

BREAKING NEWS FROM THE CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT WITH SOLAR ENERGY

By David Whitfield – Director - CEDESOL Foundation

1,000 Families in Bolivia benefited through subsidized Ecological Stoves program

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Today CEDESOL signed a contract with the GTZ for the first 1,000 improved stoves in their project titled **“Stoves for a Better Life: Implementation of a Strategy using Ecological and Improved Stoves for Residences.”**

Bolivia, one of the poorest and least developed of the Latin American countries has an infant mortality rate of 66.7, the highest in South America. Diarrhea (36%) and respiratory diseases (20%) are the principal causes for this condition. According to the November 27, 2003 Bolivian newspaper Los Tiempos article titled, “Bolivia is the Country Where Children Die the Most”, children are dying for preventable reasons and the aggressive vaccination programs don't seem to be doing enough. They don't understand why, but we suspect IAP (Indoor Air Pollution) to be a significant contributor to the death toll.



According to the latest estimates, Bolivia's population will increase to 9,600,000 inhabitants by 2007. The urban population has increased at the rate of 5% annually to 60% while the rural population decreases at the same rate and is currently close to 40%.

In the rural areas around 56% of the population did not complete elementary school and lack skills useful in urban situations. 30% of Bolivians are ethnically Quechua, 25% Aymara, 30% mestizo and 15% white. About 40% live in the high planes called altiplano, 30% live in the valleys and 30% low lands or tropics. Fully 70% of the country's population is below the poverty line.

55% to 75% of the rural population use biomass as their principal cooking fuel, while about 20% in the urban areas still depend on it as a principal household fuel. Many of these families rely on biomass because of economic constraints.

Approximately 800,000 families rely on biomass as their primary fuel source, while the rest back up a nonrenewable fuel with biomass. The largest sector of Bolivia's population is said to live on less than \$2 a day. Extreme poverty and lack of employment are factors in social unrest.

CEDESOL's vision of improved stoves is the integrated use of efficient biomass, retained heat and solar cooking. More emphasis is placed on retained heat and solar cooking as they present the primary cultural barriers, but provide the most economical, energetic and health improvements, because cooking in those systems requires no energy inputs from contaminating sources.

The following are photos taken in demonstrations in rural areas in Bolivia, all above an altitude of 2,800 meters, where meals were prepared for between 25 and 65 participants who had gathered to appraise the stoves.



It is significant that after only 6 demonstrations, written requests from community leaders have been generated for over 500 stoves.

During July and August, CEDESOL in conjunction with Sobre la Roca will begin training workshops and delivery of these efficient wood stoves and solar cookers



