

# 2020 Annual Report



**SELF**  
SOLAR ELECTRIC LIGHT FUND







## A Letter from Our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

In 2020, COVID-19 claimed countless lives and placed significant strain on the world's healthcare systems. It also generated enough social and commercial chaos to upend a significant portion of the US economy, including the nonprofit sector. By reducing some of our overhead costs—such as temporarily closing our Washington, DC office and allowing all SELF staff to work remotely—we were able to carry on with our mission even during the worst of the pandemic. Here are a few project highlights:

- We continued our partnership with the Rape Hurts Foundation in Uganda to provide solar solutions to empower women and reduce instances of sexual violence. In 2020, we installed seven solar-powered streetlights and completed a large water station.
- SELF signed an agreement with the Millennium Challenge Corporation to fund 24 new water stations in northern Benin. Work got under way in May 2020, which included testing at each site to determine the condition of its borehole.
- In Haiti, SELF finished restoring the PV systems of 12 health centers as well as a micro-grid serving Chardonnières, Port à Piment and Coteaux in the southern part of the country. Originally installed with support of the Inter-American Development Bank, those PV systems sustained significant damage from Hurricane Matthew in late 2016.

We made it through 2020's challenges because of the generosity of SELF's supporters. We thank you for your commitment to help us in our fight against energy poverty.

Sincerely,

*Bob*

Robert A. Freling  
Executive Director





# Organization

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Robert A. Freling<br>Executive Director<br>Solar Electric Light Fund   | Mary Green Swig<br>President & CEO<br>Mary Green                                  |
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- DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR** Karen Allen
- FINANCE DIRECTOR** Lisa Esler
- PROJECT DIRECTOR** Jeff Lahl
- PROJECT MANAGER** Darren Anderson
- PROJECT MANAGER** Jean-Baptiste Certain
- DESIGN ENGINEER & PROJECT MANAGER** Jeff Korcan
- OFFICE MANAGER & DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE** Isabel Light
- SENIOR TECHNITIAN, HAITI** Claudalex Lauture

## PHOTO CREDITS

- Ivan Ganafall: Pg 2, 6, 7, Back Cover
- Lynn Johnson, Ripple Effect Images: Front Cover, Pg 12







## Reducing the Rate of Sexual Assault in Uganda

Working in partnership with the Rape Hurts Foundation (RHF) in Bukyerimba, Uganda, SELF is helping reduce the incidence of sexual assault against women and girls in rural areas where historically they have had to leave their villages in search of drinking water and firewood for cooking to sustain their families. Once this project model proves successful, it can be replicated throughout Sub-Saharan Africa where sexual assault in the bush is commonplace.



By installing solar-powered streetlights and a solar water pump, as well as introducing solar cookers for food preparation, we believe that the need for women and girls to venture beyond their villages to isolated areas for wood and water will substantially decrease.

In 2019, people from the surrounding region came to Bukyerimba at night to sit under the 10 solar streetlights that SELF had installed. Adults came to socialize, and many students brought school assignments to read. The activity and light that attracted people to come out of their homes after dark served as a disincentive to predators. It was a good start, but additional lights and clean water were needed to make a greater impact.

The project turned a corner in 2020 when SELF's local contractor installed seven additional solar-powered streetlights and connected a solar pump to the water station. Testing revealed that the pumps delivered 20,000 liters of water to the water tank in about two hours. At that rate, there will be water available for agricultural purposes as well as drinking water for human consumption. The Kamuli Police Department reported that since opening the water station and installing the streetlights, the number of sexual assaults has dropped by 30%. However, the need for more solar interventions in Kamuli District remains.





## Bringing Clean Water to Benin

SELF has committed to making clean water accessible throughout Kalalé Commune in Benin. In May 2020, after coming to an agreement on funding with the Millennium Challenge Corporation to build 24 new water stations in the region, work quickly got under way. SELF began testing the water station sites to determine next steps in terms of well rehabilitation and drilling new boreholes.

For the new wells, the drilling was done successfully, with only two dry holes out of fourteen. In those cases, an additional borehole was necessary to access clean water. In addition, each of the five villages in the project that have health centers will receive solar streetlights to illuminate outdoor clinic areas and a solar direct-drive vaccine refrigerator.





# Haiti

## PUTTING VACCINE REFRIGERATORS TO THE TEST

In 2020, SELF started field work for Seattle-based PATH, a leading global health NGO. SELF's technicians in Haiti were tasked with monitoring and reporting on solar direct-drive vaccine refrigerators that had been installed at health centers throughout the country. The results of our findings will help the World Health Organization make informed recommendations on which brand and model of solar vaccine refrigerators are the best candidates for a given environment.

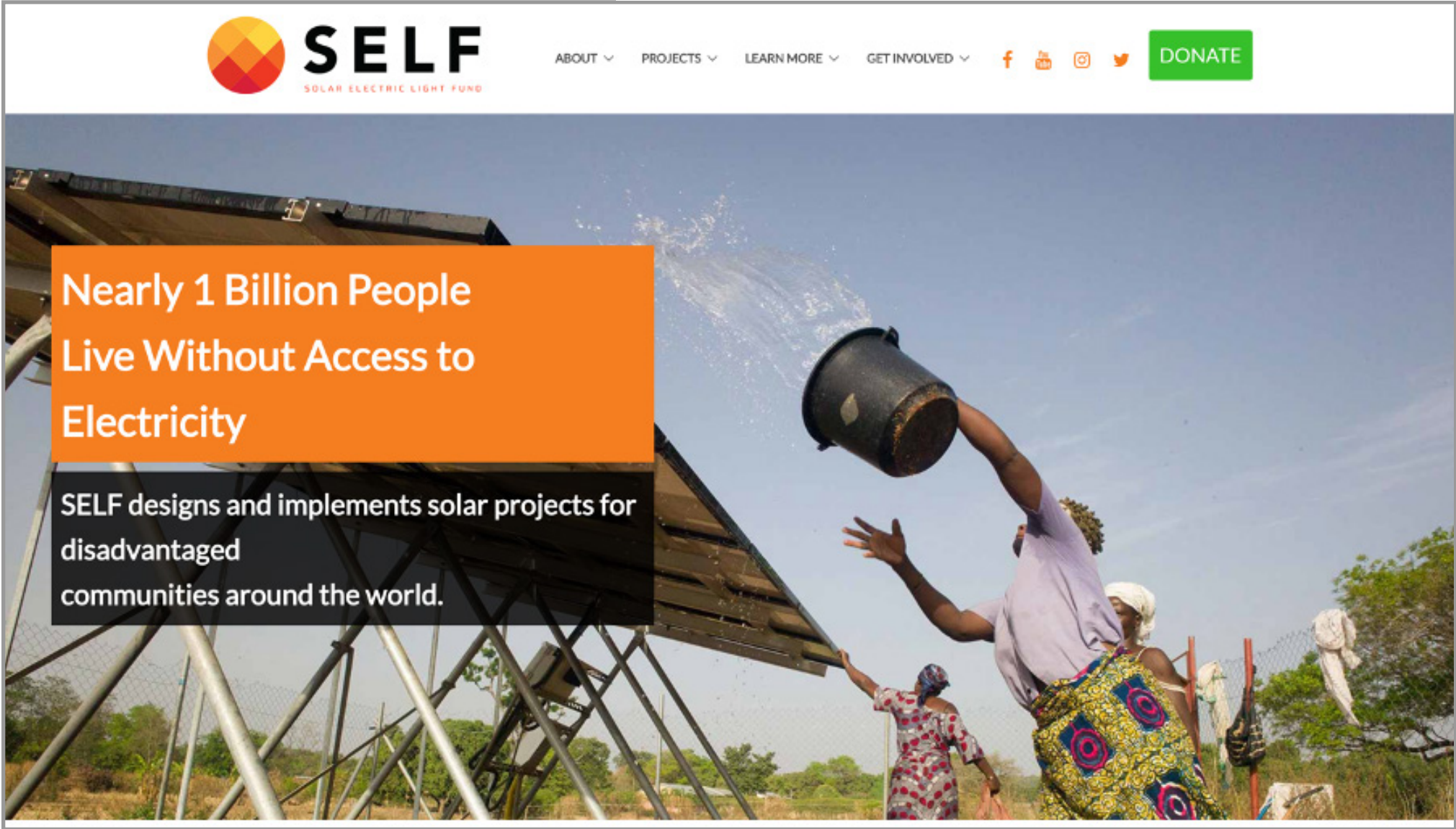
## REBUILDING SOLAR MICRO-GRID IN SOUTHWESTERN HAITI

In 2018, with support of the UN Environment Programme and the Inter-American Development Bank, SELF made preliminary repairs to the PV systems of 12 health centers and a micro-grid servicing Chardonnières, Port a Piment, and Coteaux in the south of Haiti—all damaged by Hurricane Matthew in late 2016.

The new system required stronger hardware to resist the wind speeds of category four hurricanes. To make that happen, major funding was needed to fully rehabilitate all the solar installations. The new design was completed before the end of 2020. Since then, local people have steadily rejoined the electric co-op. It appears that the demand for electricity will only grow. If the trend continues, SELF is confident that we will be asked to return to install additional solar micro-grid systems.







# Enhancing SELF's Image

SELF launched a newly designed website that provides an enriched viewing experience and increased accessibility on computers and mobile devices. There are significant changes in its design and content—enhanced with stunning photographs, videos, and stories.

Our new logo captures the essence of SELF's expanded mission, evolving from its initial focus of installing solar lighting systems at the household level to empowering entire communities to collectively improve living conditions. The logo's multiple facets represent the many ways in which solar power can bring about dramatic improvements in the health, education, and economic well-being of remote communities around the world.





# Financial Summary

Like many other organizations, SELF was significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Notwithstanding these challenges, we were able to complete reconstruction of the Haiti micro-grid in the first quarter of the year before the lockdowns began. This effort accounts for more than a third of the program expenditures for the year. We were able to move forward with support for our project partner in Uganda and drilling for water wells in remote portions of Northern Benin where the virus had not yet spread, although other project efforts were significantly limited.

In 2020, SELF was fortunate to receive a forgivable loan of \$130,200 under the Paycheck Protection Program. SELF has met the terms for loan forgiveness, and this loan will be converted into a grant upon formal approval of the forgiveness application in 2021. Our financials also reflect \$80,000 in zero interest loans from the SELF Board to allow us to cover upfront expenses for reimbursable projects. We expect to collect payment on those projects and repay the loans in 2021.

Our net assets fell for the year as project implementation and new project development were slowed by the pandemic and because of the delay in receiving forgiveness on the PPP loan until just after the year end.

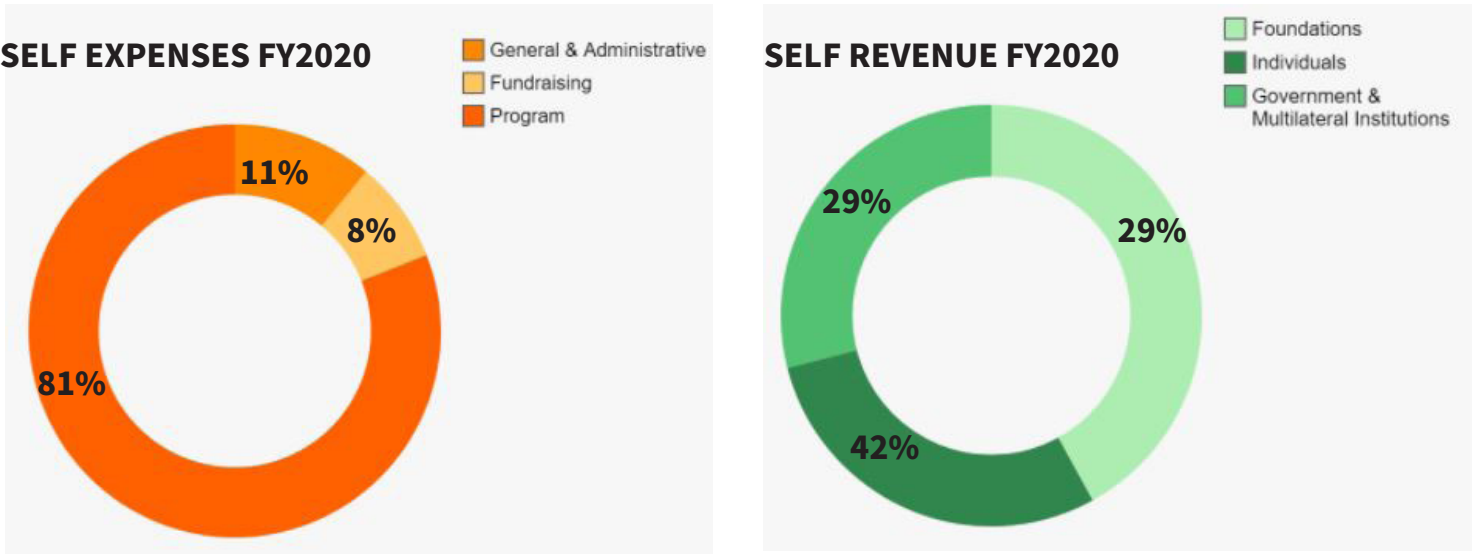
As a result of the pandemic, SELF has transitioned to a fully virtual office, which will allow us to significantly reduce our operating costs in 2021. This change will allow us to devote more resources to developing and implementing new projects in the coming years.

The financial results depicted on the following page are derived from the SELF audited December 31, 2020, consolidated financial statements, which received an unqualified opinion. SELF’s complete, audited financial statements can be found on our website, [self.org](http://self.org).

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES For the Period Ended December 31, 2020

(With Summarized Financial Information for the Year Ended December 31, 2019)

	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	2020 TOTAL	2019 TOTAL
REVENUE AND SUPPORT				
Grants and Donations	\$ 1,185,099	\$ 795,734	\$ 1,980,833	\$ 1,682,889
In-kind Revenue	5,297	-	5,297	-
Interest and Other Income	8,170	-	8,170	484
Net Assets Released from Restrictions:				
Satisfaction of Program Restrictions	755,166	(755,166)	-	-
TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT	1,953,732	40,568	1994,300	1,683,373
EXPENSES				
Program Services	1,935,302	-	1,935,302	1,514,974
Management and General	258,822	-	258,822	226,232
Fundraising	188,992	-	188,992	195,958
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,383,116	-	2,383,116	1,937,164
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	(429,384)	40,568	(388,816)	(253,791)
NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	155,483	275,195	430,678	684,469
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	\$(273,901)	\$315,763	\$41,862	\$430,678







# SELF

SOLAR ELECTRIC LIGHT FUND

[www.self.org](http://www.self.org)

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