

The Salt Farmer Solar Lantern Campaign (saltLantern) grows out of GFI's *Green Economy for the Poor Initiative* which is focused on helping bring the economic benefits of "green" innovation and "green" industry into the hands of the world's working poor. For over a year GFI has been collaborating with India's Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) on a program to introduce renewable energy technology to a group of 30,000 women Salt Farmers in the arid desert of the Little Rann of Kutch (LRK) in Gujarat, India. The primary goal of the Salt Farmer program has been to deploy energy innovations to lower input costs for one of the most marginalized working communities on earth. The underlying goal is to help poor workers gain access to the economic tools and technologies too often reserved for wealthy nations and communities.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Who:	15,000 Salt Farming Families led by women of SEWA
What:	Distribute Solar Lanterns to replace costly and polluting kerosene
Why:	Give poor workers access to "green" technology to lower input costs and raise incomes
Where:	India's Northern State of Gujarat in the Salt Flats of the Little Kutch of Rann
Cost:	\$600,000 (one time cost)
Benefit:	\$750,000-\$1.2 Mil saving/year + \$1,218,750 reinvested (over 5 years)

The Campaign

GFI has teamed with one of the premier solar lantern producers and is launching a campaign to deploy 15,000 lanterns of the LRK Salt Farmers of Northern India. The lanterns will be distributed to families through the SEWA network and a program will be structured that takes 25% of the yearly cost savings to reinvest in the larger renewable energy initiatives being undertaken by the Salt Farmers.

At a cost of \$40 per lantern, including shipping and distribution, the total campaign investment is targeted at \$600,000. From this \$600,000, the 15,000 participating LRK families will realize a yearly cost savings of \$750,000 to \$1.2 million. At a 25% reinvestment rate, the community could see as much as a million dollars over 5 years reinvested locally in livelihood regenerating programs owned, funded and led by the community. Here's the math:

Total participants in the Lantern Campaign:	15,000 families
Average family income from Salt Farming:	\$1000 (INR 44,315)/year
Total Participant Community Revenue:	\$15 Million/year
Cost of fuel for existing lanterns (5%-8% of income)	\$50-\$70/year/family
X 15,000 participants	\$750,000-\$1,200,000/year
Potential Cost Savings with Solar Lanterns (average)	\$975,000/year
Community Reinvestment Potential from Campaign (at 25%)	\$243,750/year

Why Solar Lanterns?

FUEL-BASED LAMPS: It is currently estimated that 1.5 billion or 22% of people worldwide use kerosene or other fuels to light their homes. Among the LRK Salt Farmers this number is closer to 95%. Kerosene lamps are easy to operate, portable and give off reasonable light, and in the absence of electricity or other lighting technology, kerosene has been the only available option for most of the world's rural (and often urban) poor. The major problem with kerosene, however, is that it is dangerous. Reports by the World Health Organization indicate that indoor air pollution from



kerosene and similar fuels used for indoor lighting and cooking cause more than 1.5 million deaths annually not including those caused by fuel fed fires. The other major issue with kerosene is that it is expensive. In rural India alone, buying kerosene consumes 4 percent of a typical household budget, and due to predatory fuel dealers this percentage is double for the LRK Salt Farmers.

SOLAR LANTERNS: The innovation of solar powered LED lanterns has introduced a tremendous opportunity to finally phase out the use of kerosene and other polluting lamp fuels for rural workers. Providing nearly 200 times more useful light than kerosene, solar lanterns are safer and far brighter than kerosene, and the best part is that they do not require additional spending once the lamp has been purchased. With batteries that last as much as 10 years and easy to assemble parts solar lamps offer a reliable and renewable light source.



About the LRK Salt Farmers



India is currently one of the largest producers of salt products in the world, employing close to a million salt workers across 9 states. The majority of salt farming in India is carried out in the Surendranagar District, an area spanning 900 square miles which is completely flooded during the August/September Monsoon. From October to May, salt is “manufactured” from the natural brine deposited in wells of soft gravel, sand, clay, and mud and is “harvested” in a process that has changed very little over the centuries. “Agrarias” are the small-producer family farmers that work the salt flats during the dry months and harvest salt for use in manufacturing and commercial processes or in a refined form as table salt. As with most harvesting and related agricultural work throughout the world, the majority of the production work is handled by women and adolescent girls. More than even traditional agricultural work, the process of “farming” salt is exceptionally labor intensive and the environment on the sun baked and isolated salt pans is severe. Yet, out of tradition, circumstance or simply the lack of any other opportunity, women salt farmers toil in some of most marginalized conditions of earth.



Project Partners



The Global Fairness Initiative

Founded in 2002, the Global Fairness Initiative (GFI) aims to change the global poverty cycle and enable market-based solutions that benefit the world’s poorest workers and producers. Through community-based and international engagements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, GFI’s brings a unique strength and value by managing strategic partnerships and interventions that support the working poor. GFI implements critical programs on social protections and economic access ensures that the voices of the poor are brought to a level that informs key decision makers and improves public policy to create enabling environments for small and marginalized producers. By focusing on the bottom line issues, namely increasing wages, market access, domestic and foreign direct investment, and improving livelihoods GFI has helped to improve the lives of thousands of workers and communities worldwide.



SEWA

Registered in 1972, SEWA is a trade union and organization of poor, self-employed women workers who earn a living through their own labor or small businesses. SEWA’s primary goals are to organize women to ensure that every family obtains full employment. SEWA’s belief is that all women should be autonomous both economically and in terms of their decision-making ability. While based in Gujarat India, SEWA has experience organizing poor producers through India, Asia, and around the globe. SEWA’s approach to rural organizing is area specific and demand driven- livelihood activities are structured according to local needs and regional characteristics.