

Ulaanbaatar solar incentives

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Every year, UNDP's crowdfunding academy supports individual giving campaigns in Africa, Arab States, Latin America, Europe, and Asia Pacific. Launching a crowdfunding campaign is about telling a story that connects with the public. During 2024, we encountered with a campaign focusing on the world's coldest capital city, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Affected by the consequences of climate change, this is the story of a resilient community looking to tackle one of its most pressing challenges, air pollution, with a move into solar energy.

In the heart of Ulaanbaatar, a ninth grader named Ulzii is fighting for survival. His story, portrayed in the Cannes Film Festival Official Selection "If Only I Could Hibernate," is a testament to the resilience and perseverance of the nearly 220,000 residents of the city's Ger District who live in yurts or small houses and who are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Forced by the advancing harsh climate to move to a city ill-prepared to accommodate them, Ger District residents are left to fend for themselves. Unconnected to centralized heating systems, they burn coal briquettes to survive the minus 45C degree winters, exposing themselves and their children to harmful chemicals and noxious gases.

Mongolia's heavy reliance on coal has created a suffocating reality--severe winter air pollution, increased risk of respiratory disease, and lung cancer. But amidst this bleak landscape, there is a glimmer of hope.

With an average of 250 sunny days per year, Mongolia has tremendous untapped potential for solar energy. UNDP Mongolia's Accelerator Lab (A-Lab) is seizing this opportunity with a groundbreaking crowdfunding campaign: "If Only I Could Go Solar."

The goal is to raise funds for the transition from coal to solar power in the Ger District by installing solar panels to power electric heaters in 20 households. With this campaign we can empower pioneers like Ulzii to break free from the chokehold of coal.

This technology has the potential to be not just sustainable, but life changing. It could spark a larger behavioural shift among the community and policymakers, paving the way for a just energy transition.

But the impact doesn't stop there. By reducing the carbon footprint of private households, this initiative could unlock new opportunities in the carbon credit market, creating further incentives to switch away from coal.

In 2024, UNDP Mongolia and the Mongolian and French governments are implementing the Coal-to-Solar



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solution for 100 households in the Ger District. But to truly unleash the power of the sun and equal opportunities, we need your help.

Naran Myal, a pensioner who lives with her daughter and grandson, found out about the project through a Facebook group chat managed by her community coordinator. She was ecstatic to learn that she had been selected, and informed that many residents have since gained a better understanding on solar heating and are keen to follow her lead in transitioning from coal to solar.

Solar energy is more than just a solution to environmental challenges. It's a pathway to a brighter future, where children can focus on education, families can pursue fulfillment, and communities can thrive.

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