



New Board Member - New Products

There is a saying in German that new brushes do a great job.

We look forward to the rubber version of this piece of wisdom: At the Annual General Meeting in February, Sofi Kwaja from Alice&Whittles (Canada) was elected onto the board (though no one was given the boot, the board now consists of three members; Oliver Gothe was re-elected as vice-chair, David Loew Beer's term runs until early 2016).

Alice&Whittles, the newest member of the Fair Rubber Association, has just started selling their fashionable Fairly Traded rubber boots.



Fair Trade Projects: From Cradle to Grave

Play, learn, eat, drink, celebrate: A Fair Rubber Association delegation visited all supplier partners in March, and saw first hand the amazing spectrum of projects chosen by the various joint bodies, and funded with Fair Trade premium money: Playground equipment and renovation of creches, safe drinking water supplies, support for weddings, a volleyball court, bridge building and repairs to shorten roads to school, hospital, ... a hire service for equipment for events like weddings and funerals: This edition of the Fair Rubber News highlights just a few of these projects.



None of which would be possible if the members of the Fair Rubber Association were not working hard to sell more goods made with Fairly Traded rubber. For the latest example see the brand new boots (brought to market by our brand new board member). mk

Marrying Just Got Easier!

It's a very special day for bride and groom, but getting there can be quite stressful, in particular for the bride's family as they are the ones who usually will do most of the preparation and pay the bill. That's why it was rather unusual for the New Ambadi Fair Trade committee to get an application for a wedding loan from the groom. They happily granted the request because of R. Vijayan's exceptional circumstances and achievements. Vijayan grew up with his uncle and aunt, he was only a year old when his mother died, his father has been in psychiatric care for decades. Earning a living, being able to save a little money and planning for the future of the family he hopes to have – that's been Vijayan's aim for as long as he

can remember. He's bought a tiny plot of land which he has planted with rubber trees. In a few years he will be able to produce and sell some of his own rubber, supplementing the income he has from his job at New Ambadi. The wedding will be at the end of March, says Vijayan, standing in the freshly painted, spotlessly clean accommodation in New Ambadi he has just moved to. He's met his future wife three

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times so far, the fourth will be on their wedding day. He hopes

for two children, but that's for the future. His bride knows how to sew and he'd be happy for her to run a small tailoring business from home. But what brings the biggest smile to Vijayan's face is when he talks about coming home in future – when there will be someone to talk to over a shared meal.

Wherever you get hitched, a wedding is a big expense. That's why the Fair Trade committee on the Sapumalkande rubber estate in Sri Lanka has decided to buy some of the equipment needed for weddings, other festive gatherings or funerals and make them available on a loan basis. For Rs. 750 per day (a little over 5 Euro) you get a sound system, huge cooking pots start from Rs. 50 a day (35 Cents).. Other items on hire are large frying pans, large serving spoons, marquees and special banners needed for funerals. For all items the committee chose the best quality available, however the daily rate is about a quarter of the going market rate. As a family might easily have to cater for 300 – 500 wedding guests this service can amount to a large saving. And the little red envelopes with money the guests will hand over before they leave will go further to cover the cost of the wedding, leaving the bride's parents with smiles of joy and relief.



Fun, Games, and Light at Night

Thanks to the Fair Trade premium it's fun to be a toddler on the Eila Rubber Estate. The Fair Trade committee has allocated money for the refurbishment of the creche, the playroom is bright and freshly painted and there are things to play with inside and outside, the playground has new climbing frames, a swing and a seesaw. Not just the kids are happy, Sasia Kala is one of the two nursery teachers and she now enjoys her job. The 25-year old was born on Eila and is a trained Montessori teacher, the method is hugely popular in Sri Lanka, in particular amongst well heeled parents who are able to send their kids to private nurseries. 'Before the refurbishment it was just dreadful', recalls Kala, 'the whole place was completely run down. Now we can really teach the kids by working with colours, song and dance, they

development, height and weight are regularly measured. And the Fair Trade committee has organised a rota, everyday a different family is in charge of cooking food for the 15 kids in the newly done up kitchen.

Once you're old enough to join the volleyball team your nursery days are well behind you. The team in Maha Oya has been going for 17 years but it needed a successful application to the Fair Trade committee to finally get a proper volleyball court. The players take the game very seriously, there are three teams and training starts at 4pm until 6.30pm, seven days a week. Thanks to the Fair Trade money the Sudaroly Sports Club doesn't only have a full size court, properly secured by a fence, but also flood lights which make training in the evenings easier and a lot more fun.

really learn something, about categories, counting and rhythms'. The two nursery teachers also carefully monitor the children's physical de-



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