



## PHOTO & CAPTION

### Tapping the Sun for Rural Electricity



Photo: Grameen Shakti

***A rural Bangladeshi family enjoys the benefits of solar power, including lights and television.***

USAID has worked for years to bring electricity to rural Bangladesh. The range of households with electricity has significantly expanded, and the customer base of more than 30 million continues to increase.

But only a quarter of families living in the countryside have electricity. Despite investments in rural electric cooperatives, it is too impractical and costly to extend the power grid to certain isolated areas. Solar power, on the other hand, is a practical and environmentally friendly way to bring electricity and a better quality of life to those who live in remote areas.

In 1996, the organization Grameen Shakti began supplying solar power to rural areas, an effort that grew slowly until 2000 when USAID, recognizing the potential impact of investment, began supporting the initiative. Since then, the project has truly taken off. More than 42,000 household solar power systems have been supplied and installed since 1996, and Grameen Shakti plans to have a million units in operation by 2007.