

# The young man trying to bring solar energy to rural areas and cities



One day, **Luis Plata Cavazos** installed a **mobile power plant with solar panels** in a **rural community** that had no electricity. That day, **he brought power** to a **school** that had never switched a light bulb on.

Luis grew up in **Allende, Nuevo León**. In the state capital of Monterrey, he studied an energy specialty at **Tec de Monterrey's EGADE Business School** with the **dream** of making **electric power accessible**.

By then, Luis and his partner Jesús Salazar had rejected job offers so that their **energy company Girasolve** could have a **big impact**, something they were pursuing at the time.

That day, at that **school**, was different. They **turned the equipment on**, and the silence was broken by **cheering**. The lights were reflected in the eyes of the **children**, who saw **electricity** in their **classrooms** for the **first time**.

*"That **reaction of surprise** from **teachers and children** (when they saw) that they had **electricity** after never having had it, some of them not even in their homes, has been the most **rewarding thing** in my life," says Luis.*



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**Their goal: to produce electricity from the Sun without polluting the environment**

“**Sunny**” is the **name** Luis and Jesús gave to the equipment they seek to market today through their companies **Girasolve México** and **Girasolve Energy USA**.

It is a **mobile power plant** that uses **solar panels** instead of fossil fuel such as **gasoline**.

They both think that this solar equipment can be used in **rural communities**, in **campes**, and in **outdoor activities**, without generating **noise** or **carbon dioxide**, that is, without polluting the environment.

“**Sunny**” came later, due to the **needs of their customers**, but that solar plant for the community of La Purísima in China, Nuevo León, was the **basis** of the **project**.

The companies were started when Luis was studying **engineering**. Together with **three friends**, he decided to put aside a stable job and dedicate himself to **entrepreneurship**.

Their **original idea**, which the **name Girasolve** comes from, was to create **solar panels** that would **move to find the sun** to obtain more energy, as sunflowers do. Sunflowers are called **girasoles** in Spanish, hence the name.



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### **The dream of helping people got off to a rocky start**

Their project began in **2015** with **movable solar panels** that “searched” for the sun, but these four young people came up against a **market that wasn’t paying for innovation**.

*“We participated in **innovation competitions**, but we **lost** them. We improved the prototype, but at one point we were **out of money**, and **we didn’t sell anything**,” Luis recalls.*

**Without generating sales**, without obtaining **funds** from the **competitions**, and having already **invested their money**, they began to **run up debts**.

*“We had **bad streaks** and **two partners left** the company. My partner Jesús Salazar and I decided to keep going, so we had the idea that maybe our clients **didn’t want movable panels**, but only **solar panels**.”*

*“We needed **money**, as we had **quit our jobs** and **missed out on** very good **job opportunities**”.*

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CKXaBQyguWC/>

**Not abandoning their venture has helped the planet**

The **27-year-old businessman** laughs when he remembers the time when it seemed that he **would not succeed** and says that **not giving up** was the **best decision** that Jesús and he could have made at that time.

*“We were both doing well. We had **job offers with a future**, and here **we had no security**. In **one month**, we sold **4 panels and nothing more**, but we didn’t give up and we became more confident in ourselves.*

Today, the businessman mentions that his **venture** has gone from selling **4 panels** in a **month** to installing **more than 4,800** in Mexico and the United States, avoiding **656,000 kilograms** of **carbon dioxide emissions**.

*“In the past, people didn’t have **cellphones** and **smartphones** because they were very **expensive**, but now they’ve dropped in price, and anyone can have them.*

*“I want the same thing to happen with **clean energy**. We want to give **access to people who cannot afford it** with financial models and banks, but I want to contribute even more to make it happen.”*



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## **Creating one of the largest solar parking lots in Nuevo León**

The “**Sunny**” mobile solar plant became one of their projects after they supported that community by bringing electricity to the **rural school**.

*“We’re still **hungry to innovate**. There are people who go fishing, hunting, or camping and their only option is a battery or a gasoline power plant.*

*“We’re also thinking about **remote places** where there are no **gas stations** or **rural schools** and **communities** where they have to walk kilometers to get gasoline as well as pay for it,” says Luis.*

The key was to innovate on the **service** for 6 years, which led them to grow, says Luis smiling.

At the same time as developing “Sunny,” Luis says that they have signed **agreements** with businesses such as **supermarkets**, **restaurants**, and **shopping centers** to install solar panels.

*“We installed more than a thousand solar panels in a parking lot at a wholesale food market called ‘La Estrella.’ Now it’s the **largest in Nuevo León**, and I think even in Mexico,” he says.*

Luis explains that the **parking lot** also includes **electric car chargers** for brands such as **Tesla**, **BMW**, and **Lincoln**, so the people who go there can charge their cars.

*“We installed more than a thousand solar panels in the parking lot. Now it’s the largest in Nuevo Leon, and I think even in Mexico.”*



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### **Young man recognized in Mexico and abroad**

During his time as a **student** and as an **entrepreneur**, Luis began to receive some **recognitions** for his **career** and work, such as the **State Youth Award in Nuevo León**, where he participated **on behalf of** the city of **Allende**.

*“When I got to the government palace, **they told me** that no one from **Allende** had **ever won**. I was sad because they sat me down with my family just behind me. I was thinking, ‘What am I doing*

here?’ but then **they mentioned my name**,” says Luis.

In **2013**, he participated in the **One Young World** forum for young leaders, which took him to **South Africa** with figures such as billionaire businessman **Richard Branson**.



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He was also one of the **8 winners** throughout the **continent** in the **Global Innovation Award** held by the [Organization of American States \(OAS\)](#).

He also made a **6-month stay** in **Washington, D.C.** as part of a **bilateral program** between the governments of then-presidents **Barack Obama** of the United States and **Enrique Peña Nieto** of Mexico.

*“When I returned from **Washington**, I spent a few days in **Mexico**. After winning the **OAS award**, I was sent to **South Korea** to study and live there in **Seoul**.*

*“It **changed my life** and left a **mark** on me. But more than any document, the **most rewarding thing** has been that **school in China**, Nuevo León. It was a very **moving project**,” he says.*

In December 2021, he was recognized for his career in the **Entrepreneurial Ingenuity** category of the **National Youth Award**, in category B, which recognizes young people between **18 and 29 years old**.

***“More than any document, the most rewarding thing has been that school in China, Nuevo León. It was a very moving project.”***

## **The dream of providing energy solutions**

After studying engineering at the Autonomous University of Nuevo León, Luis enrolled for a **master’s degree in Energy Management** at **EGADE Business School** with a **100% scholarship**.

*“At EGADE, I developed my **ability to solve problems** from a broader perspective. I learned to think in a more disruptive way, raising my expectations and my level of discipline.*

*“It was great being able to study at **both universities**. They **complemented** and **enriched** each other. The **Tec** is very **demanding**. It has **very advanced and innovative tools** and raises your expectations,” he says.*

Remembering the **reaction** of the **teachers** and **students** when they saw their school lit up is something that brings Luis **a little closer** to **fulfilling his dream**.

*“It’s a **dream for me**. I want to feel the **satisfaction** of having made a **contribution** to the area of **energy solutions** for people.*

*“We did it in **a school**. We didn’t change the **world**, but it’s **a first step**,” concludes Luis, with a smile.*

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