

SDGs **7+17** Lighting Up Peru

*Christina Free, Light Up The World,
Photos by Morgan Smith*

Last March, I had the incredible opportunity to participate in a volunteer trip to Peru, where I helped to instal solar voltaic systems with the Calgary-based NGO Light Up The World (LUTW), in partnership with my employer Capital Power Corporation, a power generation company based out of Edmonton. LUTW is dedicated to implementing solar energy projects in communities that don't have access to electricity. Recently, their efforts have been focused in Peru, which has one of the lowest electrification rates in Latin America.

“Improving access to energy and electricity for all is crucial for reducing poverty, improving health, and promoting economic growth.”

For over 4 million people living in Peru without electricity, families sometimes resort to burning animal dung for cooking, while children are required to use dim kerosene lamps to study after sunset. These energy sources are dangerous, and can cause fires, injuries, or respiratory ailments from air pollution. Moreover, these inefficient energy sources are extremely costly — families can spend as much as one third of their monthly income on kerosene or candles alone!

The money saved from replacing inefficient lighting sources with a reliable and renewable source of energy such as solar power can be put



towards other priorities like nutrition, business development, or education.

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Over the course of my time in Peru, we installed a total of four solar power systems in the beautiful mountainous region of Andachupa. The systems provide power for two primary schools, a community centre, and a health clinic.

I'll never forget the excited looks on the faces of a group of students when we turned on the lights in their classroom for the first time.

It was extremely impactful to take part in a project that made the lives of people living in these communities brighter!

For more information visit lutw.org.

