



July / August / September 2012 Solar Serve News

Dear friends,

Last month many people in Vietnam were captivated by Euro 2012, but our workers had other things on their mind. Thuy Vy, our accountant, made preparations for her wedding and Vu, our worker, was waiting for the birth of his first child. Other workers had to travel for projects or making new plans for the future. You can find their stories and other news in this letter. Please remember that this letter is not only about our work, but also a way to communicate news about our staff, customers and people we daily meet. We really hope you enjoy it.

Let's start with a wedding

Thuy Vy, our secretary and accountant, prepared her wedding for months. A storm almost stopped her from doing this, when a door slammed suddenly and hurt her pinky. The top of it was damaged and she needed a skin graft. It took several weeks to heal and this was all during her engagement. But she restored well and at the beginning of this month (July) she and her fiancée Duy Tan finally got married. Many people joined the church ceremony and dinner party. What a joy to see Vy and Tan surrounded by family and so many friends in celebrating this wonderful day!



Birth of first child

Vu has been working for Solar Serve many years and is the only deaf worker left, but we value him for ten. We love him and also his deaf wife Oanh, who has been working for a fastfood restaurant. In 2011 they got married and for the last nine months they have been counting every day for the birth of their first baby. While he was working at our factory he got the news that his wife gave birth to a healthy son. A few days later he was also very happy to tell us that his son was able to hear. Vu and Oanh have started a new life as father and mother. It's a new challenge for them. As Solar Serve we all rejoiced in it!

New design and training

After winning the CSIP award in 2011, a lot of things changed and a whole new scale of support and advice came together with it. A consultant encouraged us to design a new cooker which can be used for boiling water, which seems to be the greatest need at the moment. As a result we designed and made several different models. Local people will be asked to use them and according to their response we will make a decision which one will be finally made. One of our workers also got training in marketing by the same organization and Bich did a five-day training course in leadership as a social entrepreneur.



TV discussion

A TV documentary about Solar Serve as a social enterprise was used during a discussion between a government official and a representative of a centre for social initiatives promotion. The one-hour talk show was well watched because important questions were raised, like how the government could better support social entrepreneurs and recognize their impact in society. Later they put the whole discussion on a Vietnamese YouTube site and it has been watched very well since. If you want to follow this discussion in Vietnamese, [click here](#).



Lots of visitors

We discovered that Australians are very interested in renewable energy. We had two groups visiting us and they encouraged us so much in what we were doing. They understood very clearly the benefit of it. We also had a group of young Vietnamese visitors helping our workers a few hours and two Dutch ladies stopped by and were very surprised when they saw the solar cookers. A Vietnamese filmmaker from New York visited us too and made a documentary of our work and three French students did a similar documentary. They want University students to understand the effect of social enterprises. They were travelling for six months throughout Asia.

Ongoing support

After a TV channel kept showing a documentary about our work, people throughout the country started to call us. They were convinced of the benefits and started to order solar cookers. It gave us a boost in running our social enterprise and charity. But we are also very thankful for people in the world who are still supporting us financially. This can come in different ways of fundraising, like a 72 year old man who, together with his son in law and granddaughter, will walk 120 km in four days. Others are walking or running short distances or selling secondhand things at fairs. One person even has prizes available when people join his fundraising games. It's great to hear their stories when they support and introduce our work to the world.



Consultation about cook-stoves

This month we were invited by the Global Alliance for Clean Cook-stoves for their first consultation and strategic planning workshop for clean cook-stoves in Vietnam. The alliance seeks to save lives, improve livelihoods, empower women, and combat climate change by creating a global market for clean and efficient household cooking solutions. The consultation brought together a diverse group of individuals and organizations related to the clean cook-stove and fuels sector. It was very helpful to understand the work already being done and to identify together the key barriers and intervention options.



Severe storms

We were hit by several violent storms. The blades of our windmill could not keep up with the speed and were severely damaged, so that we had to take it down. Near our center the University of Danang had installed a solar panel together with a windmill on a big pole. It was a research project in order to supply electricity for streetlights. One of those violent winds smashed both solar panel and windmill to the ground and they were totally destroyed. Also winds from Laos together with heat waves made it very uncomfortable in Danang. At this moment we are entering another season where typhoons are a real threat.

Well, that's all for now. Thanks for your interest and we hope you will stand with us again.

Greetings,

Solar Serve team

Called to Serve

More information: www.vietnamsolarserve.org/ or write to: solarserve@yahoo.com