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Edito

HUMILITY, TIMIDITY OR IGNORANCE?

A modern water point is not a simple hole with any old equipment thrown in and any old quality of water coming out.

Unfortunately this is not always the case, but it is generally in Africa and it is particularly in the French-speaking Africa that the highest quality of rural water supply can be found.

Even if the situation is far from being perfect, most of the countries concerned have been committed for decades to drinking water supply programmes for their rural populations which should be held up as an example in the whole world.

On which continent do they talk about and even commit to programmes which supply drinking water even to the most isolated areas ? A modern community water point, defined over 30 years ago in Africa, only exists in... Africa. Only in Africa can be found such an investment which covers a professional borehole, a robust pump, the setting up of an after sales service, the training of the technicians, an information campaign for the users, their organisation, and the creation of a clear policy.

The South American and Asian contexts are indeed different and these two continents can be proud of significant advances in other fields, but for those who did not know, it is better to drink pump water in Africa than elsewhere !

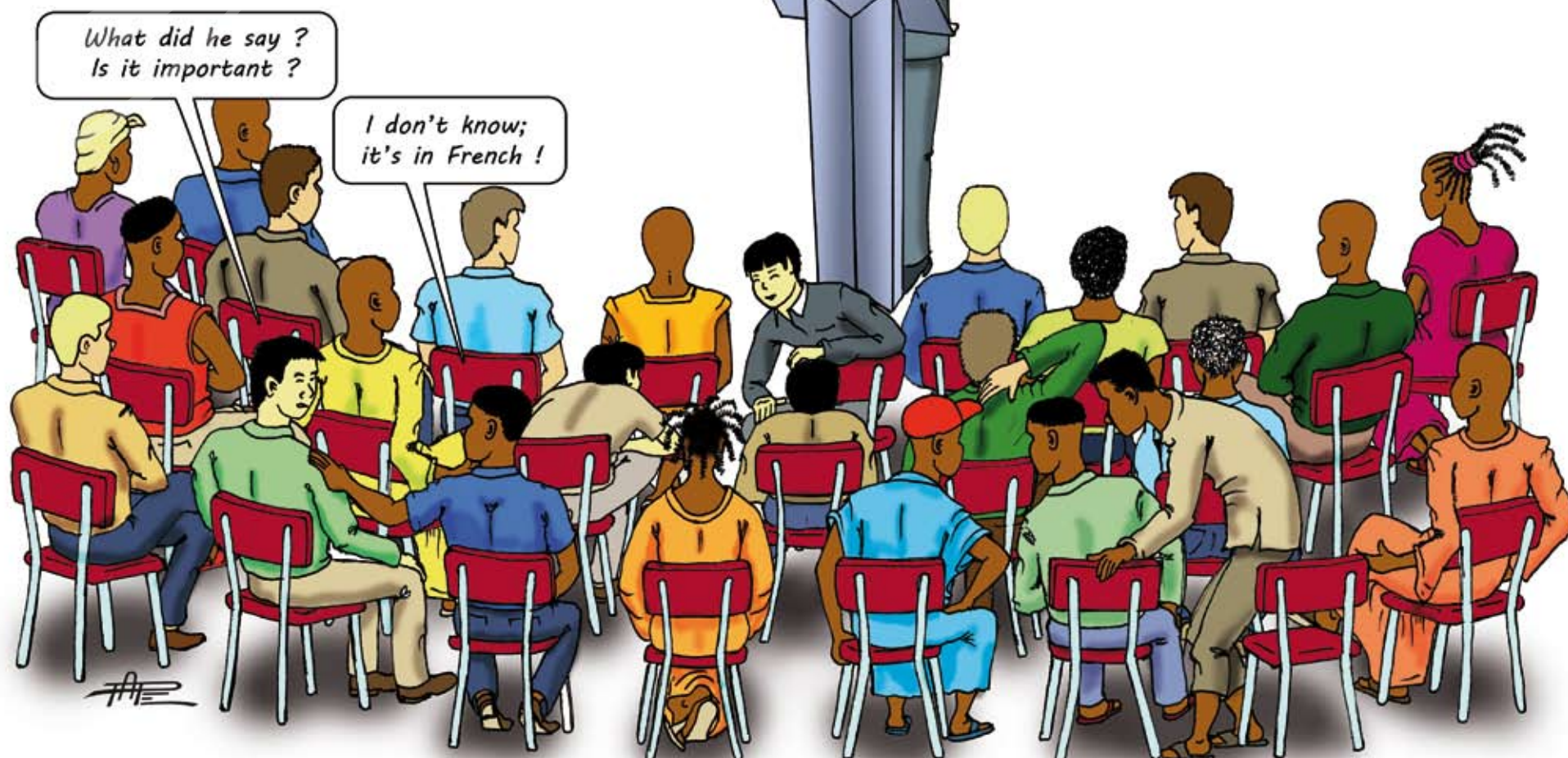
In fact, even if the quantity objective of the Millenium Development Goals for drinking water has not been reached, Africa deserves first place from a quality point of view for having made colossal efforts in rural zones, without considering the locals as second hand citizens who only deserve an 'improved' water.

Some French-speaking countries have even had remarkable results with the long term operation of their installations. These countries who are often bossed around, could or even should set the example. There should be no false humility nor timidity: all concerned should be proud of their know-how and their results in water supply. The various international meetings organized around the theme of water should now be used as a platform to show the rest of the world-starting by that other Africa, the non French-speaking one the example, so that the Africans can export their know-how, so that good practice is not sacrificed and that development is not dumbed down.

All of us, donors, ministers, administrations, NGOs, associations, private companies should carry on the message: we know how to supply drinking water to rural zones on a long-term basis and it is now urgent to learn from the past.

■ Etienne DECHERF
Business Manager

*Nous avons une véritable expérience à partager avec vous en hydraulique rurale !**



* We have a real experience to share with you in rural water supply!

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

BLIND BOREHOLE

Vergnet-Hydro invests every year in Research and Development : in 2012 the investment has been in a testing platform for its pumps. This consists of a 'blind' 6 " diametre borehole with a depth of 120 m which is able to test controlled installation depths and dynamic levels. This project has also acquired immersible sensors as well as an IT system to treat data from the measurement and recording of the pressure in the working pumps. This test bench has allowed Vergnet Hydro to continue developing its famous products.



'blind' 6 " diametre borehole
with a depth of 120 m which



ASIA

In 1993, VERGNET HYDRO made its first steps in Asia, Vietnam and Cambodia. The company then spread its activity into South East Asia, particularly Indonesia, to meet the enormous needs brought about by the Tsunami of December 2004. Alongside our local partners, we went with the NGOs into the field to solve the problem of supplying drinking water to stricken people. At the same time, VERGNET HYDRO continued its development in the region and found a distributor in the Philippines, headquarters of the Asian Development Bank.

There are two objectives:

- 1- Sharing our expertise and our vision of sustainable development for rural water supply.
- 2- Understanding the needs of the Asian populations so as to provide solutions which are adapted to the challenges they meet.

A high rate of population growth with a large proportion of the people living in the country has convinced VERGNET HYDRO of the need to probe the markets in other countries in this part of the world. The company is going to gradually increase its presence in South Asia, consolidate its links with existing partners and spread out its network in this new zone: Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, etc.

The situation is clear. The needs are considerable but the markets are varied, complex and highly competitive. To live up to the challenge, we will have to adapt and provide a technical solution which meets economic requirements.

After several years of preparation, VERGNET HYDRO is taking the plunge and has decided to invest in Asia alongside an internationally known industrial partner, who has also worked in local development to carry on the historical philosophy of the VERGNET group: proposing solutions adapted to the contexts in question and hence providing a sustainable answer to the wonderful challenges of development. A regional office was set up locally in Colombo in Sri Lanka in September 2012 to organise an assembly line, to gain in competitiveness and to be closer to our Asian partners. This then provides a geographical relay with a rapid reactivity which is essential to revitalise the network on this continent.

This is the latest chapter of a beautiful story which started thirty years ago, in the heart of the Sahel.

DELEGATION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF WATER IN BURKINA: IT'S WORKING!

In May 2009, the VERGNET group signed a contract with 7 districts in the Sahel to supply drinking water to the population. This idea in such a high risk market had been greatly thought out and the commitments made by the government as part of this Reform convinced our company to embark on filling the gap in this market. VERGNET wanted to seize this opportunity to show that it is possible by working on this sector, to continually supply the water needed by these rural populations. VERGNET has had to make sure that all the technical as well as financial data of the operation of these 7 water supply networks has been strictly supervised. Two years ago the first analysis showed that we were on the right lines.

Two years later, thanks to this effort, strengthened by the experience we now have, as well as the figures we have already gathered, we can be sure that the model put in place by VERGNET will work over the necessary 40 months of operating time. The next years of use will nevertheless be essential: they will validate the hypotheses that we have made on the life span of the 'big' material.

VERGNET can, from now on, draw its own main conclusions as well as identify the obstacles needed to get over.

What are the main trends?

Good governance, a fast adaptability from the operator to solve any technical problems creating trust between the locals and the operator. This trust is shown by an increase of more than 60% in the average consumption of paid water in litres per day.

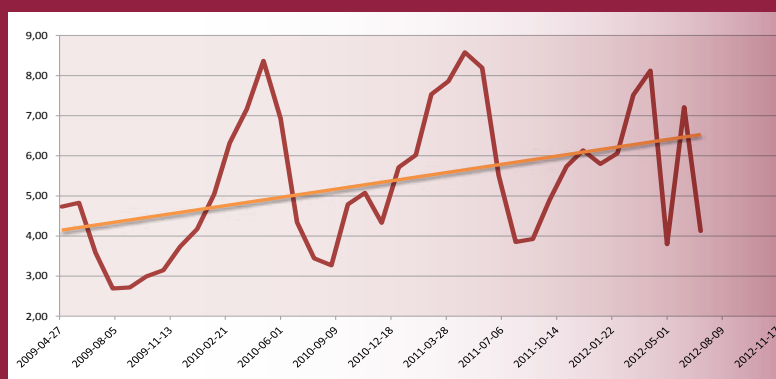


Figure 1 : Measurement of the global average consumption of paid water from April 2009 to August 2012 in litres per day per inhabitant.

Figure 1 confirms that financial simulations for the operation of water supply networks must use as a hypotheses, in feasibility studies, an average consumption of 6 to 8 litres per day and per inhabitant. Therefore, based on this, for the zone where VERGNET works, the operation is financially positive if we are able to control the unfair costs.

The most populated villages are also those where the water consumption is the highest. If a mutual management of several centres is in place, towns of at least 10 000 inhabitants should be combined with smaller towns or villages.

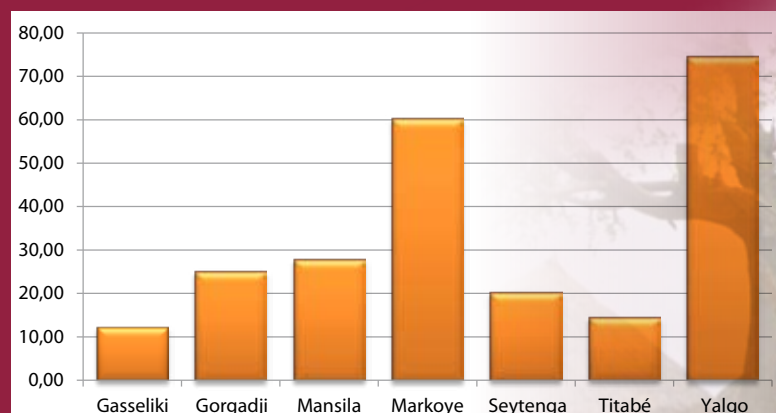


Figure 2 : Daily volume of water in m3 sold per centre

Which obstacles remain?

We are beginning to see the limits of the hydrogeological context. In Gorgadji there are not enough water resources for the population. The lack of local technical competences to bring awareness to the national level to show the need for new investments in the centre, does not help the development of the service.

Depth of the water table in metres



Figure 3: changes in the water level in Gorgadji

- A model of profit and loss account which remains to be defined and then should be standardised nationally so as to help the input and reading of the financial data.
- Duties which the commune has difficulties in carrying out. The commune does not dare commit to expenses from the contract which it has signed with the private operator.

In conclusion

The model set up in Burkina Faso is bearing fruit. A more professional service and a higher implication from the private sector make sure that hydraulic equipment is managed in the long term. These results from the Sahel show that it is possible even when the context is difficult. But the public authorities should not consider that it is all over. How can we energise this sector? How can we strengthen the partnerships between the public and the private sectors? How can we make sure that investments in the sector will make development ever more efficient?





TURNING THE PAGE

It has been 40 years. 40 years that he has been sitting on aeroplane seats, walking around Ministries and other water directorates in Africa, that his voice has rung out in the deepest bush. 40 years that he has carried forward the message of rural water supply, which has made it what it is today, something to be believed in. As simple as that.

He has always been loyal, in all circumstances, from the very beginning, until the end. Having crafted out the decentralised Vergnet after-sales service, he has always, through his own personality, brought to the mix, that human touch, indispensable in Africa. He has always shared his stories with partners, clients, backers, colleagues, whoever they might be. Slices of his own life throughout his many meetings, campfire chats at night in the bush or quite simply whilst drinking a beer in a local bar.

Few of us may say that we have been to that many villages in that many countries, supplying drinking water to that many people. His passion has led him to places many do not even know exist, in often difficult conditions.

But his will to succeed, to be of use, of long-lasting use, as well as making money so as to be able to do even more, has meant that this development aid has made a real circle, where all gain.

At 60 years of age, Jean-Michel has decided to finish off this beautiful adventure at the end of 2012. I can only thank him for that, I cannot blame him, and I now wish him all the best for this new life which is now starting. New horizons, new encounters which will continue to light up his life and let him continue to share his experience in order to help others.

For us all, a page is turning. But the adventure, his adventure, is still going on, as beautiful and as rich in emotions as it has always been. We are committed to walking in his footsteps. I will finish with this saying from Ralph Emerson, an American philosopher: what lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.

■ Thierry Barbotte

A FIRST IN THE GAMBIA

VERGNET HYDRO is increasing its range of on Fill Water Tanks and is carrying out its first project in the Gambia. With this new equipment, as part of the Livestock and Horticulture Development Project (LHDP) created by the Minister of Agriculture, VERGNET HYDRO has supplied 10 tanks of 75m³ capacity and 10 m high. These works are a first: the gain in height of the tank and the increase in load opens up new perspectives for the planners who would like to use robust, adjustable and easily installable equipment. The civil engineering, the setting up and the grid connection works have been carried out by the ASA company whose director is Mr Abdoulie BASS, our partner in the Gambia.



E'CHLO, THE SOLAR CHLORINATOR



PHOTALIA, the sister company of VERGNET HYDRO belonging to the water-solar pole of the VERGNET group is spreading out its first E'CHLO kits in sub-Saharan Africa. E'CHLO is a kit which autonomously makes chlorine from cooking salt and so it is particularly adapted to contexts where public health is an issue and where it is difficult to find chlorine in lumps or in bottles. Almost forty kits are now being used in buildings in Mali and the Democratic Republic of Congo as well as by NGOs in several countries to treat water and for hygiene.



2012

WE WERE THERE

→ WORLD WATER FORUM
MARSEILLE

→ AFRICA WATER WEEK
CAIRO

→ WORLD WATER WEEK
STOCKHOLM

NEW COLLEAGUES



> **Emmanuel THOMAS**, started his career in maintenance in 1989 then worked in the use and improvement of production tools in industry. Qualified with a maintenance degree (2 year French BTS) he joined Vergnet in August 2002 as assembly supervisor in the wind turbine production workshop. After ten years spent setting up the Vergnet two-blades windmills, he has joined the Ingré site as workshop, production and methods supervisor.



> **Thierry CARON**. Qualified from Audencia Nantes and company legal expert, Thierry CARON started his career at Price Waterhouse Coopers. After 3 years as an expatriate in Gabon, and then working in aeronautics in Toulouse, he joined VERGNET EOLIEN (wind turbines) in 2010 as Head of Administration and Finance, based in Ethiopia. Since February 2012, he has been in charge of all financial and legal aspects of VERGNET HYDRO and PHOTALIA.



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All the design, manufacture, distribution, installation and maintenance services of the hydraulic systems of VERGNET HYDRO are certified ISO 9001 version 2008