



Oct / Nov / Dec 2017 No.53

Solar Serve News

Dear friends,

There was an exciting atmosphere during the traditional boat race on the Han River. The 200 competitors had to use more energy than previous years because of the heat. The competition was fierce but after 7.5 km for men and 5 km for women there were finally two winners. They did not give up and the joy of receiving their rewards was worth it all. As Solar Serve we have to work hard too and not give up. But for us it is a great reward when we see people using our products that can help to improve their health, economy and lives



More workers



We were in need of workers, but now we are so thankful that Tan, who lived with us before, came back to study in Danang and today he is one of our new part-time workers. One month ago two men, A Bi and A Nao from the Jeh minority showed up at our doorstep and asked for work. Now they are a part of our Solar Serve family. They are great and joyful workers. Also Duy stayed with us and now loves to work with his hands. We are also waiting for another young (deaf) man to work with us. Also Esther from Korea/USA with a certificate to teach English wants to help children in our neighborhood to improve their English.

Being creative

Tho, the wife of our director, is also one of our workers and is in charge of the kitchen, hospitality and keeping the buildings clean. She was invited for a baby shower by one of our neighbors. Suddenly the electricity was cut off in the neighborhood. Tho knew the solution and ran to our center and took a few Light of the World solar lamps with her and provided enough light for the party to continue. After that the neighbors became very interested, and the next day someone came over to our center to buy one. Tho was so happy that in her small capacity she could stir others in a practical way.



Minority cottage

We have built a small cottage in our research & display center. It was done in a few days after we gathered old material from our storehouse. Some of us knew how to put a frame together and others were creative in decorating the walls. The roof was a major thing. In Hoi An we were able to get dried banana leaves and decorated the top of the roof with it. A windmill was placed in front and our waterwheel beside for supplying electricity. We filled the cottage with a few clean cookers, a solar lamp and a parabolic and box cooker in front. It became a great spot to show our work and to take pictures with our visitors.

Great visitors

One of our latest visitors was a family from Holland. They were also involved in charity projects. So we had something in common that made their visit worthwhile. When they shared our work with one of their neighbors he immediately wanted to support some of our clean cookers. Another man from Malaysia who has been researching solar cookers as one of his hobbies, came with his friend to Hoi An and decided to visit us. He has been reading our newsletters for years and now he wanted to see what we were doing. It was a short visit but spontaneously he wanted to support our work.



Investigation

A small delegation of the Australian embassy in Vietnam came to visit us. Not only to see what we were doing, but also to check up on the reward they had donated a couple years ago after our director was named as one of the best social entrepreneurs. The money prize was transferred by a government agency to Solar Serve. They were very surprised that we only received 2/3 of it. They promised to start an investigation why this money was withheld. It would be so good if this money was be released so we can buy material for making new cookers and paying our workers faithfully.

Clean stoves for Cambodia

Two visitors (foto:left-back) from Cambodia came to visit us and ordered 200 clean stoves. They liked our stoves, but asked if we could change some things on the outside following the preferences of the Cambodian people. After that our workers have been working hard in order to meet their requirements. We cannot always make a change like this, because we have our own model and try to keep the price as low as possible for the poor. Because of this change the 200 stoves became a little bit more expensive, but they did not mind and we were happy to make them.



Works of charity

Although our director Mr. Bich is regularly involved in teaching small family business owners how to establish a healthy business, we often combine it with supporting poor families. Last month he had the opportunity to help the 'Jeh' and 'Xe Dang' minorities in the mountains with 100 clean stoves. His co-worker Mr. Phi raised some funds for helping poor schoolchildren with 75 schoolbags. What a joy it was to provide the ones who really needed it. We like to be available for you to be an extension in suppling people in very poor areas with their needs especially with our clean stoves.



Removing bees

A young woman asked one of our workers if he could remove the bees from a tree in her garden. She did not want to kill the bees with a deadly spray. Our worker dressed himself in a thin plastic raincoat and tied it closely. He also put something over his head and climbed the tree. They were all hanging in a big bunch together. With a plastic bag he covered them and closed it at the top. After he came down he went to another place and gave them their freedom again. It was beautiful that he could do this and especially when you appreciate the works of a bee and enjoy their honey.



A FBT mountain & lemon story

Mr A Ho belongs to the Xe Dang minority. Many years ago he was only hunting and planting rice in the jungle. After he participated in the family business training, he changed his focus. In his garden he had 4 lemon trees. They produced fruit in every season with a lot of juice. He lives on Ngoc Linh mountain (2,592m above sea-level), where the weather condition is very good for growing lemons. He planted 300 lemon trees on his land and avoided chemicals for growth. He became very successful and is already planting 1000 trees more. He was so thankful for this wonderful change and direction.

A FBT chicken & eggs story

Mr. Chieu belongs to the Thai minority. He used drugs for years, ever since he was a student. In 2004 he married, but his wife was also addicted and died. After 3 years he knew he had HIV / AIDS . He was desperate and was waiting to die. Someone brought him to a Christian rehabilitation center for drug addicts and after a short time he was healed. He participated in our seminars and learned so much that he immediately started a chicken farm with 300 chickens for selling eggs and to manufacture food for animals. He succeeded and became a good example of standing up after a hopeless situation.



A FBT new cook & restaurant story

Mrs Phuong and her husband belong to the Dai minority. They attended the FBT course and were eager to learn to run their business better. They built a restaurant but many people around them said that they should not do this. Even their relatives were against them. They decided to ask God if this restaurant was the right business for them by sending them the right cook. The next morning one man came to them and asked for a job. To their surprise he was a very good cook and when they employed him they started to be successful and their restaurant became very crowded. Everything is possible!

Happy with all support

We are very happy to tell you that several support groups and individuals have helped us in the past. Last month they were even picking pears and selling secondhand goods at a flea market. It helped us to pay the salaries of our workers and sometimes to buy materials for making the cleanstoves. We are very thankful for all support, because we cannot make a reasonable profit on our products in order to run our projects. We want to be open about it. We are not asking you for any support, but we also do not want to fool you that we do not have any needs.

Finally

We hope that you enjoyed our letter. Thanks for your reactions, encouragements and hints. Let's work together for those who are not able to stand strong in society and help them to have a normal life.

Greetings,

Solar Serve team



Called to Serve

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