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Solar Serve News

Dear friends,

When a grain of sand lodges itself inside an oyster, it causes great discomfort for the oyster. The oyster begins to defend itself from the discomfort. It creates a smooth, hard crystal substance around the grain of sand, layer after layer which finally produces a beautiful pearl. In this letter we would like to share with you some stories of discomfort at Solar Serve which resulted finally in creating beautiful pearls. We will start with a hard one..



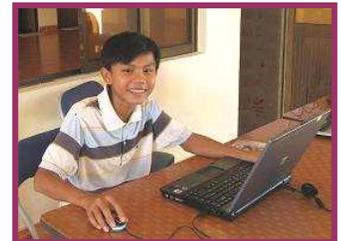
Heart attack



Fred was born with a mental disorder. With a childlike excitement he has been walking hundreds of kilometers every year in order to support our projects. This year he was planning to walk 160 km in 4 days. A few months before this event he felt very heavy in his chest. The doctor did not find anything but a few days before the 4-day walk, he suddenly had a heart attack and was rushed to the hospital. They saved his life and through medicine, care and rest Fred has recovered well. It was not easy to understand the reason of the attack, but for sure more layers were added to this precious pearl.

Secondhand laptop

Thang (13yrs), the son of our director, is eager to help us with our website. He is working together with our staff but if one is working on his laptop the other one has to wait. When this was shared with some friends they made contact with a charity organization. The organization had just installed a secondhand laptop for one lady, but she called it off. When our friends called them they donated the laptop to Thang immediately. At the same time a friend of a friend, who was visiting Vietnam was able to bring it with him. The secondhand laptop was not only a pearl for Thang but he also shone like a pearl when he received it.



Encouragement

A group of young people based in South Africa came to visit Vietnam. They felt to stay a few days in Danang during their trip. Traveling together for months, they were already shaping each other like little pearls, so they were able to encourage us through their experiences. We felt that their visit was a refreshment. We had lots of question marks after we lost the land which we wanted to purchase for the extension of our work. But their words and encouragement were like a great comfort. It inspired us not to give up and the next story will show you that after months of difficulties a beautiful pearl was formed.

Great reward

When we lost the land we asked ourselves what went wrong. We felt such a peace that we did not want to hold back. One day someone introduced us to a Social Entrepreneurs Support Program. Their aim is to identify and support social entrepreneurs at their early stages of development. Bich, our director, felt to participate in this program along with 200 other entrepreneurs in Vietnam. There were three rounds. In each round participants dropped out and finally Bich had to stand in front of a panel. The result was made known on the first of September. Amazingly, Bich was at the top of the list and was chosen as the best social entrepreneur. After months of shaping, a beautiful pearl appeared which came along with 20,000 dollars worth as seed money to strengthen and to develop Solar Serve as a social enterprise.



Formed and shaped

Another pearl has been shaped but under the surface. Mrs. Tho had given up her job and joined her husband with her children at the center. She took the responsibility of running the hospitality which includes cleaning the center and cooking for our staff. It requires commitment besides having a family. This has not always been easy for her. This is the first time that she was away from her village, relatives and friends. At least she has her own family around her and now after several years she has been formed like another precious pearl in our center and stands side by side with her husband.



Short news

We are still in need of workers, but recently Hoang, a friend of our staff, came to help us for several months. Also Thang (27 yrs), an electrician, asked us if we could help him after he lost his job. Now he is also working at our Center.

One of our support groups did a successful display for thousands of people. They were able to demonstrate the solar cookers, distributed our pamphlets and showed our YouTube video clips. (We added some new clips and now you can find us also on Google earth.)



Some foreigners have been visiting us in order to start solar projects in Vietnam. If they had visited with us at an exhibition in green technology held in Tam Ky two months ago, they should have been very inspired. We came back with lots of information and made great contacts. An article in the newspaper said that Vietnam plans to bring renewable energy to around 600,000 households in rural, mountainous and remote coastal areas by 2020.

We replaced the windmill opposite our center where a park will be built in the future. Hoang and Tuan are also researching a hydraulic mill in order to generate electricity in the mountains.

That is all for now. Again thanks for your love and interest. Please keep in touch,

Greetings, Solar Serve team

Called to Serve

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