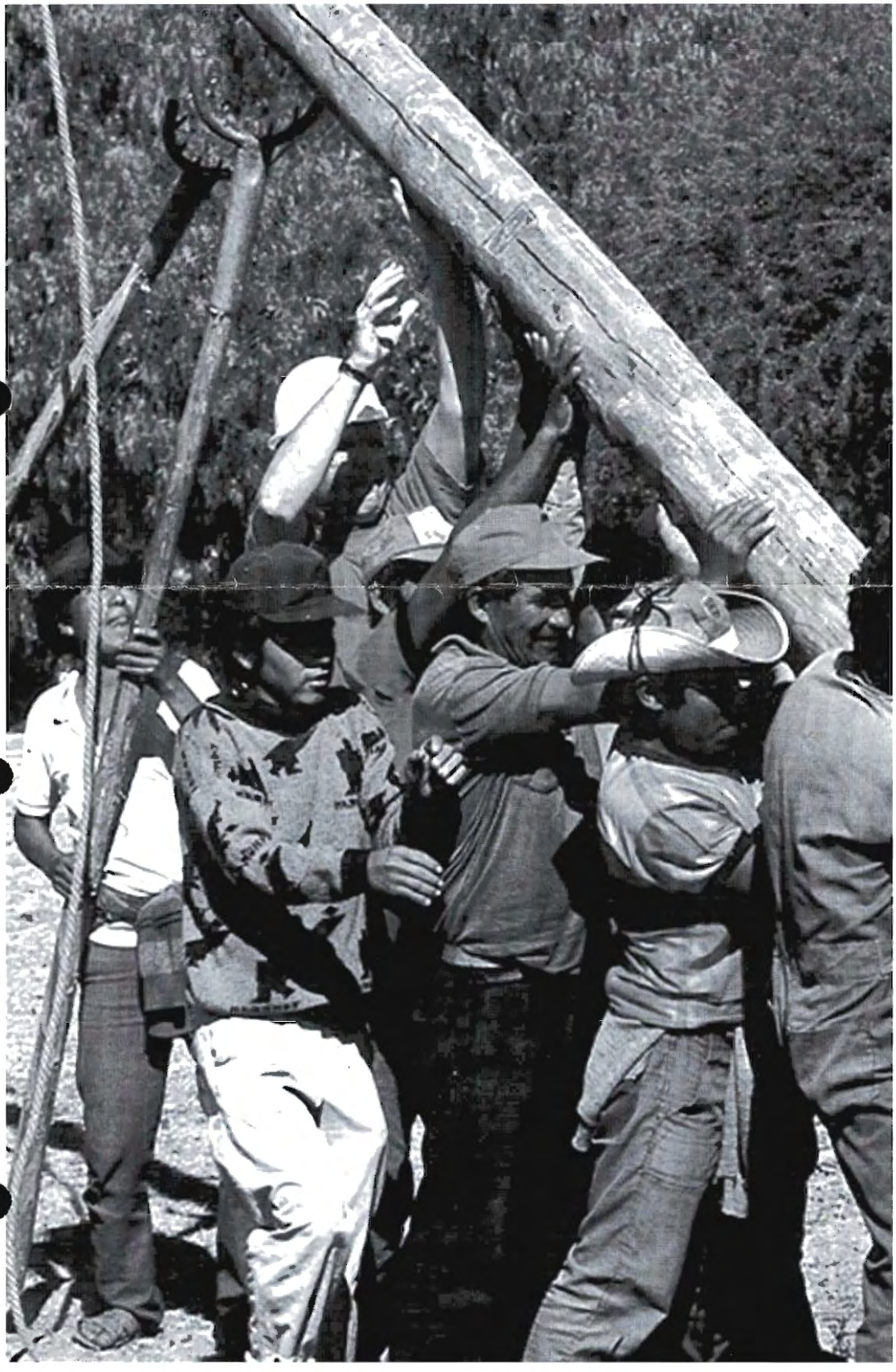
NRECA International Foundation



Bringing Light and Prosperity to the Developing World

International Activities

Electric cooperatives are

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In 1999, the world population surpassed the six billion point, but more than two billion people in the world live without access to electricity. Without electricity to power the basic necessities of life, people are afforded little opportunity to move beyond a mere subsistence lifestyle. They have little hope for significant improvement in their lives and no expectations of a better life for their children.

With electricity comes light that radiates through the darkness, increasing safety and security around humble cabins and thatched cottages. Light that offers the opportunity to educate the village children who, no matter what, must work all day to help eke out a living in the family's rice paddies. Light that allows commerce to continue after the sun goes down, giving the local farmers the chance to make a few coins and increase the family's disposable income many times over.

With electricity comes the power to run sewing machines that village women run day and night to complete an order for a local factory. A consignment order that signifies the first actual paid work the women have ever attempted, and though only paid a few dollars, represents the most money the family has ever had at one time. Electricity powers the new village wheat-mill motor that improves the quality of the grain and shortens the time required to reach the market, bringing more money to the family. It powers the saw, drill, or other machinery that allows a young man to build a business that supplies the first steady support for his family.

Electricity powers the water pump that reaches hundreds of feet into the earth and pours safe, fresh water into a bucket, saving the children or women the need to walk miles each way to a polluted stream to bring back the only ground water available in the area. The fresh water strengthens the family's livestock and flows into a garden that grows fresh vegetables in the dry savanna.

Electricity runs a small refrigerator that stores the only vaccines and medicines available for miles around. It provides light and power for a visiting doctor or nurse to effectively treat patients, many which have traveled a great distance seeking relief. The same electric system powers a short-wave radio summoning help for a critically ill villager. Yes, we can say in all candor that electricity changes lives for the better. Who has more knowledge and a better understanding of developing electric systems in rugged, rural, and remote areas than the electric cooperatives of the United States? Absolutely no one.

Since 1962, NRECA members have placed more than 500 rural electric experts in overseas assignments, helping rural people organize over 250 consumer-owned electric cooperatives that bring power to more than 35 million people. Today we continue the tradition and bring new lights to villages around the globe.

In addition to meeting basic humanitarian needs, NRECA's international activities include:

- Promoting the cooperative model for electric utility development worldwide;
- Improving the global environment through the use of clean, efficient electric power and the promotion of renewable energy; and
- Opening the door for American manufacturers to an energy market in the developing world that turns over $100 billion annually in business and contributes to employment opportunities at home.

Electric cooperatives can make direct contributions to this effort by donating funds, volunteer time, and equipment and materials to the NRECA International Foundation or by adopting an overseas co-op through the Sister Cooperatives Program.

NRECA's International Programs are self-supporting; no member dues are used. All donations to the Foundation are tax-exempt under the 501(c)(3) code of the IRS.

Volunteer Opportunities

The NRECA International Foundation is currently working on electrification projects in more than a dozen countries throughout the world. The Foundation looks to volunteer-experts to share the expertise developed at U.S. rural electric cooperatives to meet rural energy needs overseas.

In sending volunteers on international assignments, the NRECA International Foundation makes all the necessary contacts, prepares the schedules, logistics and covers the cost of travel and in-country expenses.

The assignments do not include salary — they are strictly on a volunteer basis, although often the employee's home co-op donates the person's time to the project, or the employee may use vacation time.

The Foundation works jointly with the volunteer's cooperative to ensure that the volunteer has benefit plau coverage and full medical and emergency insurance during the assignment period.

The NRECA International Foundation also provides volunteers to assist with small-scale overseas electrification projects. Volunteers typically spend one to two weeks in the host country working alongside local people installing electricity in community buildings such as schools, health clinics, and feeding centers. They may also be called in as instructors, technical advisors or whatever other position needs to be filled by true professionals in their area of expertise.

The NRECA International Foundation's Volunteer Program is all about people helping people and giving hope for a better future for the generations to come. It allows volunteers to participate and help us in *"Bringing Light and Prosperity to the Developing World"*.

Sister Cooperatives

The Sister Cooperatives Program links electric cooperatives from the United States with cooperative utilities in Latin America, Asia and other parts of the world in a bond of friendship and professional support.

There are two major goals of the Sister Cooperatives Program:

- To promote activities that expand the professional capabilities of the respective staffs and help each organization become more effective in meeting the mission of consumer-owned electric service, and
- To develop deeper understanding of each of their cultures, communities and working environments.

The most successful Sister Cooperative programs conduct regular exchanges of employees and directors. Sister Cooperative participants report a high degree of satisfaction when people from the sister systems spend time together exchanging ideas and engaging in problem solving.

Examples of recent Sister Co-op activities include:

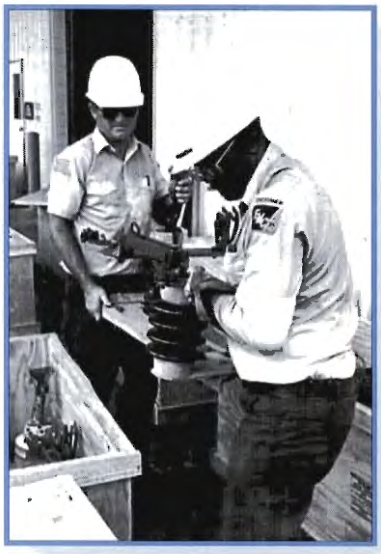
- Linemen safety training
- Introduction to computerized billing, meter reading and load management
- Collaboration on promotion of cooperative principles, board of director
  training, and member relations
- Analysis of high line losses; and
- Shipping of donated equipment and materials.

To fulfill the potential of the relationship, Sister Cooperatives must commit resources to the program. NRECA promotes the program and helps to establish formal links between sister cooperatives.

Equipment & Materials Program

The NRECA International Foundation's Equipment and Materials Program annually ships tons of new and refurbished electric utility goods to developing countries.

The equipment and materials are donated by rural electric cooperatives, municipals, and investor-owned utilities from across the U.S. For many utilities the donated equipment is tax-deductible under the 501(c)(3) section of the Internal Revenue Service Code.



Donated equipment and material, in good working order, facilitates the process and lower costs of rural electrification in countries where NRECA International has active projects. NRECA staff supervises the use of the donated materials to insure that it is to the benefit of rural people living with inadequate electric service.

The recipient utilities are asked to contribute to the cost of packing and in-land transportation of the materials. The Foundation enjoys the support of the Ocean Freight Reimbursement Program, a USAID grant, to cover shipping costs from the U.S. to the target country.

We constantly seek different types of equipment and materials; among those most frequently needed are the following:

- Power line materials, including conductor and insulators
- Meters, transformers, regulators and capacitors
- Tools in useable condition
- Climbing gear
- Power-line construction equipment, including vehicles

Important notes: neither NRECA nor any organizations or individuals profit from the Equipment and Materials Program. We rely largely on volunteer help and especially on the generosity and patience of contributing utilities.

We accept most quantities and types of usable equipment and material (although we may decline special material that is not compatible or usable in our target countries). However, because of limited funding and depending on the location and quantity of the materials, it may take us up to several months to consolidate sufficient material to fill a shipping container. These details will be handled on a case-by-case basis with the donating cooperative/utility.

For more information about NRECA International Programs or any of its projects and activities, please e-mail us at **InternationalPrograms@nreca.org** or call us at (703) 907-5645. You can also write to us at 4301 Wilson Blvd. IPD9-202, Arlington, VA 22203-1860.

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National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

USAID

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