

Nita Bhalla - Solar Lanterns Replace Kerosene Lamps In Indian Urban Slums

NEW DELHI (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - An Indian social enterprise start-up is helping people living in urban slums to use clean energy by changing their kerosene lamps for solar lanterns and wood fires for more efficient cooking stoves through a simple payment scheme.



Ills.: Reuters

Pollinate Energy, which began operations in 2013, is one of thousands of social businesses in India which are tapping into the clean energy market, in a country where 35-40 percent of the population have no access to electricity.

While the majority of those without power live in rural areas, many poor urban communities are also forced to live by candlelight, use polluting fuels like kerosene, or “steal energy” by illegally tapping in to the power lines of wealthier neighbouring residences.

In Bangalore - best known as India’s IT hub - Pollinate Energy markets and sells renewable energy lanterns and stoves on a five-week, interest-free payment plan to families living under tarpaulin sheets in the city’s slums.

“There are actually a lot of organisations selling clean energy products in the rural sector already, and we found that there was a big gap in the market in the urban sector,” said Monique Alfris, co-founder of Pollinate Energy. “Nobody believes that there are people in urban environments who are using kerosene for light.”

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