

**REPORT FOR
SWITCHER/PREM:
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH
AND OTHER PROGRAMS
ON THE PATH TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

“Before, I did not know anything about sexuality as explained in your information paper.”
< A 20-year-old student from Tirupur >

Brrrrhhhh, Brrrrhhhhhhhhh, Brrrrrrrrhhhhhhhhh - the machinegun is demonstrated by a “plastic wallah” who shows how much fun it makes to play with this plastic-kalashnikov made in China. The train has left New Delhi Saturday at 1130 and should reach Tirupur Monday morning at 5 o'clock. One man investigates the gun and starts negotiating about the price. The gun is for his son.... How is it possible, that man is so fascinated by arms I am asking myself...Why are men with arms (e.g. Warlords) highly respected? Arms are killing people – constantly! Violence is “no problem” in all “cultures” I met in my life....Preventive objects like condoms are still dirty....Why? What is the reason? I have a lot of time to think and observe life during this 2586km-journey. It is Saturday, the 29. Sept 2001 - the second time, that I will visit Prem in Tirupur after more than 5 months absence. I look forward to meet again the ladies from the social department and all other staff from Prem Group.

When I left Tirupur in April 2001 the integration of Reproductive Health Services was introduced to most of the different companies of Prem Group. According to the signed declaration, access to condoms and information about reproductive health shall be given to all Prem-Employees in a dignified way. My second visit shall consolidate the work initiated in spring and improve the quality of this service.

1. REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH - Actions, Explanations, Problems, Future: (declareTirupur.doc)



Inauguration of the first Condom-Box:
Ms. Mary, Ms. Josley, Ms. Narmadha.

Ms. Mary and Ms. Narmadha (responsible for the Social Department) where in favour of the idea to enhance condoms and information to all members of Prem in order to reduce unwanted pregnancies and e.g. AIDS. The first experiment we did was, to install a Condom-Bag and information about reproductive health (service) in the toilet of the staff in the main office. There were discussions about it, organised by the Social Department. Men and Women discussed separately. It seemed, that there was no opposition for our program. The next step was, to install the same service in the toilet of the Managing Director Mr. S. Durai after receiving his support. This is a very important step-unfortunately not done in most of the projects. Mr. Durai allowed us also, to put a “STOP AIDS”-sticker onto his car. Most of the vehicles belonging to Prem where decorated with this sticker (social marketing). After my first visit most of the toilets where equipped with the same installation as in the main office. As some of the Condom-Bags got destroyed (only in two men toilets) Condom-Boxes were produced in order

to give an additional (emergency) access to all Prem members in a place, which is less hidden than a closed toilet. So even if the Condom-Bags are empty, the access required according to the signed declaration (See declareTirupur.doc) is fulfilled. Of

course it needs more courage to get free condoms that way, as some person could observe one approaching the Condom-Box.



It was recognized, that the book "Where there is no Doctor" (David Werner) in Tamil language could improve the access to a more holistic health knowledge for all staff. Metallic bookstands were developed and installed wherever people have some time for leisure or "waiting time". In canteens, restrooms and even at the entrance of the main office this valuable book got (will be) installed. The logistics and the maintenance for all installations (Book-Stands, Information Board, Condom-Bags, Condom-Boxes) got decentralised. Every factory (e.g. Prem Gardens; Veerapandi; Thuthariplayam etc.) has a store for condoms, which is managed by employees of the production. Two ladies and two men are (will be) in charge for refilling, maintaining, monitoring. One lady (man) is responsible for the refilling of Condom Boxes /Bags – has to replace dirty or damaged Condom-Bags with washed ones etc. The other lady (man) is monitoring only. Every 6-month these functions are switched (refilling; monitoring). If the decentralized stock reaches a certain limit (e.g. less than 1000 peaces), then the Social Department is informed, and further condoms are organized.

2. ECOLOGY, RENEWABLE ENERGIES: (solarcooking.doc)



During my first visit 4 windmills, each 225 kW (peak) got inaugurated near the Classic Spinning Mill. Fantastic!!!! From the beginning on I was also active in the field of ecology. Most of transportation was done by bicycle. Solar Ovens and a Solar Hot Water System got produced and used with interested staff of Prem. The response for Solar Ovens was small due to required changes of the habitual cooking and different taste of the food. The Solar Hot Water System demonstrates its function in the house of Mr. B.K. Prakash.



The dyeing factory has the greatest potential for eco-improvement... The outlet after dyeing is still a harmful impact for environment. To just put it into a pool and evaporate it either in a basin or on a field, is still a problem, which has no easy solutions.



The dyeing procedure needs a lot of energy most of it in form of steam. Between 20 and 30 tons of steam are required every working day. This means at present, that 15 tons of precious wood is consumed every day. I asked if it would not be possible to burn oil instead of wood. Yes, this is possible, but 15 tons of wood (30-50'000kWh) costs 20'000 Rs and 3000 l of oil (ca. 28000 kWh) costs 34'000 Rs. The difference of ca. 500 Fr. per day made me understand, that other ways have to be found: In the short-term ca. **50 m** of "naked" pipes **can be insulated**. This will help to save tons of wood each week. As the technical standard of the machines in the dyeing factory are probably best in Tirupur, the efficiency of the steam production is an option, which can be improved in the long run:



people would have ca. 10% more (qualitative) income for a price of one management-salary in Switzerland.

- During my stay in Tirupur, Prem Gardens School received 234 applications for admission. 204 children were rejected... To construct new schools is an action against this symptom- but after school 80% will not find any job. In Ladakh (Jammu and Kashmir) I was fascinated by a school, which teaches teachers how to educate people, which will be unemployed in the future. I am aware, that it is a very difficult work to change most of the school system, but for the long run we do not have many alternatives. Organic farming, Solar energy, making medicine with tropical plants are some of the tasks, which should be part of a school- philosophy (love-wisdom), which wants to make the students as independent as possible.

5. **VALIDATION:**

- Travel:
- Honorarium for 7 weeks of work in Tirupur
- Material
- Food and accommodation

I am very grateful, that decision makers of a profit-oriented company **DO**, what most of the NGO-“Experts” still ignore. It will benefit all of us- specially, when other companies / organizations follow the good example of Switcher/Prem.

Please let me know, if you have questions/ suggestions. I am glad to explain details on a round table (e.g.).

Thank you for caring.
Vanakkam,

Alec Gagneux.

Links:

- www.transaction.net/press/interviews/lietaer0497.html informs about the fundamental injustice in the monetary system of today.
- www.sodis.ch informs about water purification.
- www.helvetas.ch informs about one of the Swiss NGO's.
- www.globoSol.ch and its links shows, how solar cooking is benefiting people from different countries.
- www.tarshi.org gives information about reproductive health for all people.



Drawing on a wall in the Veerapandi School - less than 300m away from mountains of wood for the dyeing- steam generator... Often children understand more than adults...