



July / Aug / Sept 2008 No.19 Solar Serve News

Dear friends,

We would like to start with a funny story. Two young men came to visit our workshop near the airport. The deaf workers moved a few parabolic cookers for display outside the workplace. It was good weather for cooking but the two visitors did not believe that the parabolic cookers were working and could even set things on fire. One of them was so skeptical that he placed his helmet on the cooking plate in the middle of the cooker. After a short time smoke filled the air and the helmet started to burn. One of the men snatched it away as fast as possible, which caused a lot of laughter. Anyhow the young skeptics were embarrassed but also a little bit wiser.

Visitors from the North

Eight women from the north who were working for a Finnish NGO came to visit us. We showed them around and they were very interested. They shouted when we burned a newspaper with a parabolic cooker. Last year (not knowing the existence of our project) they bought twenty parabolic cookers from China and India, but were not able to burn paper with them. They visited our information room and new center, and we also took them to a village where we established our project this year. They were able to talk with the people from the village and learned how to set up a project with solar cookers. Our workers were very encouraged when those widows visited our work and showed their interest in what we were doing.



A wonderful day

This year we organized the International Environment day in a small village near our Solar Serve Center. Dr. Hung had invited some officials from the Environment department and the locals were happy to show and cook with their cookers. It took awhile before the sun broke through, but they were able to cook after 10 o'clock. It was very rewarding to work and have fun with the local people. A combination of box cookers and parabolic cookers seems to be very successful. The locals loved it, even when they were approached by the media without any involvement from us. The cookers could stand the test. We immediately were asked to set up a project in a poor area in a province 300 km north of Danang.



Volunteers helped with final touch

The last three months we have been busy in finishing the Center. We had several groups helping us to do the final touch. One of them was an international surf team from California. They offered their help between their times at the beach. They were actually blessed by a typhoon which did not hit the country but caused huge waves. For several days they were really able to surf. They were also tough people and loved to do hard work. We had lots of fun and coffee with them. Two other groups from Vietnam stayed with us in the Center and loved to clean and paint, and helped us with the roof. It was great to have all of them with us. We are so thankful for their hard work.

The crown on top

Wood for the roof was difficult to buy, but Bich found a new company in the countryside. The owner helped us a lot. We were their first customers. We had to choose our own trees which they sawed into long 7 x 14 cm beams. The heavy beams were carried up to the roof and it took several days to fix the beams on the roof. Foreign friends had carried a part of the 5500 roof tiles to the top already, but the last part was done by our own workers and volunteers. The red tiles were carefully



laid on the wooden frame and the result, after two weeks of hard work, was a beautiful Vietnamese red hat on top of the building. The owner of the wood company called us later and thanked us again, because he had received another big order. We felt that this is the way it works under the Sun, if you do your business honestly and right.

Dedication and celebration



We had two groups of volunteers helping us to clean the Center. In the mean time there was a Conference going on in Danang for people who are helping the poor in Vietnam. We felt that during this time we should dedicate the building. So we invited the people from the conference to attend the dedication. Two bus loads of people arrived on June 15 at the center and we had a great time of celebration together. We were at least 120 people together and even our deaf workers invited their friends. We showed a short power point presentation and thanked the people who have stood with us during this time. Therefore the center became a building of the people. After that we had a wonderful meal prepared by our staff and other volunteers. Many people expressed their excitement and some of them believed that the building will soon be too small for all the work that will be in store. What a good start for our work under the Sun.

Short news

- We were able to export 12 foldable parabolic in 1000 x 800 x 200 cm carton boxes and 2 box cookers to Canada and Holland. Even the deaf workers were excited to prepare those first orders.
- After we moved to the center some deaf workers didn't show up anymore. Their parents decided that it was too far to travel, even though we offered transport. We felt a little bit sad for the deaf.
- We are planning to have four groups visiting our Center. Please contact: solarserve@yahoo.com
- Mister Vinh returned to his village. We are very thankful for his help as caretaker.
- The last months have not always been easy. Sometimes it was a test. Mister Mai had a kidney attack and the daughter of Bich was hospitalized after a fall on her spleen. They are doing well now.
- We do not focus on finances but we are very happy to tell you that all the costs for the building has been covered and we are even able to buy necessary things for the interior of the center. This is amazing and really something to be thankful for.
- One month ago We also received for the first time from a Vietnamese government agency a donation for our project.



Finally

Please could you stand with us again, this time not for the construction, but for the development and protection of the project and our vision? Even though we do not seek any publicity we have been in the news regularly. Not everything is proper and suitable. Also the articles do not always reflect our views. We have also been approached by organizations. They want to partner with us, but we do not always understand their intention. We do not want to lose our goal and vision and be caught in something that does not reflect our heart. Please remember us when we have to make some tough decisions. That's all for now. Please stay in touch.

Warm greetings,
Solar Serve Team

Called to Serve