

Supporting a smart fight against deforestation in Madagascar

When Regula Ochsner returned to Madagascar in 1998, two decades after having worked there, she was shaken. Entire forests had all but disappeared. While some had been cleared for farming, most – roughly 80 percent – had been harvested for firewood. Cleared of its forest cover, the fragile soil was exposed to the elements, resulting in irreversible erosion that left behind a scarred landscape and destroyed habitats.

Determined to protect what remained of Madagascar's forests, Mrs. Ochsner returned to the island in 2000. A shipping container followed her, filled with 500 kits to build solar ovens. ADES, the Association for the Development of Solar Energy, was born, and the shipping container was transformed into its first workshop.

ADES has since grown into a 140-person business active in nine centers across the island that has spawned hundreds more part time and fulltime jobs. Its portfolio has since expanded from the solar cooker they began with to include energy-efficient briquette and wood stoves.

Rice, cassava, sweet potatoes, or beans, staples of Malagasy cuisine, can be prepared with a fraction of the wood or briquettes needed on traditional open stoves. In addition to cutting

the need for firewood by 50 percent the stoves each save 3000 square meters of forest per year and dramatically reduce the amount of harmful smoke people, in particular the cooks, are exposed to.

All in all, ADES has sold 170,000 stoves, impacting close to one million people. But Regula Ochsner wanted to reach more of the country's 25 million inhabitants, who live spread across vast areas often serviced by poor infrastructure. The answer was a sales platform on wheels. Equipped with a kitchen, dormitories, and a sales room, the ADES truck, inaugurated in 2017, travels from site to site with a total staff of ten, spending a few weeks or months in a region demonstrating and selling stoves at markets before moving on.

As part of our long-term CSR strategy, u-blox has been supporting ADES since 2011, and we again renewed our commitment to the project this year, sponsoring three-months of the mobile sales platform's activity as it travelled from Moramanga to Ambatondrazaka to Tamatave on the east coast. During that time, they sold stoves to 1500 households made of 8250 individuals, collectively saving 4500 tons of wood and CO₂ emissions. ■

Learn more:

www.adesolaire.org/en

www.u-blox.com/en/our-work-community-making-difference