



### **Award - Commercialization**

In appreciation and recognition of creating a sustainable commercial supply chain for increasing the use of clean and efficient cookstoves in Ghana.

#### **Interview with Don Feil**

##### **EnterpriseWorks/VITA—Ghana**

**Mission:** Combating poverty by helping stove manufacturers and retailers achieve sustainable business and consumers possess fuel efficiency and reduced indoor air pollution.

**What is the most exciting aspect of your work?** The ability to have such a strong and direct impact on people's lives! When I travel to areas, I try to get out into the rural areas and see the households where people are using our cookstoves and other products, and there I personally witness the benefits the products are having on their lives. Although most are not formally educated and are poor, all are extremely savvy consumers. They know if a product is good and economically desirable. Their input as users and consumers of the cookstoves is sought and used and helps make our products more successful.

**How has being a PCIA Partner helped you in your work?** Although most would think the first answer to this question is the "financial benefit," the real answer is the ability to associate with like-minded organizations, and to identify and meet with organizations I didn't know about. Learning through colleagues has been of great benefit to our work.

**How has winning a PCIA Award helped you to promote your program?** We won the Commercialization Award in 2007 and it was wonderful to have this recognition. We've been doing this work for forty years, working to make our non-profit use a for-profit business model for our products, so we are grateful to have our success highlighted.

**What is the most useful thing you learned at the 2007 PCIA Forum that you were able to implement in your program?** The PCIA Forum was so useful to us because of the people that attended and the relationships that came out of the meeting. We were able to begin relationships in new areas that we wanted to pursue, learning from our colleagues. As well, we have been able to clarify the commercialization process – expanding cookstoves as a sustainable business, not a subsidized environmental health intervention.

**What new breakthrough/insight has your program achieved since winning your award at the 2007 Forum?** Since winning the award, we've been able to scale up our cookstove program



Don Feil accepting the award from Kurt Hoffman, Director, Shell Foundation

in Ghana, expanding the sales-base of stoves to a point where the implementing organization is on the verge of being self-sustaining.

**What are your program's goals for the coming 1-2 years?** We are currently selling 60,000-70,000 cookstoves per year in only two areas – Greater Accra and Kumasi. The plan is to expand to other areas and by next year, double our sales.



Stock of cookstoves in Uganda

**What advice do you have for others in the household energy and health field?** There is a tendency to treat low-income populations as beneficiaries but it's much more beneficial, and actually necessary in our work, to treat them as clients. Taking into account the end-view of the customer from the very beginning designs of the cookstoves or other products to the end marketing and promotion is essential to achieving success. Without this, your product and program can fail. Low-income populations have money, but poor cash-flow and they will spend it, but the key is to show them the economic benefits, not just the health ones. For cookstoves, the result is significantly lower fuel costs and less indoor smoke pollution and better health, showing that less pollution means less sick days, which means more days of being able to work and bring in money (improving health brings economic reward) is key to changing consumer behavior.