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[Drinking water in Munchon](#)[Fish and men](#)[ARCHIVES](#)**Edito***By Patrick Verbruggen, co-director of Triangle G H*

More and more frequently, Humanitarian action is criticized for its escalation of funds, equipment and volunteers... If these reproaches are understandable, while facing an increasing over-mediatization of crisis situations, they remain hard to hear when insecurity is growing, and when the working space of NGOs is reduced from year to year due to forbidden accesses, confusion in the nature of activities (military, humanitarian) and the reluctance of populations when confronted with numerous propositions made by « non identified » humanitarian actors. Today, our reality is made of anxiety generated by the dangers met by expatriate and local humanitarian workers in order to ensure the subsistence level to the populations who are victim of catastrophes, wars... But we nevertheless keep on working. To do this job enables us to act, to materialize our indignation when facing injustices, distress. We do not pretend to save the world, but to bring aid, support to families, villages, individuals. Throughout our actions, we perpetuate the idea that solidarity is more than just a political concept, that it can be achieved beyond any economical or ethnical barrier. That in the end, solidarity is inherent to the human being. That it is not necessary, but compulsory.

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In January 2010, Triangle G H initiated two projects financed by the European Union in North Korea. The first one, described below, completes and reinforces a programme financed by the Swedish cooperation aiming at improving the water supply network by enabling the extension of that network and the setting-up of pilot units of sewage treatment. The second one, implemented in the Province of South Hamgyong, strives to increase and improve the fish farming production intended for the fish supply of the children care centres of the province. Operating in two cooperative farms related to the Department of Aquaculture of Pyongyang, this project aims at improving the food security of the children of these care centres, thanks to an increase of the production through the elaboration of an integrated system of fish breeding and the improvement of the transport, distribution and storing conditions until reaching the children centres. In fine, it will benefit to more than 19 000 children in a hundred care centres of the Province (orphanages, nurseries, kindergarten).

Drinking water in Munchon

By Romain Sztark, Unit manager Water, Hygiene & Sanitation of Triangle G H

Located on the East coast of the country, the city of Munchon, counting more than 42 000 inhabitants, has long been provided with water thanks to an old water supply network dating from the 60s and providing brackish water in very limited quantity.

Since 2004, Triangle G H has achieved two projects enabling a significant increase in the drinking water production, in order to produce more than 50 litres per person and per day. Several water sources have been set up and a part of the distribution network has been rehabilitated. In 2007, at the end of these two successive phases, approximately 1200 households as well as the main hospital of the city of Munchon were connected to the new drinking water supply network.

Thanks to the co funding of SIDA (Swedish cooperation) and the European Commission, Triangle G H was able to start two new projects aiming at covering the totality of the needs in drinking water of the city. To that end, nearly 50 kilometres of pipes with small or large diameters will be set up in order to connect all the housings to this new network, thus enabling the distribution of more than 2 500 m3 of drinking water per day directly to people's homes.

However, such an increase in the drinking water availability will significantly raise the production of wastewater by the inhabitants of Munchon, which in turn may cause the deterioration of the sanitary environment of the city. Presently, the wastewater is directly evacuated into the sea via open air sewers without any sort of treatment.

One part of the project is therefore dedicated to the treatment and the evacuation of this wastewater. Consequently, simplified units to treat the sewage will be built, generating an important decrease in the quantity of organic components present in this water; the open air sewages will be rehabilitated and covered in order to better evacuate the water, but most of all, to limit the vectors of diseases. However, these activities will not be able to cover the entire city, but only one out of its four districts.

To this day, the rehabilitation activities have started, and large diameter pipes are being set up. This work is achieved by specialized teams of Munchon. Normally, all the pipes will be set up before the end of the year, and will thus enable the provision of quality water to the whole population. The sanitation part of the project is still being designed and should start at the beginning of the month of May, the most adequate period for this type of activity, as winter climatic conditions do not permit the achievement of reinforced concrete works between November and April.

Concurrently to this building/rehabilitation work, we carry out actions to raise awareness to hygiene and enhance local capacity building in order to help the populations to become autonomous at the end of the project. The action on hygiene aims at promoting practices suited to the right use of drinking water and sanitation infrastructures in order to limit the risks of disease and to improve behaviours. Capacity building will mainly concern the persons who will be in charge of the maintenance and the follow up of the infrastructures in order to ensure some durability.

These two projects, jointly carried out, will be finished for spring 2011, thus enabling the inhabitants of the city of Munchon to have enough drinking water and to live in an improved environment.



Thermo welding of large-diameter pipes achieved by local specialized workers.

Fish and men

By Louis Merlin, Project Manager in North Korea - Triangle G H

Silence and loneliness in the burning heat of a sauna, on Sunday evening, in the basement of a big hotel. The "ploc" of a drop falling into the big pond. Tonight in Pyongyang, I am sweating the week end's toxins, those of the spring barbecue organized by the Triangle G H team in Korea and of the few beers coming along.

Coming out of the oven of the sauna, I let myself cool down and write this little note to you on a plastic counter. To give a quick picture of my work here, to you the readers of this paper of Triangle G H.

So I work in North Korea on an integrated fish farming project started last January with the help of the European Union.

In order to produce better and more, in a country where land is scarce and worn out, we made a bet on integrated fish farming with our Korean and French partners. By closely associating agriculture, farming and fish farming, integrated fish farming offers a lasting and self sufficient answer to nutrition problems.

Small revolution, the fish farms associated with the project turn out to be allocated the management of farming lands which production feed the breeding stock. The manure is used to produce green waters, rich with plankton, feeding the fish and enriching the farming lands. Support to agriculture, creation or development of breeding activities, introduction of new fish farming practices, and above all, smart articulation of these different productions: our action in that field consists in accompanying the fish farms through change, with the objective to produce more, in an autonomous way.

Surrounding nurseries and primary schools are supplied by the fish farms. From the fish ponds to the children's plates, we act upon the entire chain to improve the quality of the product. The projects underway are numerous: improvement of the preservation, development and distribution (adapted means of transport, improved logistic management) and careful follow up of the nutritional quality of the meals of the children, who are our primary beneficiaries.

Integrated fish farming, action on the whole industry: the task is ambitious and the challenges are numerous. But this multi-faceted project, including many interlocutors, offers innovative and promising logics.

Our work also needs time. Time to convince, to prove that we can do things differently. In this planned, organized and under pressure country that is Korea, nothing happens without convincing. So we give ourselves the time to think, to gather a team of Korean technicians and college students, to discuss and elaborate the project together. Resting on these firm foundations, the activities start very fast. The farming season starts now, with the support of the project, the first fish farming tests are imminent, and in a few weeks we will initiate the action on the preservation/transport chain.

In the field of fish farming, which is new for Triangle G H, we have established a collaboration with the APDRA, an association of French fish farmers having a passion for cooperation. These fish farmers will accompany us during the three years of the project and their first mission in Korea, last February, showed all the added value of a dialogue from fish farmer to fish farmer.

As it is the case for other development projects, this project coming up requests a lot of time and energy from its actors. Of course it goes along with points of view hard to conciliate, crises and long stubborn negotiations. But it leads to change, opens doors, and connects people. It takes a new turn thanks to the skills and dynamism of the fish farmers, the technicians and the local leaders. Without a doubt, all these skills, these differences, these arduous negotiations have in Korea a specific taste which represents the richness of this project.