As part of their work with Yorkshire-based sustainability charity, the United Bank of Carbon (UBoC), leading ‘green’ academics from the University of Leeds’ School of Earth and Environment have hosted a cook stove workshop to highlight the global issue of the environmental and health impacts of household solid fuel use by about half of the world’s population.

The one day workshop, hosted in conjunction with LEAF (Leeds, Ecosystems, Atmosphere and Forests) and Africa College, was led by Dr Dominick Spracklen, associate professor at the School of Earth and Environment. It brought together cook stove policy makers, practitioners and academics from around the UK to share insights about ‘clean’ cook stove projects and how they might be used to address the issues caused by traditional cook stoves.

As part of the workshop, a number of the latest design of improved cook stoves were demonstrated to show how clean cook stove projects could have a major impact on the current situation if implemented properly.
“Nearly three billion people burn wood, animal and agricultural waste and coal in open fires or rudimentary cook stoves to meet their basic energy requirements. Reliance on these polluting cook stoves and fuels leads to a wide variety of health, social and environmental problems,” explains Ed Butt, PhD student at the School of Earth and Environment and project co-ordinator for United Bank of Carbon. “For example, it’s estimated that related health problems account for some four million premature deaths annually with women and young children being the worst affected.

“The burning of solid-fuels like biomass is often inefficient and releases a toxic mix of health damaging pollutants, which contribute to climate change at regional and global levels. In addition, in many countries, forest cover has been cleared or degraded to support charcoal production, and in others, reliance on wood fuel and charcoal for cooking has led to pressures on local forests and natural resources.”

Dr Dominick Spracklen added: “A number of academics at universities throughout the UK are looking at ways of improving the situation and this workshop was a great opportunity to bring them together to identify opportunities for future development and collaborative research. There’s no doubt that the latest design of clean cook stoves together with community-level insights and information on acceptance, can go a long way to solving the far-reaching environmental and health problems caused by this burning issue.”

- Ends –

Picture shows (L to R): PhD students Ed Butt and Cat Scott of the School of Earth and Environment at the University of Leeds with Dr Dominick Spracklen associate professor at the School of Earth and Environment, and Richard Iliffe, project manager of co2balance

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Note to editors

UBoC
Founded by Bettys and Taylors Group, the University of Leeds and Deloitte, UBoC enables businesses to play a part in tackling climate change by matching them with verified rainforest projects from around the globe. Businesses are able to choose from the largest bank of verified rainforest protection projects in the world and find a specific environmental project to partner which has synergies with their own organisation. For more information, visit www.unitedbankofcarbon.com