



July / Aug / Sept 2013 No.37

Solar Serve News

Dear friends,

The international fireworks competition in Danang is regarded by many as the biggest and best fireworks competition in the world. This year it drew more than 400,000 visitors. Again it became a spectacular display. Teams from the USA, Russia, Japan, Italy and Danang competed for two days, with the team from the USA taking the grand prize. There was excitement in the city and you should plan on coming next year too. Be sure you book your hotel ahead and don't forget to visit us. The last few months have been filled with training, exhibitions and conferences. This letter will cover these events and activities.



A great boost

An economic specialist of CSIP (Centre for Social Initiatives Promotion) visited our center and trained our staff with a short course in how to sell our products to clients and how to make an action plan. Now it is clear that in the coming years we want to focus as a social enterprise on two products: our parabolic cooker and the new cleanstove. The other products will be important too, but in order to develop better we needed to focus more precisely. During the two-day training our staff also had opportunity to share their ideas, so the course gave them a great boost.

An important meeting

An international seminar was held in Hoi An, discussing green growth plans and strategies for the region. Many organizations from around the world were invited. It created lots of opportunities for networking. Through international models they were able to learn more about green reforms. Solar Serve was also invited. At their stand they met many representatives of embassies and international agencies. It was a good way to show our work and to exchange information. Because of the international nature of the seminar, security was tight, especially on the second day when the participants visited several green growth projects in the countryside.



With raised voices

During the last week of June a Trade Fair was held in Tam Ky. We received an invitation and Thang, who is our marketer and Thang, the son of our director stayed and slept for seven days at the spot. There were around 500 enterprises showing their products. During the cool evenings it became very crowded. Our staff had to raise their voices when a nearby karaoke turned up their sound system. Although people were very interested, they were hesitant to put their money in an unknown product. When we lowered the price on the last day we were able to sell. This was a good learning (marketing) experience and helped us to move forward.

Prepare!!!

In May we participated in an International Conference in Thailand. We took one of our clean stoves and parabolic cookers with us. Our goal was to encourage participants to prepare themselves in time of natural disasters. We were amazed that one of the main speakers had a similar goal. We made some good contacts and one of the participants took the parabolic cooker to Indonesia and also the cleanstove had to be sent to Australia. After meeting some old friends, we left Thailand with good feelings. Our goal was accomplished.





Waiting for the flood

NAV/NCA, a non-governmental organization asked us to make 150 cleanstoves for poor farmers near the city of Hue. Although we are not responsible for the follow-up, we wanted to know if the stoves were used. The people already cooked with simple ovens of cement, but they caused a lot of physical damage because of indoor smoke. Unfortunately, they had not used the new stoves. They wanted to wait till the rainy season. There is often a flood in this area and they can't move their cement ovens. They decided to keep their new cleanstoves for when they had to move to higher levels. The ones who already used the cleanstoves were very happy with them.

Never too old or young

Every year the Rabo-bank in Holland rewards people if they walk or run a certain distance in order to sponsor local or foreign projects. Young and old friends of Solar Serve took up this challenge and walked or ran for kilometers. The oldest participant was 80 years old. It was not only a great way to keep in shape but also an opportunity to help our projects. One of the participants announced that he and three other family members will sponsor us again during the International Four Day Marches in Nijmegen (16 – 19 July). They will walk 30 km each time for four days with 40,000 participants. The oldest one is 73 yrs old and the youngest 12. They really look forward to this event. Our good friend Fred walked in this event for 21 years too, but had to stop after having some heart problems.



Protection on the road

We organized a goodbye party for Thuy Vy, our accountant. She will give birth to her first baby in July, but wants to return after several months. We had a delicious lunch together and gave her our blessings. Thanh, a student, has already taken her place, as we told you in our last letter. He graduated as an accountant in May and is now working fulltime for us. A few weeks ago he was hit by a scooter that drove too fast. He fell off his motorbike and hit the ground on the left side of his body. With a large bump on his cheek and many scratches on his arm and leg, he survived the crash. He went to the hospital but was released after a short time. He came limping and in torn clothes to our center. We took care

of him with ice cubes to cool down his wounds and some medication that prevented him from infection. He is doing well now.

Jumble sales

Most of our foreign friends are familiar with jumble sales. They are frequently held by clubs, organizations, schools or churches. After some house cleaning, unwanted goods are held for sale often on sidewalks in front of a building or in a backyard. The organizers will usually ask visitors to buy those goods for a small amount in order to support the organization. A support group in Holland was involved in several jumble sales. They showed our parabolic cooker and cleanstove too. This was a good opportunity to make our work known. During their last jumble sale and after a wonderful successful morning, they had to break up quickly when rain and a storm tried to ruin their day. We are thankful for initiatives like this and all the work they do in moving all the goods around.



New challenge

We received an invitation to teach basic principles of solar cooking in Kenya. This is not the first time we got an invitation. During exhibitions and conferences, these invitations have been given several times. It would be a great opportunity to help others in using solar energy but at the moment we do not have enough staff. One young man who joined us several months ago left us already. So we have to wait for the right time. We have asked some students to work part time for us to do the marketing. If we want to develop our product, we should stay focused. It's time to move forward. The invitations will always be in our mind and we are going to prepare a practical teaching program in case we receive the green light for the teaching.

Well, that's all for now! Check our new blue colored [website](#) and a new [videoclip](#) Thanks for standing with us.

Greetings,

Solar Serve team

Called to Serve

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