



Jan / Feb / March 2016 No.46  
**Solar Serve News**

**Dear friends**

The year 2016 is already several days old. Our wish for you is that everything will turn out for good. Don't give up! Although the world is shaking, we have decided not to hold back. There are still many things to do. We learn from the ants that they refuse to take it easy. They are working hard and storing up against the coming time. We also do not want to just look a few feet in front of us by not preparing for the future. So, here are some goals for the coming year!



**Plans for 2016**

We will multiply the number of clean cookers for minorities made in our factory. We also want to expand our family business trainings in areas near Dalat, Mekong Delta, Kontum and Quang Nam. In the mean time we will develop a new solar light model this year for dark mountain areas and a new solar water pump model (read below) for poor farmers. We also purchased more land (14x17.5mtr) beside our center after receiving a wonderful donation, and are considering several options to use it this new year!

**Pumping water**

We are researching some existing solar water pump models. We found a suitable pump in Hanoi which could be connected to several solar panels. Although it is working fine we want to make our own model. It is a great tool for pumping water to remote areas where there is no electricity nearby. It can be used for pumping water for drinking, sanitation, filling tanks and irrigation. Water pumping is clean and efficient. Solar water systems never run out of fuel as long as the sun is shining.



**Family Business Training**

The last three months we have been extending our Family Business Training in the mountains, which covers 4 sessions of three days each. Most of the 30- 40 participants in each course are already running a family business. Because of a lack of understanding of basic principles they are not successful. The FBT is an eye opener and after they receive their certificate we have heard many of the following stories:

**Sadness into joy**

After a divorce a woman had problems with managing her finances. She became very depressed and decided to end her life. She failed and ended up in a hospital. After being released she joined one of our Family Business Training (FBT). The leaders noticed her sadness and paid special attention to her. She got new hope and learned how to manage her business well by raising special animals for restaurants. She became very successful and is doing well financially. It turned her life around!



**Moral business**

Another woman at the FBT course had a hair & massage shop. Competition in her town rose when many shops got involved in sex massage. Although temptation was high, she refused to be involved in doing business as the others. She lost clients and was desperate when she attended the FBT. When she learned and applied the moral principles of doing business, she got a lot of customers back. Now she is happy with her shop and doing even better than her competitors.

**Stronger chickens**

Another man raised chickens for a special purpose. He created a unique natural way to make the chickens stronger. The only drawback was that he did not know how to make it into an effective business for his family. He was encouraged to make a business model when he attended the FBT course. He invested a lot of time in it and during the course he already started to apply it in his own situation. Now he is so successful that he has run out of chickens.





### More than three years

We could tell you more stories like these. Till now we have been helping poor minorities in the mountains. They do not know how to use their natural resources. It is great to see them waking up. We are also able to introduce them to our clean cookers. They find them very useful and even want to buy them or sponsor others, even into Laos. We have made around 6730 clean cookers in more than three years. Half of them have been sold or sponsored.

### Making 170 children happy

Some leaders of the FBT club and a few of their students donated some money for helping poor schoolchildren of the Ca Dong minority. They contacted a schoolteacher and she recommended three minority schools with a total of 170 pupils. The day before Christmas they loaded their vehicles with 170 bags full of wonderful Christmas gifts. It was unforgettable because the pupils had never been exposed to the love of Christmas. This will always be printed in their hearts.



### Future agencies

After several minorities chose ours as one of their favorite clean stoves, the women's union in Thanh Hoa wanted to open several agencies. Several demonstrations were arranged by SNV who had already supplied 60 of our stoves. Again the minorities showed their appreciation, but they could not open any agency unless the stoves are either half or fully sponsored. They live in such poverty that often luxury things are not found in their huts or houses.

### Amazing recovery

The 80 year old father of Bich (our director) was hit by a motorbike and broke his arm and leg. At the hospital they also discovered that his spinal-cord was damaged near his neck. An operation was not possible. It needed to be cured with medicines before they could do any surgery. Amazingly he recovered very well and the operation was successful. His family had to take care of him in the hospital. After four weeks he was released from hospital and is now recovering well at his home.



### Wedding and syrup waffles

Matthijs, one of the workgroup members in Holland, who did research on solar stills this year, got married with his Jozina. The wedding took place in a beautiful old church and was attended by many people including the whole workgroup. The group has also been selling many packages of delicious syrup waffles (stroopwafels) to support our projects. Dutch people like to eat those waffles with their coffee, so they were able to sell a lot of packages, even more than last year.



### Unforgettable time

We had a great time with our staff and friends during Christmas. It all started with decorating our Christmas tree together, telling a special Christmas story and playing a funny exchange game. Tho and Thuy Vy and others prepared a special dinner and some guests were invited. We all enjoyed the food. We also had designed a new Solar Serve shirt for special occasions and before the staff left for home they all received a special Christmas box with goodies to enjoy during their holidays.



## Finally

- We got an invitation to hold an FBT course in Malaysia for Vietnamese overseas workers.
- Our Moringa seeds are also used in Turkey and Holland. Some were planted in greenhouses.
- More minorities have been supplied with our clean cookers. Here are some pictures including the Ma minority.



- We are in contact with someone working in Cambodia for SNV, (you mention SNV a couple of times in the letter but don't explain what it stands for) who is considering a clean cookers project with us.
- After we sold our truck we found out that transporting our clean cookers with a company is faster, safer and even cheaper.

That's all for now. Keep in contact and have a wonderful 2016.

Greetings,  
Solar Serve team

## Called to Serve

**More information:** [www.vietnamsolarserve.org/](http://www.vietnamsolarserve.org/) or write to: [solarserve@yahoo.com](mailto:solarserve@yahoo.com)