



Oct / Nov / Dec 2007 No.16

Solar Serve News

Dear friends,

On the 15th day of the 8th month (Vietnamese lunar calendar), when the moon is full and round, children but also adults are celebrating their mid-autumn festival by banging the drums and performing lion dances. Moon cakes are sold like pancakes and children are walking around with beautiful lanterns. After this festival the monsoon season begins. Temperatures in Danang will be still from 25°C to 33°C, but heavy rain can be expected. For us as Solar Serve this is a time to reflect our project and make preparations for the coming season. Since the year 2000 we were able to provide 1300 box cookers and 110 parabolic cookers through workshops and other means. So, what will be next?

A miracle

We gave a big shout when all the money for the land came in. We had more than enough before the 40 days deadline. A charity organization, which had limited funds, was very generous to us, while a businessman donated a large amount from his company and also personally. One organization decided to put aside a huge amount for us and also friends and unknown people were very generous. This outpouring of love amazed us. We felt like solar cookers bathing in beams of warmth and love. It was a miracle. We were so excited, therefore a good reason to shout. Thank you very much when you were able to stand with us.



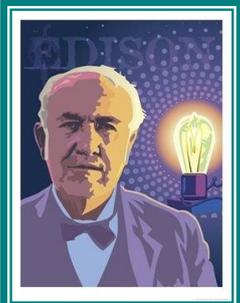
Design for factory

We made our own design for the factory and asked an architect to work it out. After one month he showed us the result and now we have a booklet of 70 pages with detailed pictures of all the windows, toilets, workplace, roof, rooms, kitchen, storage, etc. We made a rough drawing, so you can see for yourself how it looks like. On the first floor will be our factory and the second a show room for visitors and a few rooms for training. We are excited and now we are trying to find the right contractor for doing the job. The cost will be three to four times as much as the land. We are very excited about this challenge.

We are not worried about the costs, because the Sun has not been changed since the last challenge. Our plan is to start building as soon as we found an honest and right contractor. Please could you stand with us again?

Workshop in Thailand

We were invited for a Chiang Mai Workshop in Thailand. The organizer provided tables for our display. We also transported five box and two parabolic cookers to the exhibition. For many participants cooking with the sun was very new. We showed them a video presentation of our box and parabolic cookers, solar stills, briquettes and future plans. They were very interested in the community and steam cookers for large groups. At the end of the workshop we gave away all the seven solar cookers to people who were working in Mongolia, Tibet, India, Thailand, Cambodia and a few other Asian countries. We were thrilled that the cookers will be used in nearby regions. We hope this will multiply solar cooking throughout Asia. But saying and doing is different, so we will see what they come up with. Making a project to work requires patience and perseverance



Patience and perseverance.

Thomas Edison made many attempts before he was able to make the electric light bulb. His assistant told him to give up after many failures. However Edison had two important characteristics, patience and perseverance, which made it possible for him to carry on his work. After each failure he learned that this particular way was not successful, and that he should find another way to do it. To reporters he said: "An experience is never a failure because it always serves to show something" Finally he figured it out and changed the world. We as Solar Serve can learn an important lesson from Edison. We also need patience and perseverance in order to influence society with our project. Therefore we should never give up and learn from our failures.

Special guests

After we rented a place near the airport, many people came to see us. A man from Vung Tau who works for a petrol company, wanted to help people around his area with solar cooking. He was interested in making the parabols with some helpers. A Vietnamese student who is studying in England visited us during his summer break. His desire was to help the poor with solar cookers. An American teacher wanted to take a solar cooker with her, but we advised her to build her own carton cookers by downloading the plans from the Internet. Her friend from New Zealand blessed us with a wonderful gift.



Another lady who lives in Thailand came to visit us. She had a similar situation with buying a piece of land and was able to encourage us. A teacher from Spain who has been working in Saigon visited our website and wanted to see our work. He loved it and wanted to help us with some information.

The sister and husband of our advisor came to visit Vietnam. We had a wonderful time with them. They were able to see the piece of land and our info-room. It left a long-lasting impression on them. Another man from England called us. He was interested in sending tours to Vietnam including a visit to our project. We received another letter from a person who wants to encourage tourist agencies in making contributions to environmental projects

Permission and new workers

In August we received official papers to work as an enterprise in selling parabolic cookers. We have lost this permission when we closed the factory in Tam Ky. The small info-room near the airport in Danang has been used as a small factory and two deaf workers have been employed and trained. We will employ more people as we open our new factory next year.

Our desire is that in the future our project will be self sufficient. We still have a long way to go, for example: We received an order for 40 parabolic cookers from someone. We prepared everything with the local government and selected the people. When everything was settled, the person could not keep her promise and only 10 parabolics were supported. We had to come up with our own funds in order to keep our promise with the people and government officials. We had to remember ourselves that through our failures we learn something.



Four days walk

We don't have any sponsorship, but several friends are helping us occasionally with 'green' support. One of them is Fred who has been walking hundreds of kilometers each year during the International Four days Marches in Holland. This year he walked 40km every day. It was a wonderful achievement. The first three days the weather was good. Around 37500 people were registered and it was unbelievable to see so many people walking for four days through the countryside. The last day the weather changed. Rain, thunder and lightning followed them till the last meters. Everyone was soaked but Fred and the left over 34.000 walkers didn't care. Fred was again glad that he was able to finish his 'green' sponsor walk.

Two ways of thinking

A businessman told us the following (may-be well-known) story. Two businessmen wanted to start a shoe factory in a poor country. They decided to research the area. They came back after a few months. One of them was very disappointed and said there was no need for a shoe factory because everyone walked bare feet. But the other man was very enthusiastic and said that there was a lot of potential for a shoe factory, because everyone walked barefoot.



This story is like our project. It is easy to be discouraged when it rains, but if you count the hours of sunshine during the year you will see lots of potential. We need to think differently in order to see our visions and dreams coming through. We hope that you will stand with us when we go on with our project and in exploring new ideas.

This is all the news we have for now. Again, thanks a lot for your friendship

Warm solar greetings,

The Solar Serve family

Called To Serve

For more Solar Serve News:
Or write to:

<http://www.vietnamsolarserve.org/solarservenews.html>
solarserve@yahoo.com