

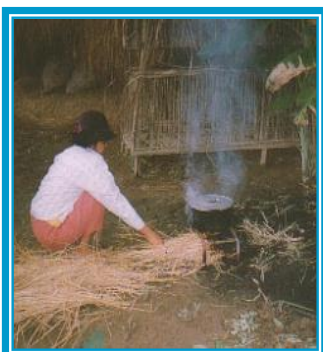
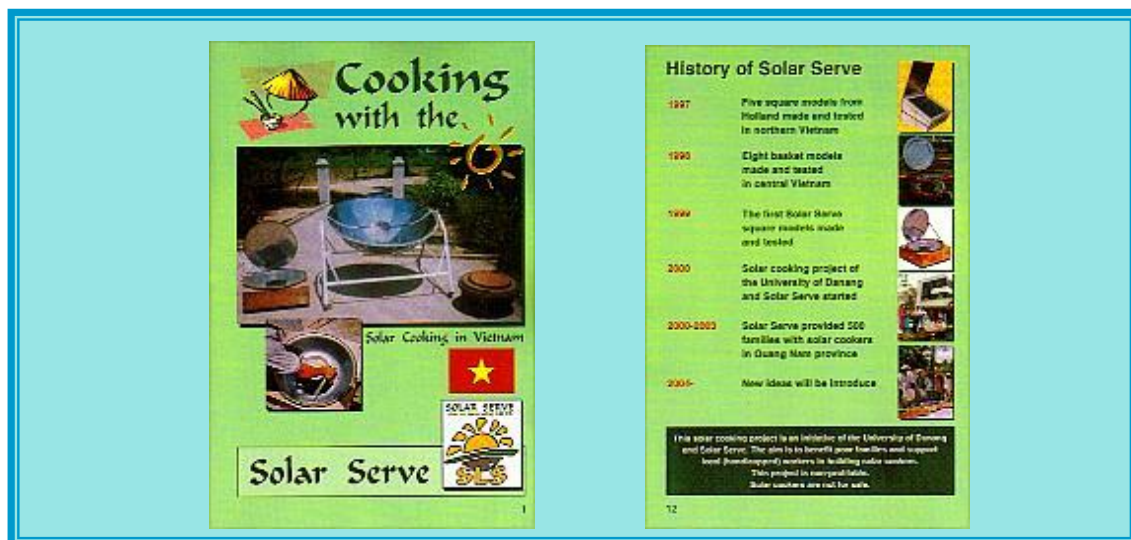


Dear friends,

Chuc Mung Nam Moi or Happy Vietnamese New Year. This will be the year of the monkey and starts on January the 22nd. Thank you very much for your positive reactions and encouragements after our first Solar Serve newsletter. Yesterday we were trilled to hear Mr. Huynh Nam, Chairman of the Danang People's Committee confirming the theme our last newsletter: *"Danang will be the 21th Century 'gateway' for Vietnam and the Asian region. This passageway will lead to important areas such as Thailand North West, Laos, Cambodia to West-highland and central region in Vietnam, and further more to India North, China South, and Myanmar"*. We hope that this gateway will become a beautiful royal 'kingsway' in 2004.

New folder

In this second newsletter we would like to tell you more about our solar cooker project. We have made a colorful solar cooking folder in English and Vietnamese and here is an example of the front and back page. Give us your full name and address and we will send an English copy to you.



Vietnam is rich in solar energy

Many people in Vietnam still depend on coal, straw, leaves or wood for cooking. Open fires contribute to air pollution and cause lung and eye diseases owing to people spending time in hot and smoky kitchens. This traditional cooking method also compels women and children to walk for hours each day to find wood for daily cooking. Vietnam is rich in solar energy. Every year it receives 1400-2000 hours of sunshine in the north and 2000-3000 hours in the central and southern part, but not many people take advantage of solar energy for daily cooking.



A basic solar cooker is needed

Only one basic solar cooker is needed to save lives, money, time and even the environment. Since 2000, our solar cookers for cooking food have been introduced in several districts in Quang Nam province. Five hundred families have been provided and almost 79% are using these solar cookers frequently. People have been able to save money (20%), time and even improve their health.



Teaching and training

The use of solar cookers requires changes in cooking habits, food, and food preparations. Therefore our staff set up a solar cooking training program. The aim is to provide teaching and training through workshops, home visits and group meetings. Over the years, local people have progressively adopted solar cooking as an alternative cooking method.



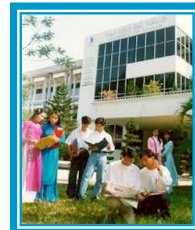
Factories and new ideas



When we start a project in the countryside, a small factory is set up. Local handicapped and poor people will be employed. New ideas will be researched and introduced. This year we opened a factory for the new parabolic solar cookers. We are also researching solar stills, an old solar technology by distilling brackish and seawater into clean water. On International Environment days the participants of the local workshops give demonstrations in solar cooking.

Our aim

This solar cooking project started in 1997 when five square models from Holland were made and tested in northern Vietnam. In 2000 we came in contact with the University of Danang and started officially this Solar Serve project. The aim is to benefit poor families and support local handicapped and poor workers in building solar cookers. We are non-profitable and therefore the solar cookers are not for sale.



Katu ethnic minority

One of the challenges for 2004 is the start of a solar cooker project in a new area. Last week, some of our staff visited one of the Katu villages. The Katu people are one of the fifty-three ethnic minorities in Vietnam. Lately, the government moved some of the Katu villages to the countryside. Our staff will consider working with them. It requires a new approach. Their culture is different of the Vietnamese and we do not yet know what they think about cooking with the "sun". The Katu are known to be very superstitious.

Keep in touch!

Please be with us during this year. It is great to serve in the presence of the Keep in touch !



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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