

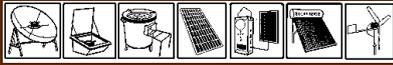
# Solar Serve News



Oct / Nov / Dec 2018 No.56



Charity  
Social Enterprise  
Training



## Dear friends,

Our staff needs to be in good shape. Physical exercises will help them to keep going. Now they are playing football after work in front of our center and some of them are going to a gym. We and other neighbors have been asking for years if a large piece of waste land opposite our center could be used for physical entertainment. Finally to everyone's surprise many wild trees were cut off last month and trucks loaded with sand showed up and it was announced that in three months' time there will be a park for everyone. This will affect our neighborhood and also the physical conditions of our staff. They need that for the coming months if you read more about our next challenges.



## Increase three times

We have been in contact with several foreigners who were very interested in our clean cookstoves. Till now they have not come with a solid decision, so we could not wait in order to move on. We had a chance to meet a CDM consultant from Hanoi. He was looking for some projects in Vietnam to reduce greenhouse gas emission. He was very surprised when he saw the quality but also the effect of our product. He knew the concept of clean cookstoves very well and had already made a plan with some Korean companies to help many poor people in Vietnam. He could not find the right model, even when he searched in China. Last month he came to our center and made up his mind.

After a few weeks he ordered the amazing number of 30,000 stoves. We have made more than 10,000 stoves in the past but this will be three times more. This will be a real challenge for the coming months.

## Showing interest

It is very nice when people visit us. They don't have to buy anything, but we are very glad to tell them about our products and the effect of changing the environment. Last month an international group of young people showed their interest and visited our center. They asked a lot of questions, especially a young man from Kenya. It inspired him to start something with solar panels in the near future. We cannot manufacture solar panels, but we are able to install them. This is the same with our water heaters. They are not made by us, but we can buy them and install them on the roofs. They became very popular and now many other companies are installing them. Another group of 20 students from San Francisco who are studying subjects like the environment came to visit our center on their fieldtrip. They asked us a lot of questions too and were surprised that our products are simple and easy to use. It was great to meet all those students.



## Solution for the future

What will happen when an addicted person, who got off drugs is sent back to his village or town? Is he able to stand strong to all the temptations, and furthermore did he learn a skill or is he able to start a small business? This was a great concern of one of the leaders of a rehabilitation center outside Hanoi. When he was visiting Singapore he was introduced to a good model, but he did not know how to apply it in Vietnam. A friend of this leader had just finished an FBT training and told him about it. 'This is what we need', was his first reaction and immediately he called Bick, one of the FBT trainees. In a very short time more than 50 ex-drug addicts

were trained in how to start a family business. When a former student (read next story), who was also a drug addict, showed his success after doing this course they all became very excited and hope was stirred.

## Success with selling peanut oil

Hao lived on the street and became addicted to drugs. His life became terrible. One day he became so weak and sick that he was taken to a rehabilitation center. The Christian brothers treated him with love, respect and took care of him. After a few weeks he experienced a wonderful deliverance. He became very disciplined in making right decisions. It took Hao a few years, but he became the leader of another drug rehabilitation center. Last year he attended our FBT course and applied immediately what he had learned. In a very short time he was very successful in selling peanut oil in his neighborhood. The people liked it so much that they became his word of mouth advertisement. His business started to grow rapidly and now he is a great inspiration for many others and even many drug addicts.





### Great inspiration

Students of the Amsterdam school in Hanoi had a desire to bless poor communities in Phu Ly (45 km south of Hanoi) with 30 clean cookstoves. After they received the stoves they organized some gatherings with the locals. They explained the benefits of using the stoves and taught them how to cook with it. Here are some pictures of the students. This is really an inspiration to many others in helping the poor in their communities.

### Conference in Thailand

Last month we joined a conference in Pattaya (Thailand). Around 3500 young and old people from all over the world came together for one week. Their desire was to have a positive impact in their society (we call them mountains). Some of them are working in the area of business, media, sports, entertainment, education, government, churches & communities, families, etc. Our focus was to challenge people by having an impact in the area of charity, social business and training. It worked out well because we were able to show our work at an exposition during the afternoons of the conference. We had a lot of good contacts with people from Uganda, Papua New Guinea and also other parts of the world. In the near future we would like to train them as we have already done in Myanmar.

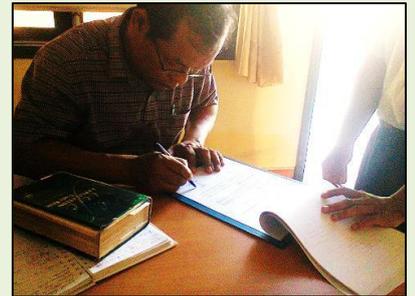


### Expanding our work

During the conference in Thailand, the people of Myanmar who we helped last year to start a project with clean cookstoves, were also showing their work during the exposition. They are doing well. They asked us several months ago to send them 2000 covers for their stoves, because they are not able to make them. They were so happy to tell us about one of their first orders of 100 clean cookstoves. Their leader is making people aware of the danger of cooking with open fires. Their product will protect them from harmful smoke while cooking at home. Around 4 million people die every year from indoor cooking smoke (WHO). It's not a matter of business or making money, but it is all about the compassion of saving precious lives. In Cambodia a businessman is taking our cleanstoves to the streets. People have to pay only a fraction for a trial, but if they like it after a few months they are always willing to pay the full price. It's a great way to make people to use them.

### Not keeping promises

We like to work with honest companies and people who want to keep their promises. Sometimes they have been deceiving us with material that we had not ordered. They also add bad quality material between the good ones or they have cut it into sizes we have not asked for. They also trick us with the quality and thickness of material, so they can save money. Our director and bookkeeper are sometimes fighting hard, because we want to produce quality stoves. We also need to be clear with our workers that it is not fair to have a contract with us, but to quit suddenly, especially when they have been trained well. Keeping your promise is still a lesson to be learned for all of us, especially in the coming months. Our real need is for more skillful workers, good coordination and even available storage space (our research center is already used for it).



### Finally

We have put a new videoclip on YouTube of what we are doing in Danang. We have showed it in Thailand too. If you have not seen it yet please click on [the following link](#). You are free to put it on your facebook page.

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)