

# Solar Serve News

July / Aug / Sept 2018 No.55



Charity  
Social Enterprise  
Training



## Dear friends,

In the last few months Solar Serve seemed to be a hiding place for animals. We caught a snake in our center but it was eaten soon by our tribal workers. We also had a monkey but it was aggressive and attacking people. Finally we had to bring it back to the forest. Our neighbors donated an aquarium, but some of the fish could not leave others alone and needed to be separated. A cloud of termites filled one worker's room, eating lots of paper and wood. Also other animals invaded our center but bad things turned for good and here are some of our exciting stories.



## Producing our own covers

There has been a demand for more clean stoves in Vietnam and across the borders. In our last letter we told you that we were not able to make the covers of our stoves anymore. After being mistreated by a dishonest company we asked a retired engineer to design a machine for us so we could make the covers by ourselves. Together with his son, he came up with two heavy machines for cutting and pressing. They have been installed already and after some changes, we have cut and pressed thousands of covers ourselves already. Now we are no longer dependent on others in producing a good clean stove.

## Myanmar and Cambodia

Our friendship with the people in Myanmar is expanding. After they opened their own factory, we provided for training and assistance. They are not yet able to make certain parts due to a lack of materials or machines in their country. So, we were able to cut and press with our new machines 2000 covers and bottoms for them and shipped it already to Myanmar. We also have been working together with a company in Cambodia and provided hundreds of stoves already. They are able to sell them to local people with discounts or loans. Their vision is 100,000 clean stoves by the year 2022.



## An outing never to forget

We don't always have an opportunity for an outing with all of our workers. We were invited to join a gathering of likeminded people in Saigon. A man who has been working all over the world inspired us to widen our vision. His teaching was with compassion and he challenged us to expand our work to other countries. After the gathering we took the opportunity to visit the Mekong Delta. We stayed in Can Tho and early in the morning we hired a boat and visited the floating market, and also a village where noodles were made and a beautiful garden of trees, flowers and animals. In the meantime we watched the 2018 world cup together and everyone got a nice T-shirt with a picture of our group printed on it. An outing never to forget!

## Get inspired

This year lots of opportunities were created by FBT in teaching families and even ex-drug addicts how to create a healthy business. Many have failed in the past or have been misused by others. Therefore it was important to restore their confidence in order to start again with good principles. It's amazing how that has changed many of the participants of this course. The last few years we have been training many families of small enterprises in the north, middle and south of Vietnam. Now there are so many success stories to tell and we hope you get inspired by some of them. It changed many lives.



## A dream became reality

Mr. Ngoc had a lot of compassion for deaf people in finding a good job for them. One day he had a dream where he had opened a fast food restaurant for deaf people to work. So he learned to cook and got the sign language under control. But one day he was abused by one of the deaf. He was so hurt that he wanted to stop working with them right away. During this time he became father of a child that turned out to be deaf. He loved the child so much that he became aware that his calling for life was still working with the deaf. When he followed our FBT course, he was encouraged in picking up his dream again, so he started a fast food restaurant. His dream became reality and now he is helping many deaf people.

### No one taught me before

Mr. Hai is skillful in wood carving. He began to make Agar products and sold them in China. He was very successful. But he made a mistake by not signing a contract. Very quickly he was bankrupt because the other company could not pay him. He then had to close his business. When he attended one of the FBT seminars, he quickly learned what his strengths and weaknesses were. He also was able to analyze his chances and avoid dangerous discussions. When he realized how important this was, he wondered why no one had ever taught him before. It's great when people discover new things!



### Turn into something valuable

Mrs. Van had a successful business. Unfortunately she was misled by dishonest people and lost her entire income. Her husband also ran away and her son became addicted to drugs. She felt hopeless and eventually she wanted to end her life. One day she met a good friend who told her that there was hope. It changed her life. Later she heard about the family business training course. She registered as a student and learned so many new things and how to set up a new company with the right principles and concepts. Now she is so grateful and able to turn her past into something which is valuable for life.

### New worker and the need of protection

A Meo (20yrs) belongs to the Jeh minority. There are lots of temptations for young people, so one of the leaders advised him to get away and work with us. One day he showed up. It worked out well, because we could see that he has the ability to become a skillful worker. After a few weeks he did not want to go back anymore. Furthermore we need protection when we are working in our factory and transporting materials. A rubber band broke on Duy's motorbike which caused a sheet of metal to hit his leg. The wound needed 7 stitches but fortunately he was able to move again after 10 days.

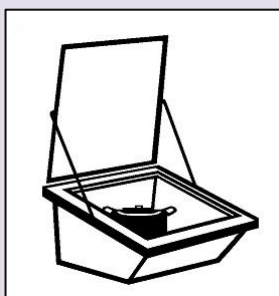


### Representing our work

In the coming month of September two of our staff will represent our work during an International conference in Thailand. They purchased a stand and will share the three main involvements of Solar Serve namely Charity, Social Enterprise and Training. We love to expand our work more to other Asian countries and even beyond. In our next letter we will tell you more.

### Preparing for Charity

A new season of typhoons has just started. Mostly it comes together with heavy rainfall and flooding. We need to be prepared because one of our three purposes is Charity. Especially we should have clean cookers available in our storage. This is another task we have to face, because we need to be fast and react quickly. Also a woman involved of charity work came to visit us and connected us with an organization which is ready to help in disasters. It should be great if we can work together.



### Visit from USA

Two American ladies, friends of Solar Cookers International came to visit us. One of them writes cookbooks. Their visit was short but wonderful. They were especially interested in our solar box cooker. We have these cookers still in our showroom but unfortunately we are not using them in our projects anymore. Vietnamese are fast, but cooking with box cookers needs a lot of patience. It will not always encourage people to use them daily. But we are very grateful for these cookers because this is how it all began for us, more than 21

years ago. We are still excited in making products to save lives and the environment.

### Support through all those years

Maybe you are wondering how we can manage our work for so long without being in debt. First of all this letter has never been written for any support. If you have never supported us, you are still our friends. Through this letter we want to inspire you not to give up your dreams and learn to stand up and go on when it is difficult. Because of this, friends are still supporting us by many means. For example by walking or running marathons, organizing flea markets, rewards, presenting our work in clubs, schools, churches and organizations. Also generous people came to visit us and several times we inherited money from friends who passed away. Sometimes we can make small profits, but we are still very thankful for all the support.



## Extension Training

We already mentioned in this letter about our family business training, but during the last few months we were also invited to teach business students in Hanoi. Some of them were already involved in fulltime businesses. A few students lacked strength for future opportunities, so it was good to empower them. We also discovered that they still walked around with wrong concepts of money and prosperity. It needed to be adjusted in order to be effective in helping others when they live in difficult circumstances. It was good that they were able to discover their talents and gifts. There is often a big change in their lives.



### Video (Ctrl + Click on picture),

We want to show you a short video with our new cutting and pressing machines and the production of our improved clean stove. Although our new machines will make our work a little bit easier, there is still a lot of work to do by hand in order to complete the whole clean stove, like cutting, folding, rolling, welding, painting, assembling and packing. So enjoy the short video but also know that it's not complete yet.

## Finally

We hope you enjoyed our letter. Maybe by the end of the year we will give you an update of how many clean stoves we have made and how many are used in Vietnam and other countries. Take care and thanks for your friendship.

Greetings, Solar Serve team



## Called to Serve

More information: [www.vietnamsolarserve.org/](http://www.vietnamsolarserve.org/) or write to: [solarserve@yahoo.com](mailto:solarserve@yahoo.com)