



*Promoting a new kind of human development
incorporating environmental protection*

NEWSLETTER NO.3 - JUNE 2006

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Editorial

This issue of the newsletter is an opportunity for us to celebrate with you the 18 months the foundation has been in existence. The first half of 2006 was highly instructive, from at least two points of view:

- *The large number of projects and partnership requests Fondation Ensemble received (more than 500 in the first six months of 2006), through their rich diversity, illustrate how apt and necessary it is to combine human development with environmental protection. There is strong demand; Fondation Ensemble is determined to respond on an individual case basis, in an appropriate manner and in compliance with the strict selection criteria that it has deliberately chosen.*
- *Regular monitoring and implementation of the projects, which is imperative, in our view, is enlightening. Over the past few months, the founders and the director of Fondation Ensemble have visited projects in India, Senegal, Peru and Morocco. These trips have all been useful, as a means of evaluating the results already obtained, but also sometimes to formulate.*

It is in the light of these diverse experiences that we are presenting to you today the latest projects that Fondation Ensemble has decided to become involved in.

The better to share our experience, you will also find information concerning the innovative techniques employed in the field by some of our partners.

In November 2006, new projects will be submitted to the ad hoc commission for selection.

Warm thanks to everyone who contributed to this newsletter; the next issue will be available in October.

"Chat is foam on water; action is a drop of gold"

Tibetan Proverb

Irène S. Almeras



My field trip to India

By Jacqueline Délia-Brémond, Vice-Chairman of Fondation Ensemble

"My field trip to India in March 2006 had a triple objective. During my first trip on behalf of Fondation Ensemble, last year, I met a number of the local voluntary organizations, some of which were conducting projects in line with the foundation's vocation. When I returned to Paris, contacts had been established, and several projects were selected by the Bureau in the course of 2005.

Returning to India one year later, I was obviously impatient to find out first hand how these projects had evolved. India is in fact the only country where Fondation Ensemble supports projects directly through local organizations, with no intermediary.

I therefore went to Udaipur to visit a specific project supported by the foundation that is part of the Devalt organization's "Clean" program, which is spread across 74 towns in India. This program develops both technical tools (conservatory for medicinal plants, ecological rainwater purifier installed in a school) and educational materials (paper recycling workshop, vermicomposting, in a technical school situated in an underprivileged district, which implements Gandhi's principles: basic education and the means to ensure subsistence through manual apprenticeship). The enthusiastic coordinator of this project applies all the theories taught to children to his own home. Even his parents have been converted!

In Delwara, 80 kilometres from Udaipur, I met members of the Seva Mandir organization and the local authorities, villagers and several women's groups from two villages concerned by the sanitation project funded by the foundation. The actual work has not started yet, only the preliminary studies have been carried out.

Back to Delhi, and from there to Haryana and Kherla, where the foundation supports a comprehensive project for a model ecological village. When I met Omita Paul last year, I was impressed with this remarkable woman. Omita holds an important position in the Indian Defence Ministry and still finds the time, with her daughter in law Gayatri, to run the Aravis Vikas organization which she set up several years ago. Here the results are tangible: two nicely renovated centres, one for men, with some weights as a kind of sports centre, the other for women, with a beauty care workshop; 50 toilets built; a rainwater collector; 600 metres of gutters, - and where the gutters are located, the streets and alleyways are clean -; several watering places, plantations of jatropa (bio diesel), etc. The population is receptive, the implementation clear, authoritative and pragmatic seem to be the best adjectives for this organization, which is totally in phase with the municipal authorities, who are highly satisfied with the work already done.

Later, I travelled south to Pondichery, in the province of Tamil Nadu, where the foundation supports a water management project with the Harvest organization headquartered at Auroville. The project has not yet started in terms of production as such, but the problems facing the villagers are evident. In one village, the water supply to a reservoir where women draw their daily ration of water is today polluted upstream by pesticides and fertilizers. They women tried to dig a hole on the bank to gather a trickle of water filtered by the sand. The yield is meagre and it takes innumerable journeys back and forth to fill a jar. There are constant disputes. In another village, an immense lake has gradually been overgrown by vegetation, and the villagers have squatted plots of land. Now they have to be convinced to leave, the polluted water cleaned up, and directed as necessary. The utility of the project is clear.

In Delhi, I also wanted to meet other voluntary organizations in order to establish contacts that could generate new projects. Around ten people travelled to Delhi to meet me, some from a great distance, like the representative of one organization who travelled by air for the first time. We would very much like to be able to help all of them, but unfortunately the proposals do not always take the foundation's criteria into account.

The third aspect of my trip was to find local experts who could help the foundation to better assess the projects submitted to us, perhaps take part in the actual projects and later evaluate the results. Here again, a number of promising contacts were made.

It is a cliché to say how endearing a country India is. In the 1980s, when V.S Naipaul wrote his famous trilogy, "India: a wounded civilisation", the state of the country seemed desperate to me. Today it is reviving, and some people say 'Why help the Indian people, they are so intelligent, they will manage on their own'. Intelligent they certainly are, and some of their number are also immensely wealthy. But a few kilometres from a busy international business centre like Bangalore, huge pockets of poverty remain. I think we must work for and with India, for we can be of use to a country that is quite clearly one of the forces of the future."

The latest projects selected by Fondation Ensemble

1. WATER AND SANITATION

Protection and sustainable management of water resources and soil of the catchment areas of the Ichu and Pisco rivers - Peru - VSF-CICDA

Ensure the protection and sustainable management of water resources (rehabilitation of irrigation systems, definition of usage rules) and soil (management of grazing land) in the irrigated systems and high altitude prairies of the agricultural communities and the catchment areas.

Restoration of the natural milieu and promotion of sustainable agricultural production systems in the Niayes region - Senegal - SOS Sahel

Implementation of management schemes for the strips of casuarinas planted to protect the vegetable cropping basins from sand silting, and promotion of a sustainable agricultural production system (irrigation, compost, reduction of fertilizers and pesticides.).

Program to support the women's federation KGFVA, to sustainably improve their living conditions and instigate local development in conjunction with the public authorities - India - ADER

Provide support to the women's federation KGFVA, to sustainably improve their living conditions, particularly through access to basic services (drinking water, collection/treatment of waste, lavatory building).

Improvement of the environment of families living in underprivileged areas in Antananarivo - Madagascar - ENDA Indian Ocean

Improvement of the environment of families through housing consolidation, the building of family latrines and the collection of household waste. Particular attention will be given to providing people with reduced mobility with access to the installations.

Alternative sanitation solutions for the most underprivileged - Peru - Water and Sanitation Program

Improve the health of the most underprivileged population and reduce the negative impact of current sanitation practices by providing access to sustainable basic sanitation services.

2. OTHER ACTIONS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Reinforcement of communities to protect biodiversity - Madagascar - Conservation International

Improve the knowledge of the local communities about their environment (forests, natural resources, species, etc.) and provide the communities with the means enabling them to implement actions to conserve biodiversity.

Integration of people in difficulty and WEEE- France - ENVIE

Diversify occupational integration possibilities by taking advantage of favourable changes in European legislation concerning waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE).

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Mediterranean Ecobehaviour in Languedoc Roussillon - France - Voile de Neptune

Promote practical eco-friendly behaviour in amateur and professional sailors to protect the Mediterranean.

"Fleurs de Cocagne" gardens - France - Réseau Cocagne

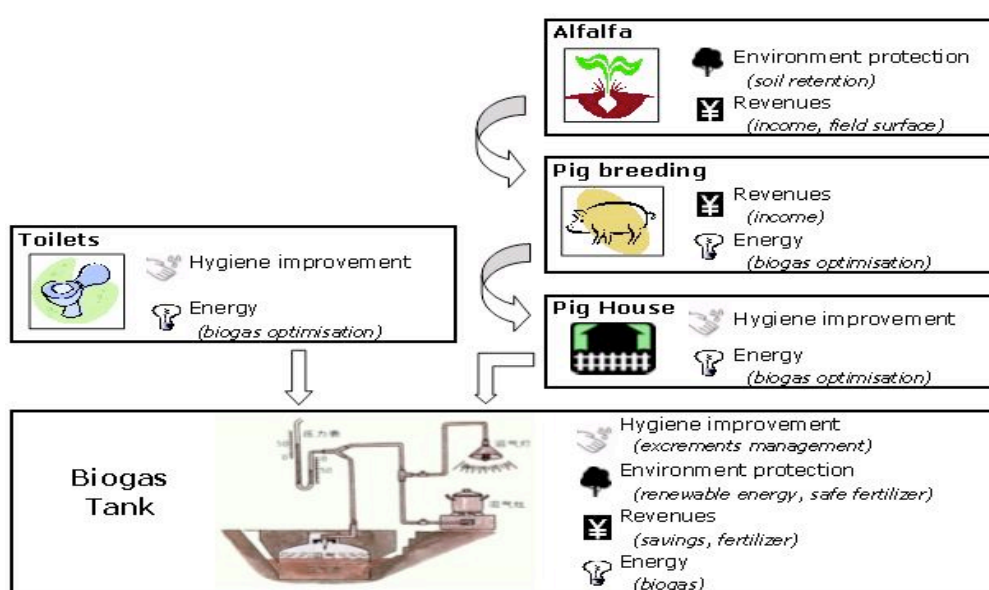
Provide men and especially women of all ages, in a precarious situation, with a structured opportunity through horticultural production (cut flowers and/or flowering plants) that conserves the environment.

Zoom on

Biogas in China

We would like to thank Christophe Barron and Jeanne Rouy for this article on the Biogas technique implemented by Initiative Développement in China - <http://www.id-ong.org/>

Biogas reservoirs work with human and animal waste, particularly pig litter. These waste products are collected in a digestion tank and produce methane gas. This system is a means of managing organic waste products, and making use of them in the form of methane gas for lighting and cooking (which considerably reduces the purchase of coal, which is highly pollutant, and at the same time reduces the collection of wood in areas that have already suffered forest clearing); the residue can also be used as a natural fertilizer. Lastly, it improves the hygiene of homes and courtyards.



The biogas tank is buried and latrines are built on the roof, for insulation purposes (anaerobic bacteria digest optimally at a constant temperature of 37°C).

The performance of the system is enhanced by:

- the presence of latrines connected directly to the digestion tank,
- the construction of animal pens (mainly for pigs) - on the roof of the biogas tank - not only improves sanitation, but also provides additional insulation, thereby improving gas production.

On a secondary level, it would be advantageous to grow animal food crops, as keeping animals in pens requires fodder. Alfalfa is recognized for its nutritious properties: it lives for more than ten years, and is cut for use. In addition, the roots can grow up to 4 metres in depth, and so if planted in 50cm strips along the edge of terraces, it can effectively consolidate them and prevent erosion.

A few figures

2 pigs and 5 people provide enough organic waste to supply the digestion tank.

Savings achieved amount to 100 to 200 euros a year

The gas produced provides 4 to 5 hours lighting and gas for cooking per day.

After a year, the fertilizer can be removed from the digestion tank; this fertilizer contains fewer nitrates.

The conservation of sideneck river turtles in Peru

Thanks go to Javier Noriega for sending us the presentation of the turtle conservation system implemented by Pronaturaleza in Peru- <http://www.pronaturaleza.org/>

The sideneck river turtle, *Podocnemis unifilis*, is a grey aquatic turtle of medium size that inhabits the lakes, rivers and streams of the Amazon basin. The sideneck river turtle lays its eggs on sand beaches formed along the river banks during the dry season when rainfall is less frequent, causing the water level of the rivers to decrease (between March and September). Many years ago, in the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve, the population of this species was abundant, however, the irrational harvesting of its eggs, given its importance and appreciation in the local diet, caused the numbers to decline.

ProNaturaleza's work with the management of the sideneck river turtle is developed in the following manner:

- Organization. This step includes the coordination between the authorities and the communal organizations, capacity building, and organising and assigning the work and tasks.
- Construction of artificial beaches. The members of the local management groups construct an artificial beach with wood and sand in a protected space of the settlement, where they will nest the eggs that were collected in the natural beaches.
- Egg recollection in natural beaches. Once the people identify the turtle nest in the beaches, they collect, select and transport them to the artificial beaches. Usually this occurs between July to September.
- Nesting of the eggs in the artificial beaches. The nesting and placing of the eggs in the artificial beaches attempts to replicate the manner in which it is done by the turtles in natural conditions.
- Monitoring. During the nesting of the eggs in the artificial beaches, usually between August to October, the nests need watching and controlling to prevent being eaten or harmed by other animals and insects such as ants for example that tend to eat the eggs.
- Marking the newborns. The sideneck river turtles are usually born around October and November. The newborns from the artificial nests are then collected measured and marked in order to monitor the management activity within the Reserve.
- Liberation of newborns. Once the newborns have been marked and registered they are taken out of the artificial nests to be liberated. This must be done either in the streams of lakes considered safe to the species, or in areas inhabited by a small number of predators.



Since the beginning of its work in the area, ProNaturaleza has liberated 500,000 newborn sideneck river turtles in different lakes and rivers of the Reserve.

Solar greenhouses in Ladakh

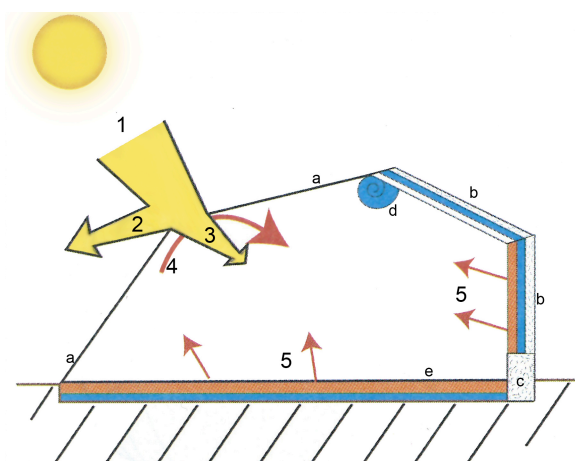
Thanks to Thomas Mansouri for this article on the concept of solar greenhouses developed by the NGO GERES in India-
<http://geres.free.fr/>

The climate is much more severe in Ladakh than in Europe; the temperature can descend as far as -30°C during winter nights. Despite this, the region enjoys almost 300 days sunshine a year, which constitutes a formidable source of free energy.

Combining local know-how and passive solar architecture techniques, GERES has developed a greenhouse suited to local conditions, which can be built from materials available on the spot (except for the transparent plastic cover). The south facing exposure, the angle of the transparent cover, the insulation of the walls (brick or earth, lined) and of the roof with straw - everything has been designed to store a maximum amount of solar energy during the day time and release it passively during the night, to avoid freezing, and withstand the abundant falls of snow. To these basic principles should be added aeration techniques (insulated windows, on the roof and on the west wall) to avoid overheating: when the sun shines during the day, temperatures in the greenhouse can be in excess of 30°C , even in the middle of winter, which is not good for the vegetables or for water consumption (always a rare commodity in winter).

Energy flows:

1. Rays of sunshine
2. Losses through reflection off the transparent cover
3. Rays of sunshine entering the greenhouse
4. Natural heat diffusion in the greenhouse, through convection.
5. Heat is released from the floor and walls, protecting the plants from freezing overnight.



Structure:

- a. Transparent plastic cover
- b. Opaque walls, with built-in insulation and ventilation
- c. Foundation
- d. Roof structure, main beam
- e. Growing area

A few examples

For families who are still largely dependent on agriculture, the produce from a greenhouse can allow them to increase their income by 50% (by selling their vegetables in winter, when scarcity sends the prices soaring).

In the coldest areas, the greenhouses are also used in winter for taking baths, working on crafts, or as a place for the elderly or convalescing people to relax.

The production of plants for planting in the fields, early in the season, is an excellent way of prolonging the summer - and in a location where the growing season in the fields lasts only four months, each week gained is important!

News

The next commission will take place in November 2006. The deadline for the submission of three-page projects is September 20, 2006.

Fondation Ensemble is particularly interested in proposals related to water (irrigation, sanitation, rainwater collection), the protection of biodiversity and renewable energy sources in the countries in "the South", as well as projects directed at the occupational integration of people in precarious situations and better use of natural resources in France.

Here is a reminder of the main countries in which Fondation Ensemble is active: Burkina Faso, Cambodia, China, France, India, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Peru, Rumania, Senegal and Ukraine.

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