

SERVE solar cooking in Afghanistan

SERVE sold over 22,000 solar ovens between 1985-2000, first in the refugee camps around Peshawar, Pakistan and later in an Internally Displaced Persons Camp near Jalalabad, Afghanistan. The \$15 sale price was partially subsidized.

Manufacturing: In both countries, SERVE had a workshop employing local craftsmen which turned out very simple, strong and hot solar ovens. It cost approximately \$40 to make each one.

Sales: In the Pashtun culture, men do the shopping. So SERVE used a team of men to sell the solar cookers.

Customer Support: SERVE also had a team of Afghan women with a driver (husband of one of the women) going around to those who had bought the solar ovens, to answer questions, correct misunderstandings, demonstrate again how to use the oven, and to bring back to the workshop damaged ovens for repair.

When Afghans began to leave the camps, SERVE personnel observed that families who had used their solar oven for more than a year took it with them. Families who had used the solar cooker for less than a year were likely to give it to relatives who were still in the camp.

Imitations of the SERVE ovens began showing up in workshops in Kabul about 1995. This expanded local availability and eventually led SERVE to discontinue production. SERVE was formed to serve the needs of the Afghan people, and their staff saw this technology transfer as being a success.

