

CLEAN ENERGIES: EFFICIENT TOOLS FOR SOCIAL COHESION SOLAR COLLECTORS IN VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Argentina
Silvana Rufail



Organization type:

government

Budget:

\$50,000 - \$100,000

Website:

<http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar>

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Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

The project aims at providing hot and clean water to a community sports centre and to 5 houses by installing solar collectors for water heating. This service will be extended to other houses and community facilities, thus providing continuity to a multisectoral-approach strategy where the State, the private sector and society commingle to generate sustainable development in the most disadvantageous areas in the city of Buenos Aires. New technologies will be implemented to promote energy saving and environmental awareness.

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

Direct beneficiaries of this intervention will be 3,860 people (1,149 households), who reside in Los Piletones and who use the Community Sports Centre, as well as five families who have installed solar panels in their houses. For many years, local authorities and other agents have been working on the urbanization and humanization of this space. Energy supply has been one of the many barriers they encountered (at present, the Government pays energy vendors to supply the neighborhood). It is essential to complement the urbanization plan with energy sustainability strategies, economic saving and environmental awareness for the long-term and overall sustainability of the project.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

Given the current trend to improve the use of renewable energy, solar thermal energy for the generation of hot water, both for individual and community installations, is the most practical way to reduce the emission of polluting gases in urban areas. The installation of solar panels is included within an urbanization plan carried out by the Government of the City of Buenos Aires in the most vulnerable areas of the city. Using the most beneficial renewable energy source in this program generates awareness of this technological product in the market (solar panels) and provides a conceptual strategy for sustainable housing construction. This project stands out as it represents a comprehensive approach which seeks to solve structural problems through the implementation of low-cost and innovative solutions in social vulnerability situations (as the one this area of the city suffers). Furthermore, its multisectoral and participative character provides legitimacy and long-time sustainability to the project.

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

This project has been successful in many areas: • The inter-organization approach and the different viewpoints have enriched the project, thus helping overcome the many barriers we have faced. • Technology appropriation and the improvement in direct beneficiaries' welfare have been effective. There are even other neighbors who are willing to implement this solution. • Technical, political, institutional and social barriers were identified, which will be considered when implementing this project in other areas. The project's follow-up and the measurement of its impacts have been carried out by monitoring the hygiene conditions and life quality of the neighborhood's inhabitants both before and after the installation of solar collectors, in order to identify changes to habits and customs as well as to assess the level of satisfaction. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that, ever since the solar panels were implemented, energy costs are lower and the registry of consumption shows a substantial decrease in this respect.

About You

Organization:

Dirección General de Relaciones Internacionales y Protocolo, Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires

About You

First Name

Fulvio

Last Name

Pompeo

About Your Organization

Organization Name

Dirección General de Relaciones Internacionales y Protocolo, Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires

Organization Phone

(+54.11) 43239400 int. 2127

Organization Address

Av. de Mayo 525. Of.137. Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires

Organization Country

, C

Country where this project is creating social impact

, C

How long has your organization been operating?

More than 5 years

The information you provide here will be used to fill in any parts of your profile that have been left blank, such as interests, organization information, and website. No contact information will be made public. Please uncheck here if you do not want this to happen..

Innovation**What stage is your project in?**

Operating for less than a year

Share the story of the founder and what inspired the founder to start this project

The project was first developed thanks to the joint work of an NGO, the IADS (Argentine Institute for Sustainable Development) and 2 departments of the Government of the City of Buenos Aires: the CBAS (Organization for the Development of Southern Buenos Aires) and the APRA (Agency of Environmental Protection.) The IADS develops innovative proposals to promote sustainable development through projects and policies. The APRA promotes actions intended to protect the urban environment. The CBAS develops public services which favor human and urban development in order to balance inequalities in the most marginalized areas of the city of Buenos Aires.

This project arose out of the ideas and efforts of each participating entity. In the search for promotion of sustainable development, the relationship between environment and poverty has always been treated but never seriously considered. Thanks to the interaction between environmental and sustainable development organizations (IADS and APRA) and the entity which is related to socio-urban parameters (CBAS), it was determined that the relationship above may be materialized through this initiative. The results obtained show that it is possible to solve environmental and social problems simultaneously.

Social Impact**How many people have been impacted by your project?**

101 - 1,000

How many people could be impacted by your project in the next three years?

More than 10,000

What barriers might hinder the success of your project and how do you plan to overcome them?

The main barrier is the capability to purchase new solar panels. The office of International Relations and Cooperation is working to give publicity to this initiative and to obtain grants that guarantee its continuity. Another barrier is related to the resistance to change by the inhabitants of marginalized neighborhoods, who claim priorities related to subsistence. In order to overcome this issue, it will be necessary to strengthen the participation of neighbors and major social organizations that are already working there. Building deficiencies would be a potential barrier as they prevent some houses from having solar panels installed. In order to overcome this barrier, the CBAS would make the necessary improvements, as it has done so far.

How will your project evolve over the next three years?

Over the next three years, the project will evolve in the following three directions:

- 1) Extend solar panel installation to other community buildings in Los Piletones (dining facilities, health centers and schools) as well as to more houses. These will be selected following criteria which will be democratically defined by neighbors through the participation of Neighborhood Associations.
- 2) Incorporate this type of technologies in the bid documents for Social Housing plans for the city of Buenos Aires.
- 3) Become a reference model by transferring good practices and sharing our experience with other cities in Argentina and abroad.

Sustainability**For each selection, please explain the financial and non-financial support from each**

The main financial support was provided by the Embassy of Germany (USD 20,000), which allowed us to purchase solar collectors.

The Argentine Institute for Sustainable Development provided specialized human resources for the project coordination and performance.

The CBAS provided USD 5,000 for expenses concerning logistics, human resources and conditioning of houses selected (which were not prepared for the installation of solar panels). Moreover, it provided human resources that would be in charge of the social work within the neighborhood. The Agency of Environmental Protection provided technical and human resources, as well as equipment and broadcasting materials. Furthermore, it supplied materials for conditioning houses and for installing solar collectors.

The Neighbors Association of the Los Piletones Neighborhood and the neighborhood's Public Library worked on a voluntary basis by discussing problems and making decisions at key stages of the project (as the selection of beneficiary houses). This granted adequacy and legitimacy to its implementation.

How do you plan to grow and/or diversify your base of support in the next three years?

The current multisectoral partnership provides a great potential to develop this project in the future and to overcome difficulties. A broadcasting plan will be prepared so as to communicate, both at national and international levels, the existence of the project and the changes to the beneficiaries' lives. This plan will provide the necessary publicity to reach new agents and industries which may collaborate in the diversification and extension of our bases of support.

Current trends show a growing willingness to purchase solar panels, which may make the technology market for renewable energy more dynamic. In this sense, the private sector may become, in the medium term, one of the most important pillars for the support of this project and of others related to social interests.

The inclusion of these technologies in governmental Housing Plans (for the city of Buenos Aires and other provinces) would promote a new concept of sustainable housing with beneficial economic, social and environmental impacts, which would also contribute to market acceleration.

Collaboration

Please select your areas of intervention in the home improvement market

Financing, Technology, Sanitation, Water, Infrastructure, Energy conservation, Renewable energy, Green housing, Environment, Urban development, Citizen/community participation, Public policy.

Is your innovation addressing barriers in the home improvement/progressive housing market? If so, please describe in detail your mechanisms of intervention

Poor settlements, as Los Piletones neighborhood, receive energy through community devices. Whenever there is a conflict related to tariffs or a technical malfunction related to the energy company, energy supply is firstly reduced in marginalized areas.

Panels provide autonomy to houses and allow energy saving, water storage and hot water supply in places that used to be impossible to reach. Also, accidents and environmental damage due to carbon monoxide escapes (from devices which have not been properly installed or which function under unstable conditions) will be prevented.

Taking into account that, in 2006, the government of the City of Buenos Aires declared this zone as an area of "sanitary risk" due to the collapse of sewage networks, rainwash discharge and water supply, the urbanization tasks performed allowed us to improve housing conditions through the use of technology.

Are you currently collaborating with private companies, or have you partnered with private companies in the past? With which companies?

The company Energe is participating in this project as provider of solar thermal energy equipments. This is a company with offices in Argentina which was originally created in the Argentinean University of Cuyo. Not only is its purpose to reach financial profitability, but also to generate positive social impact.

Please describe in detail the nature of the partnership(s)

Materializing the use of alternative energy in this project leads to the association of the sustainability concept with an urbanization and house-conditioning strategy. This conceptual association represents an innovation in the building industry and provides publicity to the companies which could successfully implement it with positive social impact.

Select the unit(s) with which the partnership was formed

Other (please specify).

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