



## SUCCESS STORY

# New Lights Bring Hope to a City

**Thanks to a new, efficient street lighting system, the residents of one of El Salvador's most dangerous towns feel safer and can keep their businesses open after dark.**



Photo: USAID Regional Clean Energy Initiative

Pilar del Rosario and her grandson, Sergio, cutting coconuts for their customers.



Photo: USAID Regional Clean Energy Initiative

177 street lamps now light up 8 km of Zacatecoluca's main access road

Pilar del Rosario is a lifelong resident of Zacatecoluca, a municipality of about 66,000 people in southern El Salvador and one of the nation's highest crime municipalities. For the past 30 years, she has sold coconuts along Zacatecoluca's main access road, enabling her to support her family, including her grandson Sergio Umaña. Now a university student, Sergio spends his afternoons helping his grandmother cut, prepare and sell all kinds of fresh coconut product "Ever since I was born, there weren't any streetlights on the roads here. And because there was no security, I always had to close my business before it got dark," said Pilar.

But that has changed. Pilar is one of more than 40,000 people who benefit from an energy efficient street lighting initiative supported by USAID. A total of 177 streetlights were installed in areas that had no public lighting system, helping in crime reduction efforts to improve security for people moving through the city after school or work.

To support the Government of El Salvador's Security Plan, USAID, through its Regional Clean Energy Initiative, formed an alliance with the municipality of Zacatecoluca and private companies Delsur and Philips Lighting Central America, to provide new, efficient street lighting to high-risk communities. The municipality was a big supporter of this team effort, investing \$1.6 million to replace 1,668 inefficient streetlights with new ones using LED technology.

This project has brought new life to public areas, where local businesses and recreational areas are now open after dark. The more efficient lights will also save the city up to 50 percent of its energy bill, allowing them to invest those resources back to improve the city.

A determined entrepreneur, Pilar now spends more hours selling coconuts during the day and plans to diversify her customer base by selling typical Salvadoran foods to drivers who stop by her stall at night.

"My grandmother and I feel safer working at night, and customers have more confidence because of the streetlights. We are happy because now we are able to serve more customers, and we will keep working hard to improve our lives," adds Sergio.