Power Up Nepal

The remote mountain village of Dhapchung is situated at the foothills of the Nepali Himalayas, the last stop on a narrow, winding trail. The village was devastated by the 2015 earthquakes, losing homes, lives, and livelihoods. Earthquake relief came slowly to the community, which made access to energy and connectivity even more paramount.

In October 2016, we partnered with four Nepali organizations to install a 16 kilowatt off-grid solar microgrid to bring light - and a new source of income - to the village. Today, community members have affordable lighting and AC power in their homes, students can access the internet and new learning resources, and local entrepreneurs are equipped with the power and connectivity they need to start new businesses. We have plans to continue innovative models for micro-grids and stand-alone PV systems in Nepal to provide residents with basic services, remove obstacles to sustainable growth, and create economic opportunities for families and communities.

Ten Nicaraguan women - ranging from college students to professionals at the Ministry of Energy and Mines - joined us in the community of El Guaylo for our annual "Mujeres del Sol" (Women in Solar) project, getting hands-on solar training while installing a 490 watt battery-based PV system on the community’s health clinic. The system will enable the use of nebulizers, vaccine refrigerators, and lights for emergency care at night. Electricity will also make the community eligible for a permanent health worker to staff the clinic, funded by the Ministry of Health. Thanks to solar, residents no longer have to walk over an hour to the nearest hospital for more intensive care.

Lilieth Rodriguez was one of the inspiring “Mujeres del Sol” who participated in the project. Lilieth grew up in the town of Quilali in northern Nicaragua, and began studying renewable energy at the age of 16. She went on to earn her renewable energy engineering degree from the National Autonomous University in Nicaragua (UNAN). Her participation in the women’s install sparked her enthusiasm for sustainable community development. Later in 2016, she became an intern with GRID for 8 months and then joined GRID’s staff as a Solar Technician in early 2017.