



NEWSLETTER ISSUE 7
OCTOBER 2008

SOMMAIRE

Sanitation:
what are we talking about?

Exhibition
« Sanitation is Dignity »

News in Brief

Sanitation: what are we talking about?

Because the subject of sanitation is sometimes unclear, both in terms of its scope and its impact on people's lives, some clarification is required.

Domestic sanitation consists in evacuating then processing all our domestic waste, both solid (household waste) and liquid (wastewater).

In our societies, the domestic sanitation cycle of wastewater contains three stages:

- Evacuation of wastewater (toilets, kitchen, bath-room),
- Transportation via a network of pipes and pump stations to treatment plants or lagoons
- Treatment of these waters before discharging them in a natural milieu and elimination of the sludge produced through clarification of wastewaters.

This cycle is especially valid in densely populated towns and villages. In less populated areas, the sanitation system is individual and often contains a septic tank followed by subterranean water spreading.

However this scheme is far from being the norm everywhere. In several world regions, what is known as the **sanitation crisis** starts with lack of access to toilets -the first fundamental stage of the sanitation cycle.



[Latrines without septic tank](#)
Photo : Maud Jimenez TGH



[Open drainage of sewage](#)
Photo : Maud Jimenez TGH

Access to toilets is not a "luxury", especially for the 2.6 billion people without it (close to 40 times the population of France)!

These people are deprived of access to basic sanitation, e.g. latrines (dry toilets). If the benchmark is the developing countries model (flush toilets served by a continuous supply of water, with human waste channeled by pipes into a sewerage system or septic tank and treatment facilities), 4 billion people do not have an adequate sanitation system (Source: Human Development report, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2006). The Water Coalition, of which Triangle GH is a member, has decided to focus its efforts on raising awareness about this first stage through the exhibition: "Sanitation is Dignity" (10-11-12 November, Place Bellecour, Lyons, France). Indeed, if the Western world can afford to explore complex issues such as evacuation and treatment, a major part of the world's population is still lacking basic toilet facilities. As long as this basic need is not covered, further issues make no sense.

Consequences on health

Lack of clean water and sanitation is the world's second biggest killer of children under five.
(Source: Human Development report, United Nations Development Programme, 2006).

Lack of access to toilets forces people to resort to "traditional" habits (defecating out in the open, in plastic bags, close to houses or water points), generating serious sanitary risks.

Excreta – reservoirs of pathogenic germs - can be found all over the environment; it can directly contaminate various milieus such as water sources, by dilution or infiltration, making such water useless for human consumption; it can also contaminate food or water via transmission vectors (flies, children).

Consumption of water or food contaminated by excreta kills over 1,8 million people a year, of which 90% are children under five.

The risk of transmission of waterborne diseases is therefore very high where there is a deficiency of adequate sanitation facilities, leading to numerous repercussions on the local environment.



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Exhibition « Sanitation is Dignity »

10-11-12 november 2008 - place Bellecour Lyon 2ème

What motivates this exhibition?

While many citizens, communities and authorities understand the importance of sanitation, we are not always fully aware of its impact on child mortality, health, schooling and environmental issues in the countries lacking adequate sanitation facilities. Through this exhibition and the media support it is receiving, the Water Coalition stimulates public awareness about the world-wide sanitation crisis, the consequences of living without a toilet, and the ways we can solve this crisis.

What is the objective?

By alerting the general public and politicians about the urgent need for long-term sanitation, the Water Coalition aims to involve all actors in a global solidarity movement that triggers the funding and technical means required to solve the sanitation crisis.

The message? Break the "toilet taboo"!

The Water Coalition wants to create a platform for open discussion about the neglected topic of suitable toilets for all world citizens. By breaking the "toilet taboo", lack of strong political action becomes intolerable.

This original exhibition, brought to France by the Water Coalition, was initiated and designed by the German Toilet Organization (GTO). This German NGO also makes the campaign available to various world regions, with support from UN Water (www.unwater.org).



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Water discussed at the 2008 G8 summit in Hokkaido...

From the 7th to the 9th of July, the 34th summit of the G8 leaders took place in Japan, on the island of Hokkaido. The issue of sanitation and access to water was part of the agenda, through the theme "Africa and development". An opportunity for the *Water Coalition* to make recommendations and propose several action plans to solve the world's water crisis. Proposals highlighted the importance of respecting the International Community's commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. For instance, Goal 7: "Ensure environmental sustainability", that plans, by 2015, to reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.

The *Water Coalition* also encouraged leaders to implement the action plans presented during the G8 2003 summit in Evian, and called for the "reiteration of a real funding commitment", and "the implementation of national action plans".

Will the member states take these recommendations into consideration? Will they tackle the enormous issue of access to water? Next year's G8 summit in Italy will be an opportunity to measure progress, but one thing is certain: action – not words – is vital now! Source: *Water coalition site: www.coalition-eau.org*

5th World Forum on Water in 2009

The 5th World Water Forum will be held in Istanbul, Turkey, from the 16th to the 22nd of March 2009. This major event, organised every three years by the World Water Council, offers the water community, local authorities and policy-makers the opportunity to discuss and address water-related issues.

In 2009, debates will center on 4 main goals:

- Recognition of water in the political agenda,
- Innovative solutions to water issues in the 21st century,
- Make concrete proposals and raise awareness about such proposals,
- Generate real political commitment

This forum hopes to facilitate the dialogue between policy-makers and the water community, in order to improve co-ordination and implement concrete, long-term action plans to end the world water crisis.

Source: internet site of *Partenariat français pour l'eau (PFE)*

A few facts:

- 1.1 billion people lack access to drinking water
- 2.6 billion people lack adequate sanitation (latrines and sewers)
- 10,000 children die every day from drinking contaminated water

Source: *UNDP 2006 Report*



Exploratory Mission in Palestine in July 2008

After establishing contacts in Palestine, Triangle GH performed a one-month exploratory mission there, in July 2008.

We identified three kinds of projects, in collaboration with our three specialised departments:

- Food safety in an urban environment (old city of Naplouse)
- Social-community support for children in an isolated and rural area (Salfeet district)
- Water and sanitation in Northern Palestine (town of Jenin).

The first two projects have already been presented to funding agencies. Pending their response, Triangle GH could implement a mission in Palestine around January 2009.

Evaluation Mission in Myanmar in August

On May 2 2008, Cyclone Nargis destroyed the Irrawaddy delta on the west coast of Myanmar (Burma). Five major administrative divisions (Yangon, Irrawaddy, Pegu, along with the Mon and Karen States) were all declared natural disaster areas, but the Irrawaddy delta was especially hard-hit and certain coastal villages were completely demolished.

The emergency phase is now over. The Burmese Government and international NGOs have managed to cover the victims' primary needs.

However, other needs must now be solved: restoring economic activity is essential, for instance, to help beneficiaries recover their autonomy.
For this reason, using our experience in Indonesia after the tsunami, Triangle GH is focusing on the Irrawaddy delta area, a key fishing zone but also the area most impacted by the cyclone. Our August 2008 evaluation revealed the importance of giving the fishermen the means (boats, nets, etc.) to work. Indeed, the fishing season (October to April) generates the annual income of many families. Having designed a pilot project: rehabilitation/construction of 150 boats, Triangle GH is currently mobilising sponsors to launch the project.

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