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# Solar Serve News

## Dear friends,

During World Cup 2010 people were gathering at their homes, in the streets, cafes and restaurants, and even in the parks. Sometimes they were yelling 'VAOOOO!!' – "GOAL!!" which echoes for seconds through the whole city. Vietnamese people love to watch football and especially the World Cup. It didn't matter what time, but work could wait until the game was over. Many people stayed up late and watched, chatted, ate and waited together. It was great! But for Solar Serve we also had different excitements which we would like to share with you in this letter.



## Solar Equipment display

This year we displayed our work at a famous spot in Danang during the World Environment Day 2010. Because of our 10th anniversary we put an ad in one of the newspapers and decided to give away 10 parabolic cookers, one for each year. It was a success. Almost 500 visitors came. We displayed many parabolic and box cookers and also our new solar water heater. Students of the University of Danang showed their new invented solar equipment too. It was great!



## Making people happy

One week before the environment day we held a workshop. Participants of this course came to cook on this day. Although the sun broke through, clouds caused cooking to be slow. We had rented an open tent which served as a meeting place. People wrote their names down in order to win one of the ten parabols. A director of an orphanage was very happy when he won one. We finished before lunchtime and moved the last truckload around three o'clock. It was a wonderful day!

## More interest in solar energy

After the environment day we experienced lots of interest. A business woman was very interested in our solar panels and the director of the Department of Trade & Industry wanted to co-operate with us in the field of saving energy. We also had orders for our handmade parabolic cookers and even the new solar water heaters became a success. After we installed one of them, they were so satisfied that they ordered five more. Now we are also providing different sizes to other customers.



### The final touch of our Center

We have changed the rooftop of our kitchen and storage into two balconies. Because of heavy storms we needed to replace our windows too. Most of them are now made from wood and smaller. Also the tiles of the roof have been fixed well. The new bedrooms on the third floor are done. The walls of the living room will be built from wood in order to avoid heavy weight of the stones. A small kitchen is under construction and the stairway will be fixed with a wooden railing soon. All tiles have been laid and painting has almost been done. It looks great!



### Charity & Business together

We are very happy that we can run a charity program and also do business. For us those two go hand in hand. It is well known that box cookers will always need support. In the last ten years we have supported hundreds of families with those cookers. Support came always through others. But we have been searching for alternatives so that something else could support the charity programs. We are not yet at this stage but there are some encouraging signs that customers are willing to pay for solar equipment.

### Recognition of our work

One of those encouraging signs came through a contest in Creative Science and Technology. We were rewarded with second prize, this time from the local government in Danang. The mayor of the city presented a plaque and a cash prize for our research and development of solar equipment. We received it together in co-operation with the Danang Polytechnic University. The whole event was televised and later published in one of the local newspapers. This reward was not only an encouragement for us, but also a wonderful recognition of our work during the last ten years



### Solar displays in other countries

We had several displays of our Solar Serve work in other countries. One of them was in Hong Kong during a gathering of NGO workers and volunteers. We also had displays during other events especially in Holland during their national day, and at a music festival and a yearly fair & street market. Most of all it promoted solar cooking to the local communities. But there was also lots of interest and even caused generous people to sponsor our work.



### Granting a work permit

Mr. Hans is the only foreigner working for Solar Serve. He received his visa through the University, but last year an extension became very difficult. They encouraged him to apply for a work permit visa. A long process started and lots of paperwork needed to be done. Finally in March he received a three-year permit. But soon he found out that this was not enough for staying in the country. After four weeks of hard work he finally received a temporary residence card for one year.

### New challenge for the future

In a few years time, the center will no longer be seen from the highway. It would be so great if we could open a showroom somewhere near the center, alongside the highway. People can easily stop and have a look at our solar equipment and also find their way to our Center. Maybe this will be our next challenge after the opening of the third floor, but till now we have not been given the green light. Maybe we can tell you more in our next newsletter

So for now, please stand with us. This means so much to us.

Greetings,  
Solar Serve team

**Called to Serve**

For more information: [www.vietnamsolarserve.org](http://www.vietnamsolarserve.org)  
Or write to: [solarserve@yahoo.com](mailto:solarserve@yahoo.com)

