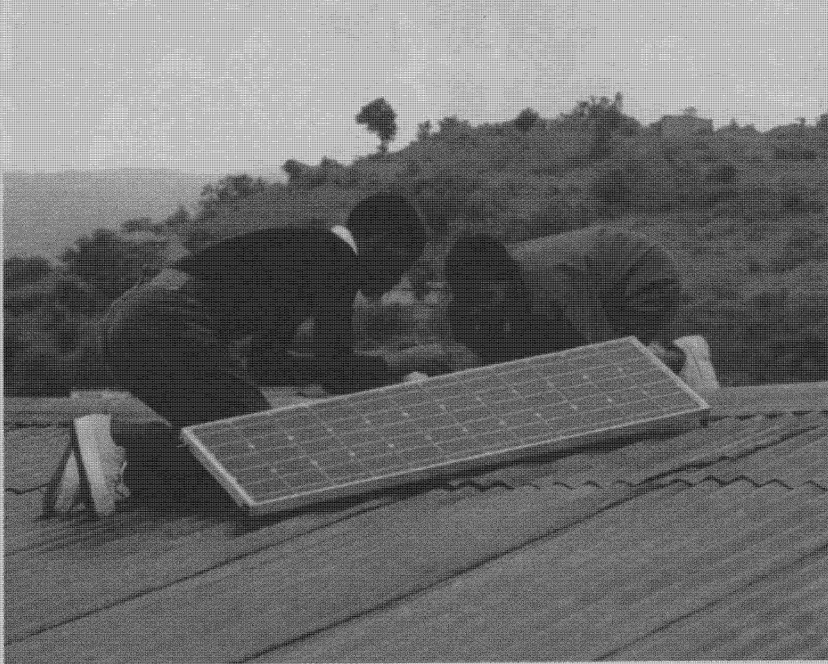


Let's Light up the World



Two billion people on the planet, or 70% of the developing world, remain without access to electricity on the eve of the 21st Century. Ninety percent of the unelectrified population of the Third World live in remote, rural areas. The 20th Century - with its electric lights, television, recorded music, and radio - has passed them by.

These families, living mostly in remote rural areas, already constitute the largest group of household users of solar electricity in the world. They represent the future of solar electricity. For hundreds of millions of widely dispersed households and farms, there is no other affordable, economically justifiable, or immediately available source of electric power.

In the last issue of Positive News we reported on plans to set up a Solar Bank to light up the world. Here we share some examples of some of the tens of thousands of "off-grid" rural families in developing countries who get their household electricity directly from the sun.

VIETNAM.

The Solar Electric Light Fund has completed a joint pilot project with the Vietnam Women's Union which represents 11 million members. The "Solar Project in

Support of Rural Women" was managed by Marlene Brown, an electrical engineer and photovoltaics design and installation expert, who assisted the organisation in its effort to electrify 100 households and 5 community centres in two provinces in the Mekong Delta. Another 30 households in the North will also be electrified through the programme. Currently only 20 percent of Vietnam's 72 million people have access to electricity.

NEPAL

In April 1994, SELF and its partner, The Centre for Renewable Energy in Kathmandu, completed a 52-house "solar seed" project in Pulimarang, a mountain village near Annapurna. The Gurkha village is the country's first PV-powered community using stand-alone solar home systems. Users purchase their solar-electric units with

loans from a revolving-credit fund managed by their village solar committee. This seed project was inaugurated by Nepal's Prime Minister and was featured on a Nepal Television special. Ninety percent of Nepal is without electricity.

SRI LANKA

SELF has electrified over 300 houses and community centres in off-grid rural areas together with its two NGO partners, The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement and SOLANKA Associates. Additional homes are receiving solar lighting systems with assistance from revolving credit funds. Dr A T Ariyaratne, President of Sarvodaya, has called for a national programme to electrify one million houses by 2005.

INDIA

In October 1994, SELF launched its Indian rural solar project in Karnataka State, forming a solar services company registered in Bangalore. Solar Electric Light Company (SELCO), a grassroots enterprise, is marketing and installing solar home systems and solar water pumps in 3 rural areas. Harish Hande, SELF's Project Manager, is creating an "entrepreneurial model" for solar rural electrification in India, where over 100 million families have no regular electricity supply.

TANZANIA

The Maasai Tribe in Tanzania asked SELF several years ago to help them prepare and fund a solar project to provide solar-powered lighting and tele-communications to serve their widely scattered pastoralists. This year SELF will sponsor a programme of solar battery charging, solar lantern financing and upgrading of existing solar lighting installations. Solar-powered radio telephones and FM radio broadcasts will enhance tribal communications among the far-flung Maasai threatened by land speculators seeking to drive them off their ancestral homelands.

SOUTH AFRICA

The Government of South Africa, through its Ambassador, invited SELF to provide assistance with solar rural electrification. The project will electrify 75 Zulu homes initially and set up a Zulu-owned



Solar-Powered home in the Solomon Islands

"solar services" enterprise to serve an unelectrified community of 12,000 in the Valley of a Thousand Hills. The project is supported by the US Department of Energy, and is being cost-shared with the South African government's Department of Minerals and Energy Affairs' Energy for Development Directorate. Twenty-two

million people are without electricity in South Africa.

CHINA

SELF has completed Phase II of its 1000-House PV project in Dingxi District, Gansu Province, and has launched Phase III in association with its affiliate, the Gansu Solar Electric Light Fund (G-SELF). G-SELF,

an officially registered non-profit agency in Gansu, was formed in May 1993, to manage solar-electrification programmes in Western China. The 7-Counties PV Programme is aimed at bringing solar lighting and power systems to 1000 households in 14 villages. Approximately 250 houses have been electrified thus far, and another 120 families will receive solar home systems this year, financed through loans from a revolving credit fund.

The Solar Electric Light Fund, Inc. (SELF) is a non-profit charitable organisation founded in 1990 to promote, develop, and facilitate solar rural electrification and energy SELF-sufficiency in developing countries. SELF seeks to accelerate commercial market acceptance of solar-generated electricity in developing countries through showcase projects, technology transfer, technical assistance, youth training, grass-roots financing mechanisms, and multilateral development bank support, through media communications, educational programmes, and awareness campaigns.

Solar Clinic

Emily Burridge, a cellist and singer, has been the driving force behind an imaginative scheme building a health centre/clinic in the heart of the Xavante Indian Reserve in Brazil.

She raised the money to build the clinic and to send Germano, the Xavante health monitor, to a course in horticulture and the preparation of medicinal plants and foods with high vitamin content. This has been under the direct supervision of Professor Matos at the living pharmacies project at the university in Fortaleza. The course was a great success and discussions between Germano and Professor Matos led to some major discoveries of plants from the Cerrado which hitherto the Xavante have not used.

In spite of lots of obstacles, the clinic has now been built. The next stage of the project is to provide solar energy for a fridge to store medicines and to light

the clinic. A further bonus is that the solar panels will be powerful enough to run a line to the school to provide light there as well.

This project shows what can be achieved by one person's determination.

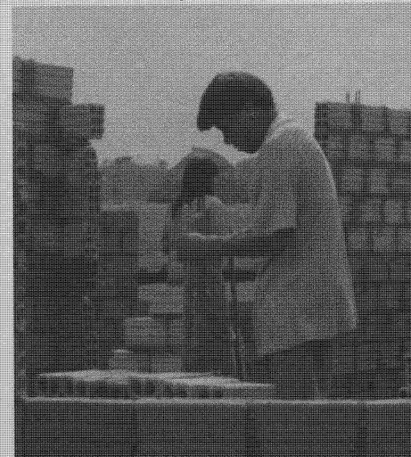
Emily has set up The Indigenous People's Cultural Support Trust.

If you would like to give support or learn more about this project, write to the Trustees c/o Tim Miller, the correspondent for the Trust at A9 Albany, Piccadilly, London W1V 9RD. Telfax ++171 734628, or Charlotte Haynes, North Parade House, North Parade, Monmouth, Gwent. Telfax 01600 772744.

Emily Burridge's CD is reviewed on page 15 of Positive News.



Construction Completed



Building in progress