are only producing 120. They have applied for additional ECIC funding to address the financing issue.

The government recently granted Gogle a thousand acres of land to grow their business, based on their success so far. But as Teramaj explained, Gogle is hesitating to build a second workshop on that land right now -- they've got to polish their existing workshop and solidify their financial backing first.

The dream is there though: "We want to grow and grow, and reach more and more households and people," said Teramaj.

Gogle is one of many companies which are supported by infoDev's Climate Technology Program, an initiative sponsored by the U.K.'s Department for International Development, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australian Aid),

Denmark’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DANIDA), Norway’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Netherlands’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

PATRICIO V. MARQUEZ | OCT 10, 2021

3 Priorities to Scale Up Mental Health Services Amid COVID-19

DAVID MCKENZIE | OCT 08, 2021

Weekly links October 8: green skills, defending the status quo, generating good jobs, agents vs humans, and more...

FATIH BIROL,DAVID MA | 2021

It’s critical to ta emissions

- About

Data

Research and Publications

Learning
- News

Projects and Operations

Countries

Topics

FOLLOW US



NEWSLETTER

Enter email to subscribe...>

This Site in: ENGLISH