

Regional WASH and Shelter mission in Afghanistan from 29 Nov. to 3 Dec. 2015 report
ECHO team composed of Kabul based Roohullah and Tom, and Luc based in Islamabad

Solidarités International (SI) in Gulan Camp

Security limitation: until last month, expatriates could only go to the camp 2 times for 2 h per week; since last month, expatriates can go 3 times for 3 h per week; no limitations for national staff except they have to be back at the base by 16:30.

Water supply from a total of 10 boreholes (BH), 4 constructed lately by SI – water trucking discontinued since September; unclear why not until then / before, like in their reporting, page 12 of

2015/00179/MR/01/01

Résultat 1 - Activité 1

Description détaillée

Water bladders are strategically placed in locations where the delivery is not feasible through networks - that is very much questionable.

Production with official population numbers: 7.35 l/cap/d but SI claims population is less than stated – anyway, the important bottom line is that water is available with no limitations, people are happy with it, in terms of quantity; on the other hand, they do complain about chlorine although we could not observe any smell or taste of chlorine while in the camp.

Chlorination is systematically done in storage reservoirs before water is made available at the taps – residual chlorine is meant to act against possible contamination taking place during transport in jerrycans and storage at home until consumption.

The raw water coming from deep boreholes is supposed to be clean and safe.

Still, water analysis shows coliform contamination at water delivery points and household (HH) levels.

The first one is completely abnormal.

SI conducts water contamination analysis but does not use it; they seem to conduct that activity mechanically but do not take any action to correct the bad results, although they have showed for several months – that absence of reaction is very worrying, abnormal and shows a lack of competence. Source of contamination should be thoroughly tracked and fought against, to try to eliminate it, at least until water point where water should be systematically free of contamination, all the more as it is chlorinated; no feedback is given nor reaction taken at HH level.

Although *Résultat 3 - Indicateur 1* says Findings of the KAP survey are expected at the beginning of March 2015, SI could not get us those, which we asked at the beginning of our 3.5 days' stay in Khost. We were told they would be shared: we keep waiting for them.

It was shared that the Financial statement file is prepared on XL spreadsheet, it is then a shame to see on it figures instead of operations – links and operations would be more meaningful, more easily traceable and would avoid mistakes.

On annex 8.1 Activities BoQ, without cost extension as none with cost extension could be found, TOTAL Price should be the result Unit price times Total QTY instead of currently on spreadsheet Unit price being the result of the operation TOTAL Price divided by Total QTY.

Line C.2.2 Generator for submersible pump (2 pieces) indicates a budget of 37,157 euros: what are those expensive generators, for what use?

Answers and corrections were promised: we are waiting for them.

SI proposed to reinforce the protection of the water points with fencing and walls: the situation seemed quite appropriate to the ECHO team and not needing any extra works, the infrastructures, in the middle of the inhabited areas, had passed a rainy season without being damaged and the population, including children, seemed to respect and take care of them. SI also cited cultural reasons, the women should not be able to be seen – the population constructed a wall around a water point by themselves, in no time, without asking for anything, showing they can do it when they want to; then, supporting other areas would be counterproductive and unfair against the self-initiatives.



We attended a hygiene promotion session held in a mosque on 1 Dec., attended by some 16 to 17 men and boys – the light attendance may be explained by a distribution taking place at the same time; it may even more be explained by fatigue after such sessions every 2 weeks for more than a year. The hygiene promoter seemed to lecture, without contextualizing, without giving much chance to the audience to participate.

Then, one of the main problems cited was the holes left after using earth for making bricks for construction, where water is stagnant and a real danger for people to fall into them – 5 children did and found death there. Unfortunately, people cannot organize themselves to backfill and ask SI to take care of it. SI will address the problem with cash for work, cautiously, especially to inject cash, which is needed, and trying to avoid to develop the assistance spirit.

Latrines

Shape of pit and soak away pit unclear: should be circular rather than square or rectangular.

SI mentioned their idea of 2 pits to be used alternately, using piping: ECHO was clear in their recommendation to avoid that, keeping the design the simplest possible; to increase capacity so that the pit does not fill up, it is depth that is to be increased.

Tarpaulin is used for walling and roofing; DACAAR used white color while SI used black; when asked why, DACAAR answered it was to keep the latrines as little hot as possible, especially during summer; SI answered it was to have the latrines as hot as possible to fight against insects. Nobody was sure. The main vector to fight against is the fly, which is attracted by light and odor and avoids darkness and dark surfaces; then, black color tarpaulin seems preferable (but still, probably not because of higher temperatures).

Messages written on signboards should be checked whether they can be read by the Pakistani Pashtun refugees.

Water supply

SI took us to the outskirts of the camp where newcomer refugees settle. They consider to add a water point there and think of a borehole equipped with a manual pump or piped water from a spring catchment. We asked what the population to be served was and the answers differed from less than 400 individuals to more than 250 families.

This illustrated the need to assess first better the situation prevailing, to identify the need, the demand, to be able to design ways to answer them.

Unfortunately, this was typical of most of the whole water supply setup: SI does not know it technically and masters it even less.

All the boreholes we could see were not properly protected, open, kind of covered with rice bags that weathered and damaged: a sound permanent protection is a basic must.



Most of the submersible pumps have no protection at all, including the last four fully installed by SI lately, in terms of level sensor against running dry, no control box to protect against electrical or pressure problem, surge or failure – they are just turned on and off from the generators. 3 pumps experienced problems, which is not normal after so little time, probably showing they are not protected as they need to be. It is surprising and abnormal that submersible pumps were ordered without their control panels and level sensors.

The need for protection against water hammer should be checked.

The generator shelter at BH 8 was just open to weather and rain. Its exhaust was not well connected through the roof.

The pipe connections were real, seemingly improvised, poor substandard unacceptable makeshift job.

The flowmeter was not well installed with a sufficient straight section down and upstream for right measuring, with no anchoring.



The log sheets with running times of generator and pump showed inaccurate and with mistakes. The fuel consumption seemed to show big differences in time, with no satisfactory explanation – worse, SI seemed not to have noticed it.

Many taps are leaking, some of them significantly, filling significant ponds – use more sealing like PFTE tape or teflon.

SI could not answer when asked about the yields of the boreholes, the static and dynamic water levels, the pump installation depths, the characteristics of the pumps – the latter were ordered before the boreholes were drilled, then, without right sizing; on top of it, the needed heads to pump into the storage reservoirs are not known.

SI talked to us about 2 ‘dewatering’ pumps, which seem to be surface centrifugal motorpumps used as boosters; when asked why they were set up, we were answered the pressure was too little and it took long to fill the reservoirs... Like most of the water system, this seems improvised and not the result of a known sound design.

At least one water point was witnessed supplied from a farther borehole while a closer one served other reservoirs.

All of the piping is 2” diameter... If why not, at least why? There is no answer.

Currently, there are 10 independent systems: that seems a lot and it is probably worth looking into possibly connecting them.

HR issues / weaknesses: high turnover, regular gaps; the current Khost 2 expatriates are ex SI national staff, Thai and Bangladeshi, who got promoted and expatriated; among all the team we met, including Kabul based Program Coordinator Yann, who is supposed to have a WASH background and experience, nobody is proactive nor even reactive nor has enough good common sense and technical knowledge and competence; SI does need urgently such skills, water supply engineering with hydraulics competency, proficiency, ability to design, modelize and size, to thoroughly analyze the situation in Gulistan camp, see what the needs are, where, quantify the demand in time and propose how best answer it, taking into account the existing setup, the 10 boreholes equipped supplying reservoirs and water points around nearby, seeing and taking into account new needs of newcomer refugee population in the outskirts of the camp.

As we met with DACAAR and visited their project at the same time, SI seemed all the weaker in comparison with DACAAR being professional and proficient.

When asked about solar energy, SI told us they consider it for the next phase with 2 or 3 boreholes for which the current generators would be replaced by solar panels as a pilot and then see if extend from there if successful: again, this illustrates the absence of drive, vision and technical adequate competence / knowledge – a solar powered water pumping system is known to have a positive return compared to generator(s) only after several years.

We could see that the village at the entrance of the camp has a water system: as it was not done, see, check whether some connection is possible / wishable / advisable with arrangements that could benefit the 2 communities, residents and refugees, and not the 2 water systems but the current 11 ones.

Conclusion

The WASH situation in general and water supply in particular is fortunately ok for beneficiaries with water being available with no limitations. The sanitation situation improves regularly with new latrines being constructed. The camp is clean, it keeps extending – expanding, hence making the habitat more scattered, less dense, less concentrated, decreasing the risks of disease propagation.

However, the current SI team doing WASH in Gulan lack common sense and technical competence to realize the numerous problems, tackle them, improve and correct them.

The current technical setup is substandard and vulnerable and at risks, especially with the submersible pumps lacking protection.

Recommendations – actions needed

1) draw the lessons from existing information already collected, mainly contamination, + fuel consumption: identify, analyze, understand the weaknesses, problems and tackle them, have them corrected

2) immediately protect all the currently open non / badly covered boreholes

Install adequate submersible pump protections with control boxes

Fix the numerous significant leakages, correct the makeshift connections with flowmeters correctly installed, make sure generators are adequately sheltered with roofing, protected from rain, the exhaust piping actually connected to and reaching the outside

3) conduct a thorough comprehensive study of the water situation in Gulan camp, including possibilities with the village, to have a real picture of the need, the demand; then, recommend how best to answer those, taking into account the existing situation – the needed competence currently does not exist within SI Afghanistan: see how to get it

Get from SI a work plan with resources and timing immediately – rapidly / asap

Get from SI regular reporting, feedback with progress, results, achievements, how the above points are addressed and corrected, with difficulties and explanations