

SOLAR ELECTRICITY – INDIA AND NEPAL

Access to Electricity for Rural Communities in Need



LOCAL CONTEXT

BIHAR is one of the poorest and least developed districts in India.

The villages in the **BANEPA** Valley in Nepal, the poorest country in Asia, are extremely underdeveloped.

The populations in both of these areas have no access to governmental electricity grids. For sources of light and power, they are forced to use kerosene lamps that are harmful to their health, or wood fires that are harmful to the environment.

PROJECT STRATEGY

Clearly explain, demonstrate, and implement solar electric technology to the local villagers in order to benefit populations in need.

PROJECT GOALS

Offer nine villages in Bihar, India, and three villages in the Banepa Valley, Nepal, access to solar electricity for five hours a day:

- **Promote** ownership within the villagers of a project that contributes to their economic and social development.
- **Provide** employment opportunities for disadvantaged women, paid for by their communities, to install, control, and repair the solar units.
- **Encourage** an active role and a sense of responsibility within the women engineers.

Project Manager: Karuna-Shechen via the Shechen Clinic (India) and Karuna-Shechen (Nepal)

Location: 9 villages in Bihar (India) and 3 villages in Banepa (Nepal)

Sector: Rural Development

Direct Beneficiaries:

India: 9 villages (1,550 families)

Nepal: 3 villages (350 families)

Budget for India: \$128,000 USD

Budget for Nepal: \$90,850 USD

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 2010, Karuna-Shechen established a partnership with Barefoot College (Rajasthan, India) to help train illiterate grandmothers to become solar electric engineers.

The trained solar engineers install, control, and monitor the maintenance of the units placed in each home in their villages.

The training method used by the Barefoot College is unique:

- ↳ Utilizing color-coded language along with visual demonstrations, allowing illiterate women who speak different languages to be trained together.

Because of this partnership, 350 houses in three Bihari villages already have electricity.

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

1,900 disadvantaged families in India and Nepal:

- **India:** 1,550 families from nine villages around Bodhgaya and served by the Shechen Clinic.
- **Nepal:** 350 families from three rural villages in the Banepa Valley.

DURATION & IMPLEMENTATION

- **India - Duration:** Five years
Implemented by: Karuna-Shechen through the Shechen Clinic and the Barefoot College
- **Nepal - Duration:** One year
Implemented by: Karuna-Shechen with the help of Namaste Banepa (a small Nepalese organization) and the Barefoot College

EXPECTED RESULTS

- The solar installations become the property of the villagers who help install them, finance their maintenance, and manage a Village Solar Energy Committee (each family pays 50 cents per month).
- Women engineers enjoy more recognition from the villagers, especially the men.
- Because of their engineer salaries, women participate financially in the economic life of their families.
- Children who work during the day are able to study and read at night.
- The villagers can work in the evenings, thereby increasing their income.
- The social ties in the community are strengthened by the possibility to meet together at night.

LOCAL PARTNERS AND KARUNA-SHECHEN

Barefoot College, an Indian organization that was founded 40 years ago, successfully develops community activities throughout the world. Its goal is sustainable development: to empower villages to use their own skills and knowledge rather than rely on outside help.

Namaste Banepa is a small Nepalese organization that helps disadvantaged children attend school and develops campaigns for the prevention of uterine prolapse. The organization also makes it possible for women suffering from the condition to receive surgery.

PROJECT FUNDING

The training costs for the Indian and Nepalese women at the Barefoot College and their round-trip fare to Rajasthan are completely covered by the college.

The costs of the solar electric hardware as well as its transport to the villages are paid for by Karuna-Shechen:

- **For the Indian villages:** The college pays for 2/3 of the costs and Karuna-Shechen pays for the remaining 1/3
- **For the Nepalese Villages:** Karuna-Shechen covers the complete cost

FUNDS NEEDED

Karuna-Shechen is raising funds to buy solar electric hardware and to transport it to the villages in India and Nepal.

Funds needed for nine villages in India: Karuna-Shechen needs \$128,000 USD

Funds needed for three villages in Nepal: Karuna-Shechen needs \$60,000 USD*

**The total cost for the project in Nepal is \$90,850 USD but a generous donor has already agreed to fund one third.*

Outline of the Costs:

For the project in India (five years)

- For One Family: **\$100 USD**
- For One Village: **\$14,400 USD**
- For the Nine Villages in the Project: **\$128,000 USD**

For the Project in Nepal (one year)

- For One Family: **\$300 USD**
- For One Village: **\$30,300 USD**
- For the Three Villages in the Project: **\$90,850 USD**

To receive more information about this project, please contact one of Karuna-Shechen's branches.



PROJECT MANAGER: KARUNA-SHECHEN

Karuna-Shechen is a humanitarian organization that implements health and education projects in the Himalayan region. Founded and directed by Matthieu Ricard and inspired by the ideal of compassion (*karuna*) in action, the organization is deeply rooted in the traditions and values of the communities it serves.

Since 2001, Karuna-Shechen has initiated and developed 111 projects in India, Nepal and Tibet, propelled by the conviction that access to basic health care and education is a right for all.

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