

Volunteers from Arup and Bechtel Building Footbridge in Rwanda

Firms partner with Bridges to Prosperity to improve safety in rural village

Press Release

25 July 2016

A team of volunteers from Arup and Bechtel are spending two weeks of their summer building a pedestrian bridge in Rwanda. The new span will provide safe, year-round access to schools, markets, and health care facilities for the 12,000 residents of Kukibuye. In the last year, two people were killed and seven were injured while walking across the logs that currently cross the Mukungwa River near the northwestern Rwandan village.

The team of ten engineers drawn from Arup and Bechtel have partnered with Bridges to Prosperity, a U.S. nonprofit that specialises in designing and building footbridges to improve the lives of isolated rural communities. Arup and Bechtel Group Foundation contributed £45,000 to cover the cost of materials and labour, while individual team members carried out their own fundraising to contribute an additional £6,000 to the effort.

The people of Kukibuye have already prepared the foundations for the 42-meter suspension bridge in advance of the construction phase, which runs from July 18 to 31. The team will be working in close collaboration with the community throughout construction to share knowledge on building safe, efficient, and locally appropriate footbridges.

Phil Borowiec, Arup engineer and Bridges to Prosperity trustee, said, “Arup have worked with Bridges to Prosperity for the last 5 years to help build these essential links that reconnect communities and provide safe passage for so many people. It’s a tremendously rewarding experience working with the local community and seeing

first-hand the significant positive impact the bridge makes to their daily lives. We're really pleased to partner with Bechtel this year, and we look forward to continuing our great work together."

"Bechtel volunteers bring extensive experience and passion to this project for the citizens of Kukibuye. Our employee volunteers have partnered with Engineers Without Borders to help improve the lives of local citizens on projects in nine countries—bringing needed infrastructure to thousands of people. We are delighted to engage in this first assignment with Bridges to Prosperity and to team with Arup in this important work that will have a lasting impact on the village," said Charlene Wheelless, principal vice president and manager, global corporate affairs, Bechtel.