

## Report 2006:

**More than 10'000 People reached in and outside of Chinese SWITCHER Partner companies:  
Only informed people with access to means are able to prevent STD's\* and unwanted pregnancies.**

from **alec gagneux**, [www.fairCH.ch](http://www.fairCH.ch)

October 6.2006

\* STD's = Sexually Transmitted Diseases

## **AIDS becomes China's 3rd deadliest infectious disease**

[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2006-02/13/content\\_519746.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2006-02/13/content_519746.htm)

### **1. Respect and Motivation**

*"When fashion means respect"* can be read e.g. on SWITCHER bags:

Since I have seen, how the fabrics are produced in different factories - since then I just have respect for the skill, the energy, the art and the kindness of the people who stand behind every shirt, every jacket, every pant...

To improve the **quality of life** – is clearly declared by SWITCHER. My engagement is also powered by this motivation. I am very glad, that a private profit – company understands the meaning of "sustainable development" better than most of the so called experts from "development agencies". I am happy to work - together with caring entrepreneurs - towards prevention of unwanted suffering. Prevention is better than healing – also in economical terms.



Concentration on knitting machine

### **2. Summary**



Book-Stand with (general) Health book in Chinese language;  
Condom-Dispenser and Dispenser with flyers explaining specifically R.H.

During 6 weeks I visited SWITCHER – partners in three different provinces of China. The main aim was, to care, that SWITCHER – partners have a sustainable program, which helps to prevent unwanted pregnancies and STD's (according to declaration: [http://www.fairch.ch/Menue/DeclarationPreventionSwitcher\\_2\\_doc](http://www.fairch.ch/Menue/DeclarationPreventionSwitcher_2_doc))

Altogether I visited nine companies, two government hospitals and exchanged ideas with representatives of the companies and the government. Due to these dialogues, many synergies benefit all of the partners. Examples: The hospitals received bookstands (with the books "Where there is no doctor") and condom-dispensers - the companies get free condoms (exception: Guangdong province).

One company (Wonderful Garments), which has integrated the Reproductive Health (R.H.) Program 2004, got visited without announcement. The R.H. Service (availability of condoms and information in a dignified way) was well maintained by the Social Compliance Officer (SCO). Wonderful will soon install Solar Hot Water Collectors for their 400 workers who live in the nearby dormitory. As a sensitive

partner, Switcher plans to participate with 50% in this investment (total investment: 26'000 RMB = 4160 CHF). Here, once again, synergies became possible: The company which produces and shall install the solar systems will also integrate the R.H. program.

As there is a clear relationship between **caring for people** and **caring for the environment**, I invested time to reduce harmful energies like oil or coal and to reduce the terrible spoiling of life-energies like precious food and precious water. In this field, there is also a great potential for saving money.

### 3. Actions

- Arrival in Hong Kong (14.8.06)
- Visiting and analyzing institutions like Hong Kong Family Planning Association.
- Sharing R.H. Flyers with people who live in Hong Kong and in China in order to see, if it fits into the cultural context.
- First meetings with entrepreneurs (Milos; Bassington). Discussing the action plans for their factories.
- Travel to Dongguan -Tangxia (Milos factory) – here I stayed nearly three weeks (22.8. – 10.9.06): Thanks to all for kind hospitality in staff dormitory-house and for the openness regarding all my questions and suggestions.
- Production of Book-Stands (45 Pcs.); preparing R.H. Flyer – dispensers; production of 300 Condom-Bags (offered by TAL [www.talgrou.com](http://www.talgrou.com)).
- Networking with Hospitals, Government officials and Condom-companies (Guangdong province is not giving free condoms to private sector companies).
- Using the network of Milos and Switcher to involve further companies into the program
- Installing the R.H. installations in Milos (200 people), TAL (4'000 people) and Global One [www.globaloneheadwear.com](http://www.globaloneheadwear.com) (4'000 people).
- The shopkeeper, who sold me a bicycle, was happy to install a Book-Stand for the benefit of the people on the street.
- Conducting a gathering with Milos staff. Teaching about health in general and specifically about reproductive health (R.H.).
- Travel by train and bus with Mrs. Simmi (initiated this China visit) to the Bassington factory in Suichuan (Jiangxsi province). Staying in Suichuan from 11. - 16.9.2006.
- Installing the R.H. - services in Bassington production (500 people), two hospitals, two companies known by the Bassington management.



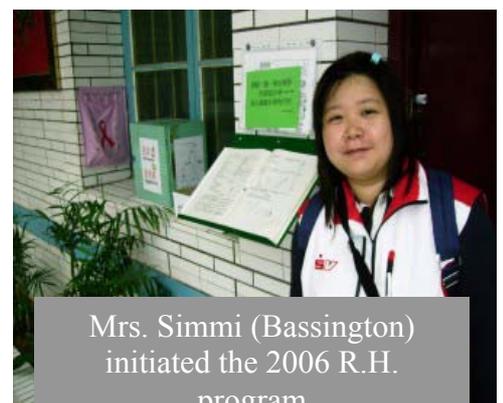
Book-Stands from small entrepreneur



Access to people on the street

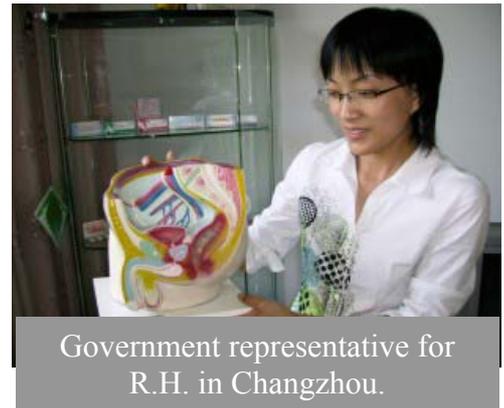


One of the two hospitals in Suichuan (Jiangxsi province)



Mrs. Simmi (Bassington) initiated the 2006 R.H. program

- Social contacts in the public transport systems from Suichuan to Changzhou (Jiangsu province): 16. - 17.9.2006
- Unannounced visit in Wonderful Garment Company [www.cnwonderful.com](http://www.cnwonderful.com) (1200 people) in Changzhou (18. - 20.9.2006). Very good maintenance of the reproductive health program by the new social compliance officer Mrs. May.
- Visiting the very cooperative Government officials who enthusiastically support the program since 2004. They showed us there new free condom dispensers at public places.
- An additional garment company (Hengli) in Changzhou is open to integrate the R.H. service for its 200 workers.
- Negotiations with the solar company who shall install the solar hot water system on the roof of the Wonderful dormitory (<http://www.sunpower-solar.com/page/gs.htm>). The company wants to integrate the reproductive health service in their new factory until end of 2006.
- Exchanging ideas about R.H. programs with active people from Bayer, Lafarge, UNAIDS, Mary Stopes etc.
- Leaving from Shanghai (21.9.2006)



Government representative for R.H. in Changzhou.

#### 4. Observations and suggestions

- In all the companies the management was very cooperative to integrate the R.H. service in a very uncomplicated way: I am very grateful to all of you and I am glad to stay in touch in order to learn from your experiences and suggestions.
- In all the companies, often **only one** responsible person is in charge of the maintenance of the R.H. installations. I suggest to train at least one additional deputy who can do the job as well as the SCO. The service shall work also, if the main responsible is not available.
- In most of the visited companies young migrant workers are the majority (exception: Bassington factory in Suichuan: There, most of the workers are local – many are married).
- At least once a year, a gathering shall be organized teaching about health and specifically about Reproductive Health (R.H.). The best moment of informing regarding HIV-protection is just before the lunar New Year holiday, when most of the (migrant) people go home, to visit their families. In this context it is very important, that they know, that without **correct** condom use, HIV can spread also from husband to wife/ wife to husband. Women empowerment - in this context - is very important, because very often, fear from the



A married men is demonstrating the **correct** use of the condom (Milos company)

husband's violence prevent the women to say **“NO” without condom** or without (negative) HIV-test...

- In all the companies, we tried to put R.H. installations at places, where the truck drivers (high risk group) can benefit from the program. It is important to share this low cost initiative with as many people as possible - even, if they do not belong to the company - directly.
- In the Book-Stands a paper is fixed which announces to the reader, that the book can be purchased (for 30 or 40 RMB) from the company. Like that, the program can benefit also families and villages of the workers. Please glue this paper into the books where this was not done until now. Thank you.
- Wonderful solar hot water system: The planned installation has a limited capacity. This is the reason, why I suggest to only install taps (on every of the 4 floors) for filling buckets with warm water. If e.g. the solar hot water is directly connected to the showers, then much more hot water will be used by few people and the majority will not have hot water for washing clothes and body.
- **Waste of energy:** In most of the companies it was possible, to collaborate with the technicians. So it became possible to insulate 'naked' steam pipes and to care for lost steam (sealing). In Wonderful and in Milos leaking valves must be sealed to reduce unnecessary losses of oil and money. From Bassington I just received a photo, which proves, that the leaking safety relief valve got replaced. The Milos technician (Mr. Wan) understood immediately, that if the returning condensed water/ steam can be used to preheat the feed water for the boiler. Just with this measure, two liter of oil can be saved every hour - this gives 22 liters per day and more than 6500 liters per year... Milos: If the burner is switched off 20 minutes before all the breaks, then the pressure in the boiler is enough to feed all the consumers of steam until break (lunch; end of the day). If the main valve (and the burner) is closed during lunch break, then again energy (money) can be saved.
- **Waste of life-energy:** One of the managers tried to explain me, that it is a habit of Chinese to spoil food: "There is no way to correct this". I am sure, that it is possible to reduce this kind of ignorance with wise motivation-methods. Companies can start to inform the workers (on paper and with words), that they (in most of the companies) are paying half of the price of all that plants and animals which are just thrown away. If e.g. a person is throwing away more than ¼ of a plate, this person has to pay 1 RMB into a cash box which belongs to the workers. This controlling mechanism shall not be managed by watchmen. Workers can organize this themselves. The money will be distributed back to the workers e.g. once or twice a year. Like that it is possible to motivate all, not to spoil precious food. Of course, there are many other ways to motivate people to care. After some time the kitchen crew know how much they have to cook. Like that thousands of Yuan



Pullovers are dried just under the roof in Milos factory. A very simple and ecological way.



Here a worker could ask his colleague for 1 or 2 Yuan RMB... this helps to reduce greed without cutting needs.

RMB can be saved for the good of the workers(1/2) and for the good of the company(1/2).

- **Lack of labor:** Entrepreneurs told me, that the family planning strategy of the Chinese government is counterproductive, because there are not enough labor at present in Dongguan e.g.. At present the population of China is still growing with 0.6% (doubling time: 115 years). Also in China there are Millions of unemployed people. To think, that local problems can be solved with e.g. enhancing population growth is narrow minded. This attitude is wrong in every country: We have to care, that people have as many children as they wish – not more. Live quality is very often not compatible with the “more– more–more” strategy of the short-term-attitude decision makers.

## 5. Conclusions

When I visited China the first time 1985, the bus drivers SWITCHed off the engine downhill. It seems, that they were motivated to do so at that time. Nowadays one can observe tendencies, which try to blindly copy the US (high)way of ‘life’ (Europe does the same mistake since the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war). Every culture, choosing this kind of “growth”-mainstream, will destroy its own resources (earth, water, air...) and its own population. As SWITCHER has a commitment to care for the **quality** of life, it is important, to find alternative ways of collaboration, which can integrate the old wisdom of the east with the social and environmental awareness of the west.

To analyze, **WHY** the truck drivers 1985 were SWITCHing off the engine, could be an ecological **key** factor of a motivation-system for all stake holders (management, staff, workers and consumers...).



