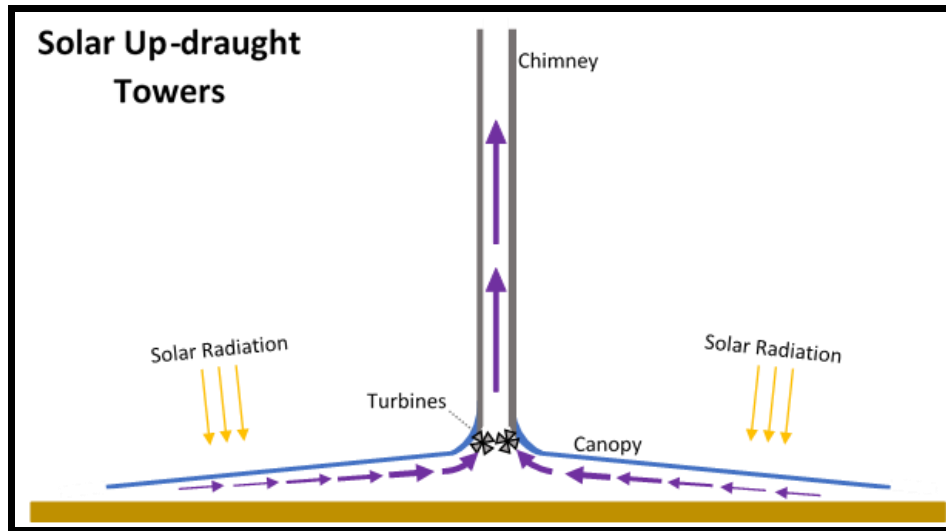


## FiND Leader November 2018

Community Engagement: the catalyst that leads to genuine and effective evangelism and discipleship.

Solar wind towers are a development that create and harness powerful updraft and turn it in to energy; here's how they work.



A massive, transparent canopy, often over half a mile in diameter, is suspended between 2 and 20 meters off the ground, and the air beneath it, warmed by the sun, becomes hotter than the air outside. In the middle of this canopy is a tall, slender tower. As the buoyant, warm air is drawn up through the tower, it passes through turbines attached to the tower's base that feed off the rising air's kinetic energy, powering a generator.

Now, think of the canopy as an image of the churches' engagement with its host community. This might be in the form of personal witness through sustained loving relationships with neighbours, support for wider community concerns or activities, engagement with marginalized groups, providing school holiday lunch clubs, local volunteering, hosting a job club, supporting those effected by tragic events – the list is endless.

As the action of the Holy Spirit is felt through the love of, and our commitment to, our neighbours, the community warms towards the faith that is central to our lives and over time is stirred and moved.

However, if the church is then found to be an empty place, all the 'kinetic energy' will simply dissipate. So, if we think of the turbines at the base of the tower as evangelism and discipleship, the engagement leads to a transformational step. We see the powerful combination of genuine engagement in relationship with our neighbour, and an introduction to a relationship with God the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of this world; the ministry of reconciliation.

Indeed, we could perhaps even say that, on its own, as an upright monolith with a very limited footprint, the church can become a cold, isolated, unstable place.

As Community Project Development Officer, I could of course go on to develop this analogy, but maybe it is for you to do that!

Gareth Greenwood