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Solar Serve News

Dear friends,

In our last letter we told you that we could feel the excitement of working again under the Sun. Well the excitement came through several challenges. First of all when we were told to close our factory and also to move the information room temporarily. In the mean time we had to attend a workshop in Nepal and make preparations for the project and Environment day in Danang. So, lots of news to tell you. Please take your time and be challenged!

Buying a piece of land

We told you that we lost our factory and felt that we should move to Danang city. At that time we had not found a place and asked you to stand with us! After a lot of thinking and waiting we felt that we should buy a piece of land. After several confirmations, we started to look around and ended up behind the area of Marble mountains, along the beach and the new road to Hoi An. Most of you have climbed 'heavens' mountain and probably have seen this location (see picture with arrow). We found



three pieces of land beside each other with a total surface of 420 m². Enough to build a factory with some space around for research and storage. On May 25th we signed a contract and paid our first payment. We had to empty our own pockets first in order to pay the amount. After 40 days we have to pay our second payment (July 3rd) and after three days we have to pay our final payment in order to be the owner of the land. At the time we wrote this letter (June 28th) we were blessed by many friends in and outside Vietnam and we are happy to tell you that we are able to pay the final payment on July 6th. What a great blessing. Something really to be thankful for if you remember that on May 25th we had to empty our pockets!

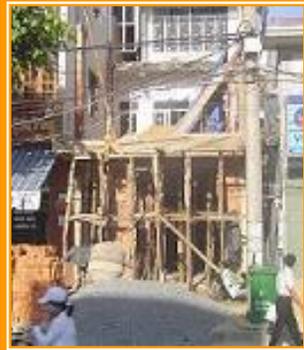
International Environment Day in Danang

In the midst of this we were busy with the preparations of the International Environment Day. It was not easy to get permission for a good place. Our desire was to have this day in the center of Danang, but the authorities didn't allow it. After another hot spot was refused, they gave us permission near a waterpark. It became still a great day! Many reporters and TV cameras surrounded us. This year we decided not only to display the box and parabolic cookers, but also the solar still, the new briquettes and our future plans for building large community cookers. We asked our staff to make and demonstrate the box en parabolic cookers at the place. Also the University showed a hot water heater and two foldable parabols. A new thing was the press machine for making the briquettes, but also the mechanical clock and the new square box cookers drew attention. Lots of visitors came to the place. After this day several newspaper articles and TV reports were released and they asked us also to participate in a TV talk show. We loved it, because it is all for the benefit of the people we want to serve.





Workshop at the top of the world
 An Asian Regional Workshop on solar cooking and food processing was held on 16th -17th April in Katmandu (Nepal). More than 30 experts from different Asian countries and almost 100 Nepalese students and experts took part in the workshop. Mr. Bich attended the meetings on our behalf and Vietnam. Every ten minutes various topics were presented. In small groups the participants talked about several topics such as 'how they could spread the use of solar cookers in their region'. It was a good opportunity to learn from each other and to get more experiences. During this time mr. Bich met father Matthew from India who runs a solar center, where they make box and parabolic cookers, community kitchens, solar food dryers, solar steam installations and solar hot water heaters. They became good friends and certainly a good contact for the future. During the breaks several solar cookers and other devices were displayed outside the meeting hall. Bich showed some big posters with lots of Solar Serve pictures which was interested for the participants. After the workshop Bich visited a few centers making solar cookers and briquettes. He also had an opportunity to visit a school where several community cookers were built. After 10 days he came back with lots of information, new ideas and new solar friends.



Move of info-room
 The landlord of our info-room decided to rebuild his house. He told us to move to another place for only two months in order to give him enough time. But knowing that a three-storey building takes longer to build, we rented another place near the entrance of the airport for six months. Although gamblers polluted the area, the police came and cleaned the place. It seems to be peaceful now and lots of people came to visit us. Also foreign passengers came to visit us, when they walked out of the airport and saw the solar cooker display outside our room. Mr.Tuan and Thanh moved too and are daily working in this new information room.



Visitors

We received a letter from a Dutch Home Committee. They wanted to see what we were doing. They knew Mr. Hans and were interested in our project. Not knowing our situation, the two Dutchmen arrived a few days before the Environment Day and in the midst of closing the factory, moving the info-room and buying the new land. But everything worked out well and they had a great time of seeing all our solar cookers and other devices displayed at the place where people use them. We took them to the land where we want to build the new factory near Marble Mountains and visited one of our workers at the countryside where we have a project. They also took Bich's family out of his village and had a meal with them. For them it was a cultural experience in a hot climate. This trip will always stay in their mind and heart. After this valuable visit we hope that their experiences and impressions will also inspire others.



Understanding

We made a new folder with basic information of our project. We are using the folder for visitors and also for basic teaching in the countryside. During this summer we have several workshops running (see pictures below: Workshop in Hoa Quy nearly three hours away by motorbike from our Solar Serve quarters). It requires a lot of perseverance of our staff. Some of them have to stay away from their families for several weeks, because the workshops are not always near their homes. Please remember them, because they have to sacrifice a lot. We are thankful for their willingness, but they are still human people with personal needs. As we started this letter with the excitement of working under the Sun, we also want to mention this other side of the coin. We hope that you understand this and will stand with us in all our ups and downs when we are working under the Sun. Thanks a lot for your love and understanding!



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

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