

Article from El Espectador: 100 Feats of Colombians - Paolo Lugari: Solar Energy in Gaviotas

With no resources other than the land, wind, and sun, he harnessed water to produce energy.

It was in Vichada. Twenty-five years ago, led by Paolo Lugari, a group of thinkers and artists built the Las Gaviotas Development Center. A community sixteen hours from any city. With no resources other than the land, wind, and sun, they set about inventing. The most widespread innovation is solar water heating, which replaces electric and gas water heaters in the Nariño Palace and in Bogotá neighborhoods like El Tunal, Niza 8, and Nueva Santafé. They invented a solar kettle to heat and sterilize water and a generator to power 100 light bulbs with a 40-centimeter drop. They even use children's swings to build water pumps. They are researching a domestic technology for the hydroponic production of vegetables and legumes at home by housewives in neighborhoods like La Gaitana, Suba, and Ciudad Bolívar. They refuse to patent their inventions, preferring to donate them. This vision of life and science won the "Zeri Emissions" award, the world's highest environmental prize.