

Lighting Up Lives

Alumar, a small island across the municipality of Getafe in the province of Bohol, used to have no electricity. This solar power project, supported by JICA, has taken the community out of the dark.



1 The remote barangay Alumar is off the electrical grid. The area is not served by electric distribution utilities and cooperatives.

The lack of electricity has kept the community poor. Most of the people of Alumar rely on seaweed farming to eke out a living; they earn an average of 3,000 pesos a month. They cannot start small businesses that require electricity.

Households use wood and kerosene for cooking and lighting. Kerosene is costly. The use of wood contributes to deforestation.

2 Thanks to a project implemented by the Department of Energy, local government units, and JICA, changes for the better began in Alumar in 2008. In that year, 50 households received a solar home system.

The system consists mainly of a solar panel, which converts the heat of the sun to electricity, and a battery, which stores the

electricity. It provides enough power for basic appliances—light bulbs, televisions, radios, and the like.

Each household pays 200 pesos a month. The amount goes to the upkeep of the solar power system.

3 Now the children of Alumar can study their lessons at night and do better in school. Everyone can watch television, listen to the radio, and keep abreast of current events.

4 Mothers can finish their work faster and have time on their hands. Now they can rest, care for their children, and swap stories with their friends.

If they or their husbands want to, they can continue working after dark. They can do chores, or they can read and broaden their minds. Maybe they'll even pick up an idea or two for a new business, like a small store selling cold drinks or preserved meats.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPROVEMENT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT IN VILLAGE ELECTRIFICATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Barangays in different parts of the country, particularly in the provinces of Antique, Iloilo, Leyte, and Kalinga, directly benefited from this project. They received seven micro-hydropower rehabilitation projects, one pilot project, and two solar photovoltaic systems rehabilitation, which focused on the battery charging stations.

Apart from facility installation and rehabilitation, the project also has capacity building and training components. It focused on social preparation; barangay power associations were created to manage the power systems and to ensure the project's sustainability. More than 100 photovoltaic engineers and about 50 personnel for micro-hydro were trained.

PROJECT PURPOSE:

To enhance the capability of the target groups for promoting and managing sustainable renewable energy-based village electrification projects

DURATION:

June 2004 to June 2009

IMPLEMENTING AGENCY:

Department of Energy

COST: 420 million yen