



Jan / Febr / March 2008 No.17 Solar Serve News

Dear friends,

If we look back at 2007 we must say that through difficulties something beautiful came out. Nine months ago we were told to close down our factory in Tam Ky. We could never imagine that now, at the beginning of 2008, we are building our own new factory near the most famous tourist spot of Danang. Maybe in 2007 you also had difficulties, but we want to encourage you to never give up your dreams and hopes. Everything is possible and to work under the Sun is full of surprises. Remember we are not working with material but with precious people who we love and who we want to serve. You are also not a 'name' but a wonderful solar 'friend'. Please think like this and keep in touch during 2008. Happy New Year!



What have we been doing?

During this rainy season we have been building many new box solar cookers in Binh Son (100 km south of Danang). We changed the shape of the cookers a little bit so that we could stack them better for storage. We have also been asked to make the parabolic cooker smaller. Mr Tuan, who also made the clock for the kitchen parabolic cooker, designed a new parabolic cooker in four parts at our workshop in Danang. He used the mold of our present parabolic cooker (1.30m) and divided it in four parts.



It took him some time, but he came up with the cooker you see in the picture. He used some cheap reflecting material for this first trial. Some other workers designed a foldable stand and together the result was almost similar to the normal parabolic cookers. We were very happy that this new parabolic cooker was working well. Now we must learn how to make the four part parabolic cooker faster. It will be a good model for export and also easy for local transport.

The preparation and construction of the factory

At the beginning of November last year four Solar Serve workers built a shelter and storehouse near our land. Mr Vinh was asked to be the caretaker. We started to build on November 12th. The first few days were very difficult. Storm and heavy rain-



fall caused lots of problems in Danang and many roads were blocked for transport. But the workers were not disappointed and after a few days the weather changed. Electricity was connected and a well for fresh water was made. Twenty-five holes (1.9 m deep) were dug and lots of bricks, cement and iron were used for connecting the foundations in the holes. Everyday we were amazed how things came together. Finally on December 5th the whole foundation was finished. It was a real accomplishment for all the workers. Very soon the walls and pillars were built and on December 26th the second floor was laid. At the moment we are building the walls for the rooms on the second floor. We hope in our next letter we are able to tell you more of the final stage (roof and final touch). We hope to finish the main construction in six months, which will be at the end of May. It would be wonderful if we can open the building in June when everything is focused on the Environment with a special day on June 5th. But feel free to come before the opening. We have already welcomed several solar friends



from the USA, Canada, Switzerland, Ireland, England, Holland, Thailand and Vietnam to see the construction site.

Enough for each day

Sometimes people asked us how we can pay for all the construction. First of all we do not ask people for donations. We believe that we should give enough information about what we are doing and leave it to the individual. Sometimes this is a little bit scary. You start something without having anything. But amazingly we have received so much support. Among the supporters were friends and unknown people, and individuals like a handicapped person, a former drug addict, an embassy worker, a single mother, an older couple who gave their anniversary gift, leaders from an organization, a church, support of a fair, and second hand sale, a sponsor walk, dozens of companies, poor, rich and also children. When we received their contributions we could use it right away for cement, bricks, iron, sand, stones, salary for the workers, housing of the caretaker, electric wiring, water pipes, etc. To make it clear: 'For each day we have enough' but 'For the next day we have to see the impossible become possible'. The result is what you can see in the pictures. We are so thankful.

Short news

- Since we bought the piece of land in August 2007 the value of the land has increased three times. Is that not amazing? We really felt that we bought the land at the right time.
- We also felt that we should not only focus on our own needs but also help others with similar needs as us.
- A reporter of a TV station is making a documentary of our project for a competition. She has been interviewing people who are using the cookers and made detailed shots of the cookers and our work. It took her several months to put it all together.
- We have been putting 3 video clips of our project on YouTube. Search for: "Cooking with the Sun in Vietnam (1, 2 or 3)" <http://youtube.com/watch?v=qn6oCLiw2ik> The first clip had already 300 viewers in two weeks time.
- UNESCO Vietnam bought two solar cookers from us. They want to introduce our work in South Vietnam.



- We have two new workers. Mister Kiet has been a truck driver, but now he is building box solar cookers and is driving our truck. Mister Vu is our new deaf worker in Danang and is learning to build parabolic cookers. He is doing well and works together with two other deaf (Cuong and Hoa). Mr Tuan is teaching them and is responsible for the workshop.
- With people leaving and coming we have around 14 workers today. We are helping them to become trainees to others, especially for the new factory workers.



- We are very happy with our contractor. He gives us good advice in buying the 'right' material. One week ago we found out how important a contractor is, when a building near our new factory collapsed because of poor construction and material.
- We created a guest book on our website. Please feel free to write any comments. It will encourage people to use or make solar cookers: <http://users3.smartgb.com/g/g.php?a=s&i=g35-15697-7f> We also found a Vietnamese TV video clip of our work: <http://clip.vn/watch/Bep-nang-luong-mat-troi,RQm?fm=search> Please let us know when you find anything else on the internet about us. All languages are welcome. We would like to add those links to our website.

This is all the news we have for now. Again, thanks a lot for your friendship.
Warm solar greetings,

Solar Serve Team

Called To Serve

For more Solar Serve News:

<http://www.vietnamsolarserve.org/solarservenews.html>

Or write to:

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