

**alec gagneux: REPORT TO SWITCHER-  
PREM ABOUT MY WORKING VISIT  
FROM JUNE 16. TO AUGUST 13. 2003**

**Summary**

- After nearly two years I had the chance to visit Switcher-Prem in Tirupur again. The main focus was, to improve the reproductive health program initiated 2001. Together with the Social Department we were able to make the access to *Condoms* and to *information about health in general* more reliable. We also expanded our activities to the public -in combination with some publicity for the social program of Prem-Switcher: Condom-Boxes and Book-Stands got installed near the New Bus Stand and in Tiruppur Railway Station.
- A gathering with nearly all the teachers of the schools allowed us, to have a dialogue, about the **quality** of teaching **for the benefit** of our students. The brain-focused government program must be enlarged to more practical survival skills in regard of the fact that our students must be able to live in dignity even without a fair-income-job<sup>2</sup>. In this context, waste management got introduced to the schools and a plant-program for teachers and students should give more meaning to the labelling of our education-system: Prem **GARDEN Schools**.
- The two solar community cookers got shifted successfully to the kitchen of the 'new settlement' benefiting the dying factory-staff. The kitchen will be more convenient than the first installation and due to that it will probably be used more efficiently than before.
- The next step towards sustainability could be, to invest in a Scheffler Solar Steam Generation Plant in order to reduce diesel oil and *precious* wood in Veerapandi. Switcher is ready to invest 50% of the cost in order to realize this project **together** with Prem.
- The NESP idea got further discussed with MD and staff members. The next time, Prem plans to give more (recently +10%) income, the NESP idea should receive a chance for implementation.

80 % of humanity will be unemployed<sup>1</sup> in the next 30 years. so...  
... what should be the priorities for the **benefit** of

- students
- people
- me...??????

**1. AIDS-Prevention and Family Planning**

When I arrived in Tirupur, some of the Condom Boxes and Condom Bags installed 2001 were empty! The main reason for this was lack of condoms. Together with Ms. Narmadha, we tried our best to develop a redundant condom-supply. We contacted people from the Aids Control Society of Tamil Nadu (<http://tnaids.tn.nic.in/default.htm>), the Health and Family Welfare Ministry (<http://mohfw.nic.in/>) and the private sector (<http://www.hindlatex.com/>). At the beginning, the contact with the Aids "control" society was looking good... quite easily we were able to organize 6000 condoms. But the second order was different: for more than 60 days they were out of stock!!!! The health ministry then was able to help us... This kind of 'field' work will remain part of the social department's skills -also in the near future.

<sup>1</sup> [www.transaction.net/press/interviews/lietaer0497.html](http://www.transaction.net/press/interviews/lietaer0497.html) informs about the fundamental injustice in the monetary system of today.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.icajobguarantee.com/new/index.htm> in the mumbai metro I discovered this **100% job guarantee** advertisement... Our students must learn, not to be caught, even if it is an ISO 9001 institute who tries to sell such 'dreams'.

Aids-Test: Prem organised recently an Aids-Test for the employs. This is a very delicate issue. I want to stress, that the results of these tests **must NOT** reach the management of any company. The results must only be given to the tested individuals that they can protect others. It is ethically wrong, to handle such personal dates to the management (including Social Department).

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**honesty is the best policy**  
 (written in one of the classrooms of  
 athamarathu pudur school)  
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With the mechanical workshop, which is producing a lot for Prem, 9 more Condom- Boxes and 15 Book-Stands got produced. The management of the workshop allowed us to install one of the Condom-Distributors just outside of their workshop. This is mainly benefiting people around the New Bus Stand.

With Tiruppur Railway Station and with Southern Railway it became true, to install a Box and a Book-Stand in the railway station. The Station Manager is at present receiving condoms from the Social Department. As soon as possible the railway management has to organise its condom supply themselves.

Schools: All the schools, including the mobile school have received/installed a Book-Stand with the Book 'Where there is no Doctor' in Tamil language. The idea is, to give access to teachers, students and parents. In the evening, the teachers are allowed to take home the book for further studies or for preparing a lesson about health. In most schools, the danger, that the book gets stolen is minimal –it is up to the head master if the book is attached by lock or not. In the mobile school, the book locked on the bookstand can be e.g. placed under the banyan tree for the benefit of people, who enjoy looking at the schools activities.

Dispensaries: In each dispensary, the book 'Where there is no Doctor' shall benefit the patients in the waiting section. The doctors are encouraged to take the book home in the evening. Whenever patients are in the waiting section, the book shall benefit the 'customers'.

Armstrong: The Armstrong Company has received 3 Books, 2 Book-Stands, 2 Condom-Boxes and 4 Condom-Bags. Prem sponsored the material. I am glad, that there is such a positive collaboration (intelligent!) -regarding social activities- between the two companies.

## 2. GARDEN - Schools

When I discovered, how some of the textbooks are suggesting really harmful behaviours, a gathering for all the teachers at Rajaji Nagar got organised. The aim of this training was, to explain the necessity to develop a 'new' generation, who must be able to look critically enough on us adults without being punished for having a different view than teachers or textbooks.<sup>3/2</sup> Different natural medicines, the use of the solar oven or how to purify water without boiling got introduced. Waste management got explained and must be integrated now in all the schools<sup>4</sup>: The cleaning and the analysis of the waste, coming from school members, will be organised by students together with the teachers. E.g. every week another class is in charge of emptying/cleaning the containers and maintaining compost- and plastic-pit. Through that process, waste-**reduction** because of **active** awareness training can become possible. The watchmen shall not be in charge of this anymore (part of practical education).

Together with MD, we decided to make our schools more natural/'**gardenual**': Every teacher and student shall cultivate one plant on the school ground. These plants will be personalised through small steel signs, which will be painted with symbols chosen by children/teachers who OWN the plants. Like this, the motivation for **gardening** will probably be good. At the entrance of the social department we (Ms. Narmadha, Mr. Rajen, Ms. Veda, Ms. Priya, Mr. Daniel and I) started with the good example by planting trees into individual pots. Generally I think, that we (teachers/ decision- makers) should try to live in a good example-way in whatever respect we ask it from others/ from the young generation.

<sup>3</sup> See WHAT IS OUR SCHOOLSYSTEM DOING WITH OUR CHILDREN.DOC

<sup>4</sup> Social Department: Staff, working in this office is periodically in charge of its own waste management: "Experiencing that, what we ask others to do."

Most of the schools have quite old watchmen. They are in charge of many things. That these old people have also to clean the classrooms and the toilets of the students got discussed with MD and the decision was, that at least the schoolrooms shall be cleaned by the class (responsible: teacher)<sup>5</sup>.

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**only busy people can enjoy  
 leisure**  
 (written in the library of the high school)  
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Due to malnourishment of many students of the **mobile school** a sprouts program got started with Ms. Indra Gandhi. Every day sprouts<sup>6</sup> are cultivated and distributed to the children. One of the Solar-Ovens is now in the hands of the mobile school and it has already been demonstrating its usefulness several times. The main idea behind these kinds of lessons is to give **practical** knowledge, which can be easily applied at home.

### **3. Dispensaries/ Health(?) System:**

In 'Modern India' patients go to the doctor, and if they don't get an injection or many colourful tablets, they get really upset. Nevertheless, a **caring** doctor goes into a different direction, and gives medicine only if really, really necessary. This needs (more) time for explanations, but the long-term benefit will be there, because germs are developing less resistance (antibiotics) and people's organisms fight, if we allow the body to do its job! The book 'Where there is no Doctor' is giving **clear guidelines** in this respect. The doctors are now also having access to the book 'Natural Medicine in the Tropics' and the flyers about the benefit of charcoal and Sodis- Water purification are in their hands. For distribution, these flyers will be translated into Tamil (Responsible: Ms. Narmadha). As a gathering with Dr. M.Sundran and Dr. Paul was organised it became possible to exchange ideas, how wrong (harmful) medication could be reduced and how prevention could be enhanced.

If Prem/Switcher is really caring for more prevention, then the visit in the health post should NOT be free. If medication is free, then many people are not motivated to care for their health in a preventive way... as health problems will be 'solved' for free. A free system can be 'over-social' and through that it can become harmful for the people. So a little amount of money, e.g. 5 RS/ NESP, should be asked. Through that little fee there are less patients in the waiting room and the doctor can spend more time for explaining about prevention (e.g. diet) also.

All doctors working for Prem/Switcher are educated in a 'modern' way. Ayurveda or Homeopathy e.g. are often offering remedies with fewer side effects – also in economical terms...

### **4. Solar Energy = Peace Energy... (Oil Energy = War Energy)**

- The four **solar ovens** were in the storeroom of the Rajaji Nagar School, when I arrived in Tirupur. It was not surprising me, that these systems were idle the past two years, as solar oven cooking management is different than habituated cooking with wood e.g.. Now, the mobile school is using one of the solar ovens –a nice beginning. The 3 other cookers will be ready for other interested teachers. Ms. Narmadha has organised cooking pots and is caring for maintenance of all the cookers.
- The two 10 m<sup>2</sup> **Scheffler Parabolic** cookers in Veerapandi were used, when I visited the kitchen unannounced. The crew was boiling water, for rice cooking. Mr. Prakash told me, that ca. one gas cylinder got saved per week, since solar energy is benefiting the kitchen-crew. The new kitchen building was almost finished, when I came to Tirupur in June. Luckily, the wall on the back was East-West, but the height of the roof was far too high. Together with Mr. Narayana Swamy we worked out an enlargement of the kitchen building towards the North to prevent shadow on the reflectors throughout the year. Just before I left, the two Scheffler-Reflectors got tested (alignment = very good). As soon as

<sup>5</sup> MD is personally cleaning his restroom in his office (good example)

<sup>6</sup> The social department tries also to act in the same way and cultivates sprouts.

the crew starts cooking in the new kitchen, solar energy will assist them. Mr. J-Raj is in charge to monitor maintenance like cleanliness, black painting of the cooking vessels and good reflectivity of the secondary reflectors. The new kitchen is beautiful and more convenient than the previous installation.

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**“i don’t know, if tirupur will  
 be desert in 10 years”**

<mr.s.durai swamy>  
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- A very experienced solar friend of mine Mr. B.K. Jayashimha came explicitly from Mt. Abu (Rajasthan) because of the evaluation of Solar Steam Generation for the reduction of harmful energy consumption in Veerapandi (see PROPOSAL FOR THE REDUCTION OF OIL#Scheffler.doc). Prem is presently transforming ca. 16 tons of precious firewood per working day into ash, CO<sub>2</sub> (and other gases) and into steam for the two dying units and the new wastewater treatment plant (the multiple evaporation and salt recovery needs ca. 4t of firewood per day). Tamil Nadu is one of the last States in India, allowing the industrial sector to burn precious trees. We calculated a return on investment of 5 years if Prem wants to reduce diesel oil<sup>7</sup> consumption of the garment factory unit in Veerapandi. If we calculate the solar-replacement of wood, then we have to ‘wait’ 20 years until the solar unit has paid the protected trees. Why? Because the price for one kg of firewood is 1.2 RS... one of the many examples proving, that the *price* ‘made’ by modern economy is not representing the *value* of its product!!!!

After the discussion with Mr. Daniel and Mr. Robin, I am happy to inform, that switcher is ready to pay half of the solar investment. Switcher and Prem decision makers will discuss further details as soon as they meet next time.

#### 5. NESP...Natural Exchange Switcher Prem making people understand economy...

The NESP idea got again discussed with MD and also with Mr. K. Kaleeswaran (Accounts Manager). Ms. Narmadha will translate the English text into Tamil and wants to play ‘NESP’ as an experiment with one class of e.g. the High School. Ms. Narmadha will then have further discussions about it with MD. NESP can become an alternative for the next augmentation of salary. If NESP is integrated instead to just give more RS, then e.g. stock of old T-shirts can be sold for NESP and so the company is winning space and the employee gets also benefits.

#### 6. Further thoughts

- 160 million liters of drinking water, the Tirupur industries are transforming into colourful wastewater per day... if monsoon is regular or not, if plants have enough water or not. I write this into this report, because it is clear, that sooner or later this will not be possible anymore... Whoever has good ideas, shall express it, as the water problem will also reach Tirupur... good to be prepared!
- The program with **Beau Soleil** is labelled as an ‘exchange program’...No, no, I am not in favour to send Indian students to Villars... most of them would not be able to digest the gap... but my suggestion is, that more **Indian philosophy** should reach Beau Soleil **and** Prem Garden. The Rishi Valley School in Andhra Pradesh e.g. (<http://www.rvs.org/aboutrvs/abrvs1.htm#INTRO>) could benefit teachers and students of both, Beau Soleil and Prem Garden in **this** direction.
- That Switcher/Prem is tolerating persons in their daily business (really busy), who ask critical questions – who see things very often 180 degree different, than ‘normal’ people is very appreciated by me. I’d like to thank Switcher/Prem- staff for all, they shared with me – specially for their friendship.

Thank you very much – Nandri.

Brugg, October 2003

Alec Gagneux.

<sup>7</sup> ca. 90 l per day are burnt for the steam ironing section