



## LIGHT THE VILLAGE PROJECT (GUATEMALA)

The *Light the Village Project* will provide solar power for lights and mobile phones to 80 subsistence farming families in the western mountains of Guatemala. The systems provide power for both lighting and mobile phone charging in the indigenous Maya communities of Chenuwitz, Tuicuxlaj Tuiboch and Rio Ocho in the municipality of Todos Santos. This project will involve the installation of 80 solar powered home lighting systems. These self-contained systems consist of a 5 watt solar panel, 2 LED lights, a charge controller and a 12V/7Ah battery. The systems will also be modified by local installers to add an output for mobile phone charging.

Bringing in an electrical system of wires and poles is cost prohibitive so there are thousands of village homes in the region without power. Furthermore, the ongoing costs of electric power service for those who do have access are beyond the means of many families. Families connected to the electrical grid pay the equivalent of one to three days work per month (between \$8 and \$24 USD) and must travel to the municipal center to pay their bill.

While some people continue to use a wick in a small bottle of kerosene for lighting, others use a car battery that is recharged every couple of weeks in Todos Santos. These families must travel between 3 and 20 kilometers to Todos Santos to recharge the battery.

The municipality of Todos Santos is rich in tradition and culture. The primary language spoken in the villages is Mam, a Mayan language, with Spanish as a second language. Most families in the communities own their own land where they grow corn, potatoes, beans and cabbage for their own food; some grow broccoli for export. Earlier projects brought potable water to the villages,



### Project Summary

**Timeline:** September - December 2010

**Objectives:** Provide solar power for light and mobile phone charging in 80 homes in the region

- Increase coverage of renewable energy in the region to reduce environmental impact of transporting and burning fuel
- Increase livelihood opportunities through training and specialized skill development among local community members
- Improve health through the elimination of toxins caused by burning kerosene for home lighting
- Increase disposable income in the household by replacing kerosene with solar power for light.
- Reduce time required to access resources for lighting for remote households.
- Increase regional communications and improve access to information through solar powered mobile phone charging

**Individuals benefiting:** Approximately 480 people

**Location:** Chenuwitz, Tuicuxlaj Tuiboch and Rio Ocho in the municipality of Todos Santos

**Implementing Partners:** LUTW and 5T2, a group of retired civil engineers from the University of Toronto



although few farms have irrigation. Almost all households have chickens and many raise sheep and pigs for their own consumption. On market day, families hike as many as four or five hours to the municipal center across rugged terrain that varies from 1,300-3,500 meters in elevation. Politically, the area is stable, with a strong social fabric and traditional cultural values. Women are primarily responsible for taking care of the home and making clothing for their family. Women from this region are known to be expert weavers, with their daughters taking on many of these responsibilities at a young age. Sons often work with their fathers from the age of five or six. A typical household in the Cuchumatán mountain region is a one-room, adobe structure.



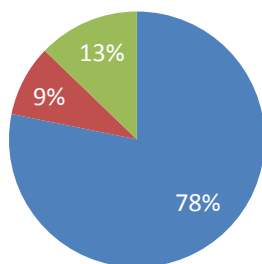
Past lighting installations have helped villagers become more self-sufficient and provided job opportunities for some in the community. To encourage local ownership, the households contribute to the project through a financial contribution as well as active involvement in the project, while the balance is paid for by donations collected by Light Up The World (LUTW) and 5T2. Beyond the tangible benefits of a healthier, safer, and more environmentally sound alternative to fuel, feedback from families who have benefitted from solar light in the region indicates that most people prefer the quality of LED light over kerosene, especially for children doing homework in the evening.

LUTW is actively fundraising to bring sustainable energy to the people of Todos Santos. If you are interested in supporting the Light Up The Village Project (Guatemala), please contact us directly or visit our website at [www.lutw.org](http://www.lutw.org).

### Project Budget

Equipment - design, installation and transportation	\$23,652
Training, Monitoring and Evaluation	\$2,731
Project management and support	\$3,872
<b>Total</b>	<b>* \$30,255</b>

\* Remaining funds to be raised: \$13,376 (May 2010)



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- Training, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Project management and support