



West Bank Village Leaps into the 21st Century:

Greenstar Foundation completes
solar power, computer installation

For immediate release

WASHINGTON DC, Mar. 17, 1999: Two teachers sit in front of a computer and type out a lesson plan. This may seem commonplace, but it happened yesterday for the first time ever in the remote West Bank village of Al-Kaabneh. The ancient settlement has never had electricity or running water, but today village residents are benefiting from a newly installed solar power technology system that runs, among other things, an ultraviolet water purifier, a vaccine cooler, and a Pentium II computer with touch screen, color printer, camera and microphone. An Internet connection for the village is expected in the near future.

Al-Kaabneh's leap into the 21st century was made possible by Greenstar Foundation, which is committed to bringing solar power and advanced technology to developing countries. Working in cooperation with the Palestinian Energy Authority and the U.S. Dept. of Energy, a photovoltaic solar array has been mounted on the roof of the local school. During the day, while Al-Kaabneh's 86 elementary school children are studying and attending class, the desert sun charges a set of 48 batteries which provide continuous, stable power to the school.

The technology provided by Greenstar improves the daily lives of the villagers while encouraging the independent economic development of the community. Greenstar Director Michael North explains, "By providing a gateway to the Internet for Al-Kaabneh, we will connect the village to the global world of e-commerce. We have already identified many local products that can be offered for direct sale on the Web by the people of the village."

Although it may seem like a stretch for the villagers to suddenly go from raising sheep and goats to selling products on the Web, the computer system will also benefit Al-Kaabneh in other ways. This system, when used in tandem with an identical computer terminal also being installed in a clinic in the nearby city of Hebron, will give the residents access to practical telemedicine over the Internet. Solar panels will also be placed in the small local mosque to power lights and to run the amplifier that issues the five-times-daily Islamic call to prayer.

On March 14, at the Solar Villages for the Middle East Conference in Ramallah, the Palestinian Energy Authority was presented with an International Innovation Award from the Greenstar Foundation in recognition of their role in bringing electricity to the 2000 people of Al-Kaabneh. Director Michael North commended the PEA, citing their "critical assistance to Greenstar in reaching the people of the village. Their vision is a powerful example of grassroots initiative and state-of the art-methods which will stimulate peaceful development in the area."

The PEA, working in conjunction with the Al-Kaabaneh Village Council, has been a crucial local liaison facilitating the Greenstar project. Dr. Abdul Rahman Hamad, director of the PEA, in accepting the award said, "We wish to thank Greenstar Foundation for its work in making the unique and pioneering work at Arab Al-Kaabneh village possible. We hope this is the beginning of many projects in which we can collaborate with Greenstar and the US Department of Energy to serve the people of Palestine."

Greenstar Foundation is an international non-profit organization which brings solar power, electronic commerce, telemedicine, distance learning, manufacturing and agricultural support services to developing countries, and to all places where a centralized electrical power grid is unavailable. The Foundation's mission is to install advanced technology to further the goals of peace and economic independence, putting the ".com" into international development.

For more information on Greenstar and photographs of the Al-Kaabneh project see: <http://www.greenstar.org>.

Greenstar Foundation
Press contact: Jock Gill, Director
781-396-0492; jgill@greenstar.org

Palestinian Energy Authority
Press Contact: Mr. Ahmad Abu-Sabha
972-2-298-6190

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