

Remei Generalversammlung 2020 Résumé Patrick Hohmann

Since 1990, it has been our ambition to produce sustainable pieces of textile that are ecologically and socially acceptable along the entire value chain. We want to be transparent about it so that we can talk about our efforts at all times. We want to address any issues we encounter along the way and put them on a path of constructive resolution. This applies first to farming, second to social conditions in operations, third to ecological matters and finally to the objective of CO₂-neutrality. This is the background against which we have developed ourselves and our products and undergone continuing education even in the field of human-rights issues. Human rights are not for us to give; all people have them. All we need to do is listen to people, meet with them, take them seriously and reach out to them. In trying to achieve genuine accountability, we have gone so far as not simply to reveal irregularities; over and beyond that, we have attempted to be part of the solution where necessary.

It would be wrong to believe that I was the only one to achieve all this or even to provide the impetus. Most of it is due to my associates.

For example, Detox, our most recent project, was triggered by Marion Röttges; the re-organisation of yarn procurement by Simon Hohmann; the purchase guarantee by Christa Suter; transparency by Markus Kunz; GMO research by Rajeev Baruah, its follow-up and implementation by Vivek Rawal; our first organic-farming trial by Peter Tschannen; the premium by Peter Tschannen and myself, and so on and so forth. Also we were lucky that Coop was interested at the time. Initially, I was very careful because I was being suspicious of Coop's size, fearing it was a power that might not only promote our project but also put it at risk.

Most Remei employees have been with us for a long period of time. They are loyal and committed to our ambition, supporting and advancing it. They are the future you can rely on. Most of them are present here today. A cordial thank-you to all of you.

It was my achievement or contribution to provide space for people to develop in in agreement with the company's ambition. This is what I have done in India and in Tanzania as well as in Switzerland. It goes without saying that it wasn't the best possible choice from a purely economic point of view, but the strength of heart everyone involved contributed to the cause has given the movement its authenticity. It has been a venture neither based on democracy or hierarchy, but always trying to find consensus and attaching the highest priority to giving as much freedom as possible to everyone sharing responsibility.

Of course we made mistakes. I made them as much as others. But I would do it again exactly the same way, protecting my people more than before! You won't find my name anywhere in the limelight; I have always given credit to those who advanced the projects or made donations.

This is why Remei's milestones are actually joint achievements brought about over the years. We may not have been very successful economically, but we have performed sufficiently well to keep going and pursue the values we cherish personally and established over time.

Remei's milestones

1983

Remei established

A sales agency converting into a yarn-trading business

1991

bioRe® India Ltd. established as a cotton company

1994

bioRe® Tanzania Ltd. established as a cotton company

1995

Launch of Naturaline partnership with Coop

1997

The bioRe® Foundation established in partnership with Coop

1997-2003

Remei converting from yarn-trading business into network designer, from cotton to finished pieces of textile

2003

Takeover of bioRe India and bioRe Tanzania from the local promoters' bankruptcy estate

2004

Remei certified according to SA8000 and launch of certification of the entire value chain

2005

bioRe® Training Centres opened in India and Tanzania

2008

100% organic: Remei selling organic-cotton products only

2009

CO₂-neutral: second CO₂-neutral Naturaline collection of T-shirts produced entirely in Tanzania

2013

All bioRe® textiles by Remei produced CO₂-neutrally; human rights

2018

Marion Röttges and Simon Hohmann taking on Remei's executive management

2019

Remei producing the first Detox collection commissioned by Greenpeace Media to become the first company worldwide to reach this goal with Utenos

2020

Remei taking over the project businesses from the Foundation; launch of all-holder value

From an economic point of view, the year under review is one of the few years for which we didn't manage to post even a small profit.

However, what we managed to do over the years is to live up to the maxim engraved at the entrance to the bioRe Centre in India, which says this:

The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human soul the whole community finds its reflection and when in the community the virtue of each one is living.

This is possible only when negotiating the thin line of human rights and when economic outcomes are the result of co-operation, i.e. when making products for which there is demand and which satisfy genuine needs. In this process, economic aspects must be driven by human needs. In our case, we not only satisfy the needs of consumers but also those of the producers and everyone else involved in the process. All of them are entitled to human dignity, and human dignity means, among other things, that products are desirable and required and sold for a just price.

A number of years ago, I defined the concept of 'all-holder value' for us. I interpreted it as *the art of embedding social thinking in our economic thinking*.

This is the story so far.

Today and tomorrow, new all-holder values will be defined and implemented by my successors, out of practical experience and out of conviction.

"The only supply chains that enable companies to cope with distress are those based on reliability and relationships on an equal footing, and aimed at integrating all stakeholders and their needs, whether human beings or companies." (annual Report).

First and foremost, it takes a warm heart to achieve what we hope and wish for. Now is the time to turn art into practical reality. I wish all of you the energy and confidence you need. My experience tells me that it's worth being committed to the cause.

My most sincere thank-you for this opportunity.

Now I hand over to Marion Röttges and to Simon Hohmann for the future.