

The Broken Promise of Solar Cooking. The Case of Goudoubo Refugee Camp in Burkina Faso

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Abstract: There has been a recent boom in renewable energy programs in African refugee settlements. Solar cookers are being disseminated with many-promised health, environmental and socio-economic benefits for women, including a decrease in smoke intake and drudgery. While solar energy initiatives for water pumping and lighting are widely used by refugees, the case for solar cookers has not been evident. This dissertation presents a case study of the introduction of the Blazing Tube solar cooker (BT) in Goudoubo Camp, Burkina Faso between 2013 and 2016. By using the energy ladder hypothesis as a theoretical framework, this paper identified and assessed the energy needs, preferences, behaviors, and adoption patterns among refugee women. Results from 37 interviews and 2 focus groups indicated that the BT failed to meet many of the participating women's needs and expectations. These findings go beyond those put forward by the energy ladder hypothesis and provide practitioners with a more holistic understanding of refugee women's energy behavior.

Keywords: Solar cookers, protracted refugee situation, energy ladder hypothesis, women