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Solar Serve News

Dear friends,

How are you? Summer (or winter in certain parts of the world) has gone and we are waiting for a new season. Till now it has been a good year for us and we are excited for the new things to come. This letter is mainly about a new challenge besides our ongoing solar cooker projects. We want to start with an explanation of this challenge and show you some pictures.



When it's raining, what do we do?

Since 1997 we have been testing our solar cookers. In the summer, the use of box solar cookers is for many people a blessing, although a little bit slow for people with limited time and not suitable for cooking rice in the Vietnamese way. The parabolic cookers changed all of this. It could cook faster and it was suitable for all Vietnamese dishes. But the drawback was that it required more attention. Vietnamese women do not like to stand in the sun for a long period of time. We made some alternatives with umbrellas and even a cover above the parabols. Today we have made a faster cooker and it doesn't require lots of adjustments or standing in the sun during cooking. But all those years there was still one major question: "But when it's raining,

what do we do?" The main answer was to encourage people to return to their old way of cooking. We also made different tests and even converted a solar cooker in an electric oven. But it never satisfied us, because in some rural areas there is no electricity and a combination was often too expensive and sometimes dangerous.

The alternative: A clean cooking stove

In 2007 Bich was invited for a solar cooker workshop in Nepal. During the exhibition they showed him several clean cooking stoves. Bich became very interested and talked with some people about their benefits. Was this the answer to the above question and a good alternative? When he came back to Vietnam he explored the internet. One day an Australian tourist came to visit our center and knew everything about the clean cooking stoves. Bich talked with him and was inspired to build one. One year ago he came up with his own model. It was really the right time because after he finished it, he was invited for a conference in Hanoi. It was organized by the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves. Their purpose is to equip millions of homes with clean cooking stoves. This will save lives, improve livelihoods, empower women and combat climate change. The conference became a big booster for Bich.



First order of 150 stoves

A few months ago a delegation of local leaders and farmers from a small village near Hue city visited our Solar Serve center. They were looking for alternative ways to use the waste from their corn harvest. They became very excited when they saw the design of Bich's clean cooking stove and were very impressed by the results. His design was perfect for using their corncob bio-waste. A big pot could be cooked fast and produced less smoke, less pollution and it could also be used indoors. It will also save money especially when their corn bio-waste will be used as fuel. The delegation was very happy and went home. They found a sponsor and a few weeks later they ordered 150 of these clean stoves for their farmers. Although we are still making solar cookers, we are also very glad for this alternative which fits our goal in helping people with clean energy, and can even be used when it is raining!

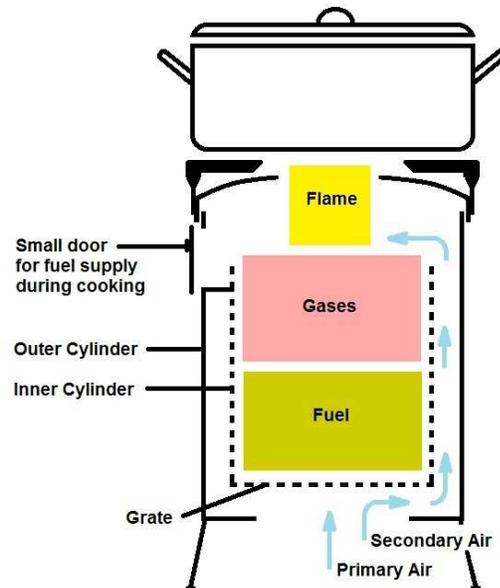


How does a clean cooking stove work?

It is very simple. The stove has an inner and outer cylinder for primary and secondary air to enter. Fuel (like bio mass) is first loaded into the inner cylinder and then lit at the top. For the first few minutes, the fuel is directly burned by using primary air and producing normal smoke. As more gases are released they need a fresh supply of oxygen. This comes from a secondary air supply which flows from the bottom through the area between the two cylinders to the top. This air provides enough oxygen for the gases to burn. When flames are formed at the top, smoke will be reduced and the stove is ready for cooking.

What are the benefits?

- It uses less fuel, therefore lower cost.
- It produces a very high heat output.
- It produces smoke only at the beginning.
- It reduces the exposure to indoor air pollution.
- It reduces lung, heart and eye problems.
- It can burn a wide variety of solid waste biomass.
- It reduces CO2 emissions and deforestation.



Need for workers

With the increasing demand of solar cookers and clean cooking stoves we were in need of workers. Just in time two new deaf workers joined our team. We love the deaf because they are wonderful people and good workers. Kha is only 19 years old and is now our youngest worker. He had no skills and it took him several weeks to get used to our work. Now he is doing well and everyone enjoys his company. When we were really in need for more workers, another deaf young man with the name An, asked for a job. His parents came along with him and we agreed to give him a trial period of one month. It is wonderful to see how everything comes together in the right time. Now we are again with eight Vietnamese staff and one foreigner. We are very pleased.

Short news

Solar Cookers International will be publishing a new issue of [The Solar Cooker Review](#) in November with many solar cooker topics and the combined use of solar cookers, retained heat cookers and fuel efficient stoves.



We have asked a company to make hundreds of dragonflies with our name on top. They will be used for charity and souvenirs for people to take home. They can balance on the top of your finger and became very popular. A second order is already made.

In the next newsletter we will tell you about a new challenge: providing coconut wood for a rehabilitation center in Holland. The center will teach people skills in carpentry, in order to help them with a job when they return to society.

In Danang a conference was organized by several social entrepreneurs. Their purpose was to serve the local community of handicapped people. A website will be made where they can find information about jobs and other things.

Bich and Thang were invited for a conference in Tuy Hoa for local leaders of all provinces in Vietnam. It was a good opportunity to show our newest models. The only clean cooking stove they had with them was sold immediately, and more stoves were demanded.

We got several solar cooker orders from people in Vietnam, Japan, Malaysia, Africa and Holland. Also the installation of solar panels will be considered soon and several water boilers were installed on roofs of private houses in Danang.

Three French students came to visit us. They made an Asian trip for six months to visit social entrepreneurs. They made short documentaries about the impact in society. Please watch the one about Solar Serve. [Click here.](#)



Greetings,

Solar Serve team

Called to Serve

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