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Solar Serve News



Dear friends,

Maybe you did not know but Vietnam is a soccer country. We had very good teams in the past and could be on the same level as Korea or Japan if we were more united. During this year's World Cup, many people in major cities come together late at night (11pm till 6:30 am) to watch the matches. We love it and have a passion that the best team will win. That same passion we have in Solar Serve too. We love what we are doing. Our 'goal' is to help the people with equipment that protects their health, environment and saves money. In this letter we'd like to share with you some highlights.

Helping poor families

Our sponsorship program is doing well in Holland because of the personal touch of a volunteer group. Explaining that it is not Solar Serve that gets the benefit but it is all about helping poor families, has changed peoples mind. The opportunity to buy a clean cooker or parabol and give them away to Vietnamese families in difficult circumstances has encouraged many of them. Even a recycling agency decided to sponsor a whole village. We have also given opportunities on our [website](#) , but it seems like the personal touch is missing for people to respond.



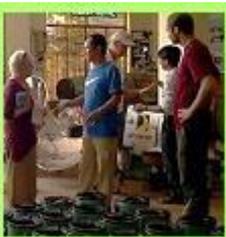
Expanding

As a social enterprise we are not depending on a sponsorship program. We work hard and till now we have already made 1500 clean cookers at our center. It is great to see the place filled with [blue colored cookers](#) and parabols. Now we need to expand our space. A neighbor came to us with the offer to rent for a number of years a piece of land (8.2m x 21.5m) near our center. Soon a deal was settled and now we are building our own storage with the help of a contractor. It will also be a place for workers to live who cannot return daily to their home. We are very excited for this new phase.



A special visit

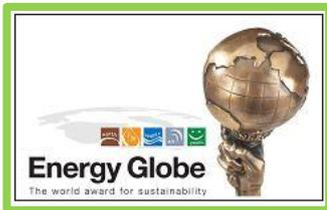
22 War veterans from the USA came to visit us. Most of them, like the Vietnamese war veterans, went through major traumas during and after the war. They experienced hell and things have been following them since. Even when they returned to America they were not welcomed. A visit to Vietnam is often a part of the healing process. They were very interested in our work and sponsored some Vietnamese families with our cookers. We received them with open arms and without any condemnation. It was a valuable time and we could see that it did something good to them.



Change in workers

Thuy Vy was asked to work for her family. We released her with sadness, although we were thankful for all her work. Minh, our neighbor is married and father of one child. He joined us two months ago after he applied for a job. We had to release two Katu workers and one deaf worker after their contracts were finished. Another one left us without notification. So we are desperate for new workers during this busy time. Not only us but many companies have to face a change of workers often, especially after a break or celebration.





Global Award

We received a letter from Energy Globe, that we as Solar Serve were the national winner of the [Energy Globe Award 2014](#) for Vietnam. With more than 160 participating countries and over 1000 project submissions annually the Energy Globe Award is today's most prestigious environmental prize worldwide. It distinguishes projects regionally, nationally and globally that safeguard resources such as energy or develop renewable or emission-free sources. Unfortunately, we were not able to receive the award, but were honored for this recognition.

Miracle tree

The moringa oleifera is known as a "miracle plant" because of its nutritional and medical properties. It grows in a tropical and subtropical climate. Each part of the tree can be used for medicine, food or other useful purposes. Although we knew about the tree, we did not pay much attention to it. Recently we received some amazing reports from people who had benefited physically from it. So we ordered a package of seeds and have planted them at our center and at a large space in the countryside. Our purpose is to help others in starting small social enterprises with the benefits of this tree.



Solar panels installed

A Dutch friend who had a restaurant in Hoi An, moved to an area outside the ancient city. He has always been a supporter of environmental projects. Lately we installed for him three solar panels on the top of a frame construction near his house. It took us several days, but immediately after everything was installed, it worked perfectly. Our friend was very happy and we hope in the future we can help others too. It all started three years ago when we were asked to assist an agency to install 32 panels at a school.

New areas

We are searching for new opportunities. Recently we have given two parabolic cookers to a leper colony in Danang. Instead of supplying the whole colony, we want to know first if the parabolic cookers are useful for them. We also sent our staff to Quang Tri for making contact with members of the women's union. The women were very excited and open for our help. As a social business we need to sell too. We contacted several agencies in Quang Nam and supplied them with our new clean cookers. We are waiting for the results. We already contacted local authorities for supplying a whole village with clean cookers and parabols, supported by the recycling shop (read above). They are now considering our request.



Summer gathering

All our staff joined a summer gathering of volunteers, social workers and entrepreneurs from all over the country. We were able to show our Solar Serve display and during one of the workshops we were able to teach some basic business principles. It was well received by the participants. We were also able to walk through the city, in order to get more insight about its needs. A small party at the end rounded up the gathering and we as staff added one day more in visiting the amazing Ocean Aquarium Museum and the holiday house of former king Bao Dai. Tired but satisfied, we returned home.



Norwegian and French visitors



We are always happy to receive individuals and groups, but it requires some adjustments in our work schedule. This was the case when six students from Norway came to see us. It was great to show them around. They met interesting people and spent a day in helping handicapped children. Although we had less time for seven French students, we were able to give them some information of the city and climbed one of the Marble Mountains with them. It was good to welcome them at our center: a special blessing.



Short news

When Bich, our director emptied his pocket in helping others, he immediately got a telephone call from the bank that he had won a Vespa motor bike. An amazing provision! Later he decorated the bike with the meaningful words 'blessing'.

Another short video clip was added on Youtube. We made a new [English version](#) of our clean stove and now a [Vietnamese version](#) is available too.

This year a charity run in support of our work was organized. Even an 81 year old man joined the run. Other activities like a flea market and a fair gave us another boost. Great to have all those volunteers helping us.



We placed a new billboard above the entrance of our center to keep people informed and updated on what we are doing.



Thanks for taking time to read our letter. We really appreciate that.

Greetings,
Solar Serve team

Called to Serve

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