



April / May / June 2012

Solar Serve News

Dear friends,

How are you? Maybe you have noticed but every three years we skipped one of our newsletters because of staff absence. Now we are ready for a new season and encourage you to watch our latest [YouTube Solar Serve video](#). It will help you to understand what we are doing now. We also changed our [Vietnamese and English website](#) with lots of updates, videos and newspaper reports. For our Vietnamese readers, it will be interesting to watch a [VTV1 documentary](#) made in February. Many people called us after watching this documentary (even with [sign language](#)) and requested our solar cookers.

Say goodbye and welcome



Hiep, one of our deaf workers, left us at the end of last year. For two years he has been working in the center. His good friend Hung left before and now it was time for him to return too. We organized a special thank you party for him. We also said goodbye to Hoang, who worked as a volunteer for three months in our center and established good relationships with our workers. Also Mr. Yamamoto from Japan arrived and tried to help us with a design of a lighter

and fast-made parabolic cooker. We were very thankful for his effort, which was part of CSIP strategy (the organization who gave Bich the social enterprise reward in 2011). In the meantime one of our neighbors applied for a job. Mr. Thang (27) has been doing well and has been involved in building, designing and promoting already. We need more workers like him.

Modern slavery

We were able to promote Solar Serve at a conference in Thailand. An additional conference opened our eyes about modern slavery in Asia. Government leaders, police, lawyers, businessmen, media, organizations and individuals formed one stand against this kind of slavery (human trafficking, bonded labor, forced labor, child labor, early and forced marriage, etc). How can we stop this and what are the long term solutions in helping people who were set free? Can we help them with a hopeful future? CNN was also involved and was committed to report regularly about modern slavery cases. Several times we broke up in groups to discuss practical steps. We as Solar Serve were challenged too in helping those people in bondage. We cannot sit and do nothing while many people are suffering.



Furniture after a storm

One of the trees in front of the house of Tho's mother fell down during a storm. Bich decided to use it for furniture in the center. We moved the tree to Danang and hired a young carpenter who had already done a great job for one of our neighbors. He was eager to come. With only a few tools and an electric saw he made in two weeks time the most amazing furniture. He furnished our living room on the third floor and our kitchen on the first. Also other things were made and after two weeks we were blessed.



Fieldtrip by students

20 students from all over the country won prizes in a green environment competition. They came together in Danang for further training. It was organized by the British Consul. They made a fieldtrip to our center and visited the school where we had installed 32 solar panels. It was great to have students like this visit us. They had lots of questions. After their visit they made an evaluation. They were very encouraged with our patience in doing this work for so many years. The project seemed to be right because Solar Serve could not exist for so long. They loved our green products and were impressed by the diligent work of our (deaf) workers. They concluded that it was a good project and encouraged us to improve our business.



New designs

More requests for solar cookers came in after the latest TV documentary. Could we provide all the needs? Our parabolic cookers are well designed and they work very well, but it takes days of skilled work and labor in order to finish a good product. We asked Mr. Yamamoto to design a product with the same quality but faster and easier to make. It was not easy and we kept on working on a new design after he left. Thang also made some attempts. By doing so, we slowly came to an end product. It was not easy because there are always pros and cons. We are now in the final stage. Gas and electricity prices are rising and people are looking for alternatives. Now is the time for promoting good and low-cost solar cookers.



Climate innovation

Mr. Bich was invited for a meeting in Hanoi organized by the World Bank and others. He was able to set up a Solar Serve stand during the meetings and met lots of interesting people. Not only businesses and organizations were involved but also foreign embassies and government officials. The first two days were more discussions about green growth and the use of better and more effective products, processes, services, technologies and ideas

that are accepted by markets, governments and society. The third day's emphasis was more on the political applications. .

Support by others

We were asked to provide six parabolic cookers in Ben Tre (Southern part of Vietnam). They were bought by an organization www.350.org. They asked us to help people who were working in an area where deforestation was taking place. We asked Thang to send the parabolic cookers to this place by bus and to set up a training course for those people. It was good to assist another organization. Sometimes people have no finances to buy a parabolic cooker but with the support of organizations like '350' or others, we can supply the cookers and assist them with the necessary training.



That's all for now. Please keep in touch,

Greetings,

Solar Serve team

Called to Serve

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