

## Solar Mamas

### What do you know about solar energy?



Almost one billion people in the world live without electricity. Most of them live in villages and small communities in developing countries. Because they don't have electricity to make light, these people work during the day. An organization called Barefoot College wants to help bring electricity to these communities. At Barefoot College, women learn how to build solar panels. With solar panels, they can collect energy from the sun and use it to make electricity for their communities. These women are called "Solar Mamas."

There are Barefoot College centers in more than 90 countries around the world. Solar Mamas travel to the nearest center to take a special six-month course in how to build solar panels. Most of these Solar Mamas have never left home before, but they travel long distances to go to Barefoot College. It can take them as long as 19 hours to get there!

Teachers and students at Barefoot College come from many different countries. They often don't even speak the same language. Another problem is that many Solar Mamas don't know how to read or write. So, Solar Mamas must learn about solar energy in an unusual way. Teachers use sign language, charts, and a lot of pictures. They give demonstrations, too. Students learn by listening and memorizing. Then, the Solar Mamas return home to build solar panels in their communities. So far, Barefoot College has trained more than 750 Solar Mamas. Florentina Choc is a proud Solar Mama from Belize. Choc says that after she returned home, "Something changed in the village, not like before when we stayed in the dark. Now, my village has light."

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**1. According to the article, Solar Mamas...**

- a) live in developing countries.
- b) do not have to work.
- c) do not enjoy being at home.
- d) read and write very well.

**2. It takes around six weeks to train one Solar Mama.**

- a) True
- b) False
- c) We don't know.

**3. What is unusual about the way Solar Mamas study?**

- a) There is no electricity where they study.
- b) They do not speak during class.
- c) They always study at night.
- d) Their teachers use a lot of pictures.

**4. How many Solar Mamas are there today?**

- a) 90
- b) More than 750
- c) 1000
- d) Almost 1,000,000

**5. What do we know about Florentina Choc?**

- a) She is a Solar Mama.

- b) She lives in India.
- c) She started Barefoot College.
- d) She invented a special solar panel.

## GLOSSARY

### -Community:



people who live in the same area such as a neighborhood, village, or city.

### - Developing countries:



country or region of the world which is poor and doesn't have much industry.

### - solar panels:



flat device that uses energy from the sun to make electricity.

### - Energy:



flat device that uses energy from the sun to make electricity

**- sign Language:**



using hand signals to communicate with people.

**- Demonstrations:**



act of showing how something is used or done.

**- memorizing:**



learn by remembering Information.

**- trained:**



teach someone a new skill.

**- villages:**



a group of houldrd and associated buildings, larger than a Hamlet and smaller tan a town, situated in a rural área.

**-women:**



an adult female human being.

**-organization:**



an aorganized body of people with a particular purpose, especially a business, society, association.

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