EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HUMANITARIAN AID OFFICE (ECHO)

MISSION REPORT

Subject: Monitoring mission – AFGHANISTAN

Author: Luc Soenen - TA WASH - Shelter

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Participants:

- ECHO: Roohullah, ECHO Kabul, Luc, ECHO Islamabad
- Partners: Solidarités International (SI)

Places visited & Interlocutors:

SI Khost office, Gulan camp, (UNHCR Khost office – Roka Kudo, DACAAR Khost office)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / HIGHLIGHTS

SI are doing just good enough in Gulan camp but slowly.

Very significant refugee population, and then pressure, decrease to 21 000 capita in Gulan camp.

2. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Monitoring WASH visit after the **situation was witnessed weak and necessitating thorough improvement back in December 2015**. A **technical support mission from SI headquarters was helpful and enabled some good progress at the beginning of 2016**.

3. ISSUES DISCUSSED, COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

HR management within SI

SI has a significant number of expatriates, 2 based in Khost and quite some in Kabul – unfortunately, there is **no strong technical competency**, including among their national staff, for whom they do not have attractive enough conditions. They are considering and discussing to **hire nationals 'off grid'** in the future, to possibly replace expatriates: that is probably a good move that would be **recommended to speed up**.

In comparison, DACAAR has 700 national staff with only 3 expatriates based in Kabul.

French Florent Lavie-Derande has been the WASH coordinator since mid-May 2016 – his main training is Bioforce. Canadian David Broska arrived beginning of August 2016 as Khost Field coordinator. Bangladeshi Mukbul Mohammaed Hossain, Khost WASH Program manager, extends until December 2015.

Security in Khost and Gulan

French Country director Luis De Pinho Santos briefed us quite extensively, willing to tell and to remind to us the situation, the environment, the history.

According to him, expatriates are seen as infidels; then, **low profile** is required.

A **threat of a planned kidnapping of a SI expatriate** was received in March 2016. The same information came a second time from French Intelligence that listens to telephones.

Khost province is managed by Akani. TIP, Pakistan Taliban, are present in Gulan camp; those need the approval of NDS (National Directorate of Security), Afghan Intelligence.

Then, came a threat from a criminal group and then DAESH but nobody supports DAESH in Khost; it was actually NDS that pretended to be or use DAESH; the DAESH threat is not credible at all.

All those threats caused **SI expatriates not to go to Gulan camp for some 3 months in the first seven months of 2016**. They resumed little before our mission, which also got confirmed at the last minute, with 2 possible visits of 2 h each per week for expatriates.

MSF, for the last 3 months, has chosen visibility; they have 150 expatriates in AFG, 10 in Khost.

SI does not inform authorities of their movements.

When going to the camp, dressed with shawar kamiz and pacole (Afghan hat) on, I am asked not to wear sunglasses, to be low profile.

In the same sense, it is kind of 'advised' not to wear the safety belt, to do like everybody else.

Most cars, including those of SI, do not have numberplates.

In the camp, by a reservoir, I was willing to climb on it to have a general view of the camp: I got advised not to because I would be accused of willing to see women inside compounds, as happened to a worker from the camp.

For any female staff, SI need to employ a 'chaperon', a brother, an uncle or the father, to whom they actually pay a per diem.

SI currently does not have any MoU in AFG with MoRR, the Ministry of refugees and repatriation – a main problem lies with financing MnE (monitoring and evaluation) on the ministry side. A simple MoU was signed by DACAAR and NRC with the Director of Plan of the Ministry.

In their Khost office, SI wanted to share with us what they called challenges

1) Solar systems

They are starting with a pilot project on the HIP 2015 program and budget.

They tell us they never managed to get any consultancy, which caused delay.

They tell us they had 2 x 2 sets of 9 solar panels of 250 Wp installed, one with Chinese panels, the second one with German panels, to power a 4.5 kW Pedrollo pump – we actually asked for more explanation as we noticed that the stickers for the German panels stated 240 Wp; according to that information, the **peak power** developed by the German panels would be only 4.32 kW; **to be followed up**.

The inverter come from France got blocked at the customs.

Pumping was to start the following day – actually, it started an extra day later.

Lots of movements of people make the future of the camp uncertain.

Return on investment gets positive after 5 years – rough estimate, to be checked or established.

Then, they propose us to decrease the new solar powered systems to 3 more boreholes only, instead of the planned additional 9 to reach a total of 10.

2) Sanitation

Part of their HIP 2015 project, 2015/00179, are 4120 transitional latrines. 418 households moved after the first of 2 payments. 418 new households were identified out of which 79 moved again. They had 63 latrines / bathrooms added for mosques. As of 14 August, they had a total of 324 latrines missing compared to the 4120 planned in spite of their one month NCE requested on 22 July 2016 to complete that activity by 31 August 2016 and they did not have enough time remaining to add latrine beneficiaries again.

Water

That day, 14 August, the population of Gulan camp was still 'officially' considered 70,000. For that population, the water supplied was 8.4 l/cap/d. Nobody complained about water quantity or availability. Population could be less than 40,000 according to an assessment by SI last year.

Borehole water level is monitored stable enough.

Connections between the 10 independent water systems are not made yet – however, those were mentioned back very beginning of December 2015 and reminded and agreed upon in February 2016.

Individual protections for submersible pumps, requested by ECHO in December 2015, were put in place and pumps were usually installed deeper; when asked, we were answered improvement was observed, breakdowns decreased, although unclear and **not well documented**.

Same with **generator filters**: when asked about their **management**, how often they were cleaned or changed, we got unclear random answers; the latter **need to be thoroughly organized and followed up**.

Same with Operation and maintenance: regular maintenance and repair data are mixed; those need to be separated and traced.

Same with data management: **data are collected but not much managed, analyzed**. Having a quick look at water pumping data, it was observed that flows fluctuated from simple to double, without being noted and even less addressed or corrected.

In general, information exists, data are collected but routinely, they seem unfortunately mostly not treated, not used. That is also illustrated by the current use of spreadsheet, calculations can be made on different files and then typed again instead of using links to avoid easy typos and see actually the original data and how they are treated. **Data management need to be put in place, to be critical with data collected, to analyze them so that they inform of dis-functionings and corrective measures can be taken as early as possible**.

The **plan is to have water point caretaker salaries discontinued after November**. 3 **water points already function without caretaker payment**.

As had already been requested in December 2015, it is advised to **look into the host village water system**, to see whether it is possible to work with them, to benefit from them or bring them benefits. For example, it should be known whether their water gets chlorinated. SI were asked to think about **long term chlorination**, taking into account that people do not like chlorinated water and row water is clean.

Cash for work paid for backfilling holes, which had been dug to make bricks, and to excavate drainage channels.

In the camp, a **grease and soap trap** – a compartment chamber designed to trap grease and soap – was inspected and was found nonfunctional, the passage of grey water being on the top. The concept of such a chamber is to trap lighter parts, grease and soap, at the surface, as passage between compartments is below the top only, so that they get collected and do not flow on into the soak pit that they would make impermeable, lock and block.

On site with the SI team, nobody realized or understood the discrepancy. Then, when asked to correct the mistake, they would answer 'in the future', whereas a hole only needs to be added in the wall between the 2 chambers at a lower elevation and the one at the top closed. Some **44 grease and soap traps have to be corrected**.

Back in office, a drawing could be provided: it was correct, showing that there was no monitoring and the drawing was not understood.

While walking in the camp, dirty stagnant water was observed but did not disturb anybody, whereas it was ideal for fly and mosquito breeding. I asked for a hoe, a pick ax and started opening a channel for the water to flow. That should be a reflex for the **sanitation and health / hygiene promotion teams, they are expected to be independent, proactive** and react right away when there is a problem.

Pit hole lids / covers, which were distributed with the rest of the material for the latrine construction, were observed **absent** in latrines: let SI check why, and learn the lesson / correct as adequate.

Latrines were observed having their entrance outside compounds. The explanation is that a number of latrines are inside the compounds, used by females. That tends to show that the latrine coverage in the camp becomes sufficient.

The so called pilot **solar powered pumping** system got started eventually on Tuesday 16 August 2016. SI selected borehole 10.

After some measuring mistakes and adjustments, the flow with the solar panels was about the same as with the generator, # 12 m3/h.

The **frequency** showed on the inverter 40 Hz: **check whether it is correct**, whether it should not be 50 Hz **and correct / reset if needed**.

SI decided to conduct a pilot project for 3 weeks to compare the Chinese and the German solar panels + the orientation – the current 4 stands can be rotated manually. Although it is good to test, it does not appear clear why that should delay; if solar powered pumping

is new for Solidarités International in Afghanistan, experience and competency do exist, for example, with DACAAR that already installed more than 40 solar pumping systems and reminded and confirmed they are available to give a hand and share their knowledge.

The choice of borehole 10 is also very questionable: it is the least used borehole with a daily demand of some 10 m3, produced within less than 1 h pumping; it is the only one located east of an asphalt road and then cannot feed the rest of the camp, the very bigger part, as the road cannot be passed – at least, SI told us so. During the test, water just got wasted on the ground. The justification given by SI is they wanted to minimize the risk – whereas that risk is extremely minimal as the generator run system remains in place, the solar panels are just added and a switch enables to select to pump on generator energy or on solar energy.

Still, back in the office and then in Kabul, SI realized and acknowledged that solar powered pumping is not that an exceptional challenge and they maintain the plan to equip with solar panels all of the 10 boreholes.

At the end of our stay in Khost, the sanitation survey / census conducted lately in Gulan camp by SI revealed the population of the camp as # 21 000, with a good accuracy, say between 20 000 and 22 000.

That changes radically the deal, it confirms the impression **the camp is not dense**, at least as it used to be. Then, **water supplied** is comfortable with **28 l/cap/d**; sanitation coverage is **less than 6 cap/latrine**(!), much better than usual guidelines that would recommend at least 15 l/cap/d and a latrine per 25 cap maximum.

4. CONCLUSION - SUMMARY

Monitoring Solidarités International Afghanistan in Gulan camp is important and should be scheduled again soon, say after a couple of months to be confirmed and coordinated with SI.

SI Afghanistan are slow and still weak technically + they are not proactive, doing their WASH activities quite routinely: let management and especially **headquarters reinforce and support them regularly and asap**.

Data and information are to be managed, not only routinely collected, analyzed and discrepancies are to be traced and **corrective measures taken**.

The main **9 currently independent water systems are to be interconnected very quickly**, by end of September 2016, + check the host village water system.

The **grease and soap traps have to be corrected quickly**, by mid-September 2016.

The **remaining 9 boreholes are to be equipped with solar panels** as soon as possible, by mid November 2016, after following up the peak power issue of the German solar panels and the frequency delivered by the inverter.