

SCHOOL TRIP TO FUMOA'S FACTORY

In order to illustrate the notion of progress, the English classes of TS went to FUMOA's factory.

FUMOA is the leader in packaging production in many West African countries. FUMOA supports companies in many sectors, especially in the petroleum, cosmetics, chemical, and even agri-food fields. It represents 70% of the packaging in Senegal.

It helps to develop small industries and companies, and therefore to strengthen Senegal's economy.

This company belongs to IPS (industrial promotion services) who belongs itself to Aga Khan, current Imam of Nizari Ismailism. Prince Aga Khan IV is considered to be a direct descendant of the Islamic prophet Muhammad. He is one of the world's ten richest royals, even though he doesn't own a geographic territory.

He founded the Aga Khan Development Network, which works towards improvement of the environment, health, education, architecture, culture, microfinance, rural development, disaster reduction, promotion of the private-sector enterprise... FUMOA belongs to this network (AKDN).

About FUMOA's creation:

In 1946, a company named ELMAF was created. It used to produce petroleum supplies, but then it diversified its activities by starting to produce cans, bottles... In 1995, FUMOA was bought by IPS, which belongs to Prince Aga Khan IV. IPS owns many businesses in West Africa, for instance Air Burkina.

FUMOA's activities:

We had the chance to visit FUMOA's factory. First of all, we discovered how woven polypropylene bags were produced (by COFISAC, one of FUMOA's subcontractors). The production chain is longer than it seems: first, little balls of polypropylene are inserted in a machine that makes bands out of it. Then, these strips are braided into a cloth of a width of about 1m, which is then rolled up. After that, the cloth is cut, and the logo of the customer is printed on it. Finally, both sides of the soon to be bag are sewn.

We learned that COFISAC is very concerned about its product's quality. Indeed, the quality control is extremely strict so that the customers are satisfied.

Then, we saw FUMOA's barrel production. They sell these barrels to big companies such as Total or OilLybia. Since the barrels are produced directly in Senegal, it is cheaper and easier for these companies, and as a result, the oil cost is lower.

It was impressive, because we saw that each barrel was made in about 3 minutes. We were also told that the factory has a production capacity of around 1 million barrels per year, although it only produces about 200 000 a year. The barrels are very resistant (they are made of three layers of steel), but also lightweight (each one weighs about 13kgs).

Finally, we were able to visit one last factory, which produces cans, bottles, jerrycans... These products are made by PEHD and PET blowing, and are sold in many sectors:

- food packaging (syrup, oils,...)
- petroleum products (petroleum lubricants,...)
- conditioning of cosmetic products (milks, lotions,...)
- packaging of detergents, insecticides, phytosanitary agents,...
- conditioning of coolants.

Nevertheless, FUMOA also provides advices for all companies who purchase their products. They offer design assistance, and custom packaging to these companies.

However, FUMOA still encounters some obstacles to its development. The power in Senegal is very expensive which makes their products more expensive – making the competition difficult. FUMOA's major contender on the market is China: chinese barrels and containers are cheaper than the ones produced in Senegal. This is due to the chinese cheap workforce, and its economic competitiveness.

FUMOA's pledges:

FUMOA is invested in many social activities.

It respects the network AKDN's values, which are the the following:

- Respect for ethical values and good corporate governance
- Compliance with the legislation in force in the country,
- Contribution to the economic and social development of the countries in which the companies are located
- Corporate social responsibility

Prince Aga Khan owns many charities, mostly located in south east Asia, South America, and Africa.

Thus, FUMOA is also very involved in the fight against AIDS, but also the major diseases that tear up our country, such as malaria or cancer.

Finally, FUMOA organizes blood donations by all the staff twice a year.

This visit is a way to illustrate the idea of progress. FUMOA symbolizes an economical development of Africa, and generally speaking, of developing countries, but also a social development and an improvement of the population's quality of life by providing jobs.