



Energy Assistance NEWSLETTER

N°17

June 2007

Repairing the Electrical System at Djuma Hospital (DR Congo)

CONTENT

Repairing the Electrical System at Djuma Hospital	1
Securing the electricity supply at Mwaro hospital	4
Echos from the GM and the BMs	5
Energy Assistance at the Brussels 20 km	6
2nd Forum of the volunteers, Brussels	7
Latest of Goma	8

Michel Bourguignon's Legacy

When Michel Bourguignon and Jean-Benoit Debaisieux carried out their reconnaissance mission to Kikwit hospital (approx. 400 km to the east of Kinshasa),



in June/July 2006, accompanied by Jan Deneyer, MSV (*Médecins sans Vacances*), they were asked by the NGO "Memisa", to make a visit to assess the hospital at Djuma, a city located some 150 km north of Kikwit. They had been very well received there and had got to know Dr. Timothée Kakwata, who was obviously a reliable, motivated and effective individual. So they returned to Belgium with the firm intention of suggesting that Energy Assistance do something for this hospital, and should at once send volunteers to carry out the project.

Djuma is an important urban area, but hard to get to. After arriving at Kikwit (by plane), you still have to travel along tracks – in poor condition - for 5 to 6 hours before reaching Djuma. The central hospital, which has 269 beds, is the

general hospital serving an area with approximately 150,000 inhabitants. Its services include gynaecology, pediatrics, internal medicine and general surgery. There are also an operating theatre, a laboratory, a pharmacy and an X-Ray machine. The city is not connected to the electricity grid, but the hospital has a relatively new 45 kW power

generating unit, which only works a few hours per week because the fuel is very expensive. Unfortunately, the distribution network on site at the hospital was installed without regard to common sense or even the most elementary safety. It was there that help from the specialists at EA was clearly needed.

Once the project had been approved, Michel Bourguignon set to work to gather all the equipment necessary for the new mission. He managed things so well that he was able to find nearly everything in Electrabel's salvaged equipment stored at

Vilvoorde. Everything was assembled at Fabricom-GTI's stores at Basècles. Michel had arranged for the crates to be loaded at Zeebrugge on board the "Godetia", a Belgian Navy vessel, conveyed free to Matadi, cleared through Customs thanks to the good offices of the Order of Malta, and then taken on by Memisa to Djuma.

Unfortunately, our friend Michel never saw the completion of this project, which was so dear to his heart. He was suddenly taken from us, in Christmas 2006, struck down by a heart attack. But his labour was not in vain, because, on hearing of his death, one of his colleagues from Net Management Tournai, Guy Vansaingèle, contacted Jean-Benoit and suggested that he should carry out with him the

astery at Mambré (western suburbs), where they installed two emergency power supply units to secure the supply to important equipment such as computers, the dispensary refrigerator and emergency lighting. They also provided and connected a voltage stabiliser for our friends at Memisa, where they lodged while in Kinshasa. Meanwhile, the equipment for Djuma, that they had sorted and checked on arrival, went on by road. They flew to Kikwit, the aerodrome nearest to Djuma.

But, at the end of the rainy season, the journey from Kikwit to Djuma is no picnic, even in a cross-country jeep. One is often held up by trees fallen across the road, which have to be cut through with a machete; or one has to

was a ferry. This turned out to be an old dugout, worthy of the adventures of Tintin in the Congo, on which, in darkest of equatorial nights, they managed to reach the other bank. Then they had to drag their luggage another 2 km or so to reach the hospital. When, on their return, they saw the state of the dugout on which they had arrived in full daylight, they had some retrospective cold sweats about it.

Effective support from local workers

They got the mission underway properly the following day. Fortunately, expecting that they would only have a short time to do all the work planned, they had asked in advance for the hospital to provide them with a team of twelve good workers and had already sent them the plans of the trenches to be dug in order to carry out external wiring. And, to the great satisfaction of our two heroes, the team were there ready and waiting for them, with the trenches already dug.

The aim of the project was to restore the whole electrical system at the hospital, starting with the large 45 kW generator, which had to be connected to a new switchboard. For two of them to do that in one week would have been quite impossible. But, by careful organisation of the wiring work using two teams of six men, and by making the connections themselves, Guy and Jean-Benoit made a success of this challenge. They also installed a small independent circuit to supply the operating theatre, the radio and data processing, using a small 6 kVA generator, retrieved from



Guy (left) and Jean-Benoît (right) with their team

mission that Michel had prepared so well. And so our two volunteers flew to Kinshasa, just as Michel had planned, on February 26 this year.

Obstacle course to Djuma

Having arrived, they took advantage of their journey to Kinshasa to make a small detour to the Benedictine mon-

astery at Mambré (western suburbs), where they installed two emergency power supply units to secure the supply to important equipment such as computers, the dispensary refrigerator and emergency lighting. They also provided and connected a voltage stabiliser for our friends at Memisa, where they lodged while in Kinshasa. Meanwhile, the equipment for Djuma, that they had sorted and checked on arrival, went on by road. They flew to Kikwit, the aerodrome nearest to Djuma.

But, at the end of the rainy season, the journey from Kikwit to Djuma is no picnic, even in a cross-country jeep. One is often held up by trees fallen across the road, which have to be cut through with a machete; or one has to

dig into the embankment with a spade to get past another vehicle or simply to avoid a hole – so one can't expect to arrive at one's destination at the expected hour! Such were the problems, that our two brave volunteers only arrived at the banks of the tumultuous River Kwilu opposite Djuma around 11 in the evening. And, at this hour, the only hope of getting across



Bon appétit !

Securing the electricity supply at Mwaro hospital (*Burundi*)

Marc's and Patrick's Tour of the Great Lakes

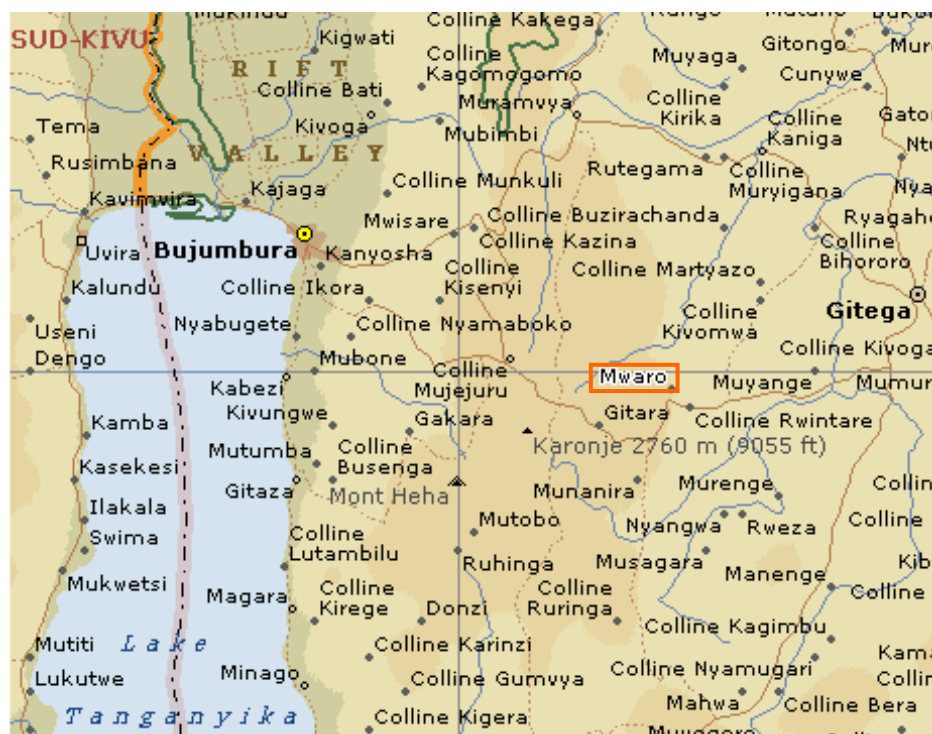
Marc Van Gelder and Patrick Pirson broke all records for 'good value' in Energy Assistance voluntary missions when they finished the "Mwaro" project at the beginning of February this year.

Since the country is so small, it seemed logical first of all to ask them to come and take another look at the state of the installations which they themselves had built in Bururi and Ruyigi in 2006. And then, as it was no great detour, it was suggested they might like to cast their eyes over the school at Kiryama, where a new project is planned .

attending to in the equipment we had installed there in 2006.

But if you make the return journey between Kigali and Bujumbura by road, you in any case pass very close to the Congolese border. From there it's only a small diversion via Walungu to South Kivu, which gave us the chance to examine more closely a new request for assistance recently received from the head doctor of the local hospital.

So in a good couple of weeks of travelling, they visited no fewer than eight sites of past, present or future projects. That of course meant a few hundred kilometres of various roads and tracks, a great deal of exhaustion as well as crossing five border posts,



And then, since the easiest way of getting to Burundi is to take a direct flight from Brussels to Kigali, the capital of neighbouring Rwanda, why not pay another visit to Kigali (Aprohade), Cyangugu and Kabgayi, where we'd been told about some minor technical problems that needed

with all the difficulty and bother that can involve in the middle of central Africa.

Problems as varied as unpredictable...

But for the moment we will concentrate on the Kibumbu hospital project



the data-processing room. These important buildings will now be easily served and at lower cost, when the main generator is not working.

But all this fine work was only the first stage. Our two friends listened to the wishes of the hospital personnel and returned with new, precise requests for the second phase of improvement. No doubt this will one day be the subject of another article in the Energy Assistance Newsletter.

Before returning to Kinshasa and catching their plane for Brussels, Guy and Jean-Benoit made an additional stop at the Yasa-Bonga hospital, where they had been asked to make a preliminary assessment of the situation. There too, Energy Assistance will be able to provide useful assistance in coming months and to help a Belgian lady doctor, who has devoted herself to the hospital for decades, and so contribute in a small way to improving the lot of some particularly underprivileged people.

Thanks again to Jean-Benoit, for whom it was his second mission, and to Guy, for whom it was a first experience. What a fine team – and how effective! The outcome of their trip is impressive and promises many more wonderful exploits!

Gilles de Roubaix
Project Manager



Patrick (left) and Marc (right) with the head doctor of Walungu

in Mwaro, which was the principal goal of their mission. It is a hospital of 250 beds, which is effectively the general hospital for the province of Mwaro. Its renovation was taken in hand by the Belgian NGO "Ampsacode" (The Medical Psycho-Sociological Alliance with Developing Continents), which called upon Energy Assistance to help with the electrical side of the project.

The hospital is fortunately connected to the local electricity grid, but this is not very reliable. There are daily power cuts, but fortunately they do not last too long. The hospital recently received a 15 kVA emergency generator, which is enough to keep it supplied during a cut, but for all that, things aren't exactly rosy. A good part of the installation had to be entirely rebuilt, and it was absolutely essential to secure the continuous supply to the operating theatre and the emergency unit, while frequent cuts in the supply from the grid were taking place.

As it is often the case in this kind of mission, the problems which our volunteers had to face were as varied as they were unpredictable.

First of all, although the equipment which had been expedited from Belgium had arrived at Bujumbura air-

port one month earlier, it had still not been cleared through Customs, and there was nothing to indicate that this was going to happen quickly. It required a great deal of persistence, argument, diplomacy and self-control on the part of Marc and Patrick, who, after a few days of ceaseless to-ing and fro-ing, succeeded in recovering

that big beautiful case which they had filled with equipment at our store at Vilvorde, a few days before Christmas.

When they got to Mwaro, they found few if any representatives of the hospital there: Eric, the head doctor, was completely overwhelmed with work, as he was the only doctor in the hospital; and Evariste, a highly motivated and helpful maintenance technician, but whose tools consisted of one old pair of universal pliers and a screwdriver which looked more like a chisel. Marc and Patrick felt so sorry for him that on leaving they made him a gift of a superb tool chest which they had brought with them.

The technical room (generator and control panel), where they were going to have a lot of work to do, was unimaginably dirty, seeing as the exhaust fumes from the generator were pumped out into the same room! Our two friends had the foresight, as a precaution for the work to be done there, to bring with them disposable overalls, which covered them from head to foot. Their first task was to make a thorough job of cleaning and removing all the soot and dirty oil that had



accumulated over the years.

At the end of the day some happiness and safety

It was only once they had finished this that they could install the new TGBT at the hospital, including a superb network-generator switch, which would save Evariste having to change the connections every day by hand, by covering the ends of the wires in bits of old sticking plaster.

They then secured the power supply to the operating theatre and the emergency unit by installing two blocks of inverters and batteries. The two switchboards were also renovated. So now when there is a cut in the supply from the grid, the inverters take over immediately, the surgeon's work is not interrupted, and Evariste has a good half hour to start the emergency power unit.

On leaving Mwaro after several days of intensive work, Marc and Patrick could rightly be proud of themselves.

Once more, through their skill and devotion to the task, they had in the middle of Africa brought a small degree of happiness and safety to people who face immeasurable difficulties 365 days a year.

Gilles de Roubaix
Project Manager



Patrick (left) and Marc at work

ECHOS FROM THE GM AND THE BMs

Statutory appointments

The General Meeting took note of the death of our regretted colleague Michel Bourguignon, and of the resignations submitted by Cédric Osterrieth and Pierre Swartenbroekx.

The following persons were elected or re-elected as Directors for a three years' term of office: Wim Alen, Eric Bassac, Jean-Claude Clermont, François de Stoop, Claude Gastout, Jean-Louis Pairon, Roland Rosseel, Thierry Tuxen. As a result the number of Directors remains unchanged (at 18).

The Bureau's composition is as follows: Jean Bouckaert (Chairman), Jean-Pierre Germeau (Deputy Chairman), Eric Vander Donckt (Treasurer), Wim Alen (Deputy Treasurer), François Graux (Secretary), Roland Rosseel (Deputy Secretary).

Roland Rosseel

Approval of new projects

Country	Name	Description
Mali	Tanami – Fallani – Balan Massala	Electricity supply (PV) for 3 health centres
Burkina Faso	Barsalogo	Training of local staff for maintenance of PV systems – Consultancy for distribution network
DR Congo	Baré	Electricity supply (PV) for health centre

Energy Assistance at the Brussels 20 km

A sports and humanitarian challenge

Energy Assistance took the initiative to enter for the Brussels 20 km a team of runners issued from the various Belgian entities of the Suez group. Sponsored by Emmanuel van Innis (Group Executive Vice-President in charge of Human Resources), the objectives of this project included :

- forming an as formidable as possible team in order to support E.A.,
- taking the opportunity of this event to increase our association's visibility,
- having each participant sponsored by his/her colleagues, friends or family, in the spirit of the « sponsored runs », so that each kilometre achieved generates a financial benefit for E.A.,
- taking on a sports and humanitarian challenge, and surpassing oneself whilst enjoying a leisure activity with colleagues.

The number of entries surpassed all expectations : 215 enthusiast sportsmen and women met on Sunday 27th of May 2007 to run the Brussels 20 km under the Energy Assistance banner.

They gathered at the Institut Saint Stanislas, situated some 300m from the starting line, where we were offered the

use of the gym and the showers. The orange tee-shirts that we wore, specially produced by Electrabel for this event, made sure that we didn't go unnoticed. Even in the middle of 28,000 runners, the Energy Assistance runners could be picked out easily.

Our team finished 42nd out of 568, quite a performance for a rookie team.

The participants' objectives were diverse. The confirmed athletes focused on the time, the amateurs on getting to the finish within a reasonable time whilst some turned the 20 km into a quick march, but all had honouring their « sponsor sheet » at heart.

The Suez group was committed to donate an amount per km effectively run for each member of personnel who took part in the Brussels 20 km. This noble gesture produced an amount of € 15.000. Other companies of the group were also committed to supporting their sports people.

The final results of the sponsorship by their families and friends are not yet known, but what is sure is that some of the participants, besides their running, also proved their skills in finding sponsors. Thanks to everyone.

After this unforgettable event all were unanimous: « *count me in for 2008* »! So, be there on May 25th, 2008. And no excuses, please, you have 12 months to practise.

Xavier Desmarets



2nd FORUM OF THE VOLUNTEERS, BRUSSELS

Sharing of experiences

Like last year around this time, some sixty EA members and volunteers gathered on April 21st in the Forum room of Tractebel Engineering in order to share their field experiences. There were many new faces, and especially young ones, interested in adding a humanitarian dimension to their professional life.

Through our volunteers' presentations we lived the scores of obstacles that had to be overcome or circumvented to complete a mission successfully, for example when clearing equipment through customs, travel locally, cross borders, etc. Most of the time the obstacles are man made as they originate from indifference or greed. Thankfully the missions are also rich in contacts with totally dedicated people who don't hesitate to sacrifice themselves for the project, or simply with the local population who spontaneously express their joy and gratitude for the work accomplished and who are always proud to lend a helping hand.

However, in certain cases the difficulties are mainly technological, and even a project that is « mini » by its installed capacity can prove « maxi » by the extent of the studies necessary (a small dam is still a dam) and by the amount of coordination required between the contractors, the power utility, the authorities, without forgetting the population as it is essential to also involve them in the project from the very start.

Also, training of the local people to perform the maintenance, one of the essential aspects of our missions, was highlighted again as being fundamental to securing the continuity of the projects. To be efficient the training must be based on teaching and train-

ing aids that are suitable for people whose technical knowledge can be very poor.

Fellow NGOs give their account

A novelty this year : two NGOs that we encountered along the roads of humanitarian action were invited to speak: MSV and Aquadev.

MSV (Médecins Sans Vacances) is a regular partner in our missions in Africa concerning hospitals and dispensaries. This organisation shares a number of our values : not-for-profit volunteers who give up (part of) their holidays, devoting it to the mission, putting focus on training and on ensuring the reliability of the local parties involved, etc. Founded in 1981, MSV has been going much longer than EA and blazed a few trails that we would do well to follow : recurrent missions that permit to follow up the actions that were undertaken, specialisation, multidisciplinary teams. Note that, meanwhile, MSV has become an officially recognized NGO and that the subsidies granted by the Belgian Cooperation Agency allowed it to multiply the number of its missions.

Aquadev, as you can't guess from its name, is an NGO composed of micro-finance consultants who operate mainly in Africa. Its mission is to provide support to the local microfinance institutions (MFIs) regarding financial management and techniques. The MFIs' role can be crucial in ensuring the continuity of the development projects (including as concerns renewable sources of energy) by permitting the populations to capitalise on and multiply the resources. No doubt this presentation will have opened new horizons to our project managers.

Creating awareness amongst management

During the exchanges that animated the Round Table that closed the day, one suggestion recurred forcefully : the necessity to increase EA communication to the management of the businesses and especially to their « middle management » so as to demonstrate the merits of EA action as part of their social responsibility. It would be ideal if the personal commitment of our volunteers (bearing in mind they give up their free time) could not only be recognised, but even be facilitated by their hierarchy and be perceived as a positive element in their professional growth.

Roland Rosseel



Latest from Goma

Completion of deliveries to Vilvoorde and setting up of the team

Practically all the equipment has now been delivered and is stored in the E.A. warehouse at Vilvoorde. Shipment by container is planned in July.

The call for volunteers to construct the MV line was successful and the construction team will be determined shortly.

Claude Gastout
Project Manager



Workplace at Goma (Photo : Kate Holt)

ENERGY ASSISTANCE needs its **MEMBERS'** support.

For Belgium The annual membership fee is **€ 20** for full members and **€ 5** for associated members. (Please send your contribution to our bank account number ING **310-1675876-93** - IBAN: BE98 3101 6758 7693 - BIC: BBRUBEBB).

IMPORTANT : In the message with your payment, please mention the amount being paid for membership (€ 20 or € 5) and/or the amount of the donation. The donation is tax-deductible and you will receive a tax certificate for any donation of **€ 30** or more. The membership form can be downloaded from the site (<http://www.energy-assistance.be>) or can be obtained from the association.

For France, Every one who would like to join EAF can do so by sending a subscription of **€20** by cheque made out to **ENERGY ASSISTANCE FRANCE** at 1, Place des Degrés, 92059 Paris La Défense. Please let us have your address details so that we can send you a tax receipt (all donations and subscriptions to EAF are tax deductible in France up to 60%).

Thank you in advance.

REMINDER: Please send any changes in your personal data (address, telephone number, e-mail) to the **ENERGY ASSISTANCE** secretariat.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE IS LOOKING FOR PROJECT COORDINATORS

To deal with the increasing number of projects being submitted to EA, we are looking for volunteers to join the Project Committee which studies, develops and follows up the implementation of the projects we approve.

Interested? Then please apply to J.P. Germeau
(jp.germeau@skynet.be)



Address

BELGIUM

ENERGY ASSISTANCE asbl
Rue de la Pépinière 20
B-1000 BRUXELLES

Persons to contact :
Sabine Baeten

☎ +32 2 510 74 38

Michel de Ligne

☎ +32 2 510 74 18

Xavier Desmarests

☎ +32 2 510 72 41

☎ +32 2 510 21 82

E-mail:

contact@energy-assistance.be

FRANCE

ENERGY ASSISTANCE France
1, Place des Degrés -
F-92059 - PARIS LA DEFENSE

☎ +33 1 41 20 13 40

E-mail: energy-assistance-france@suez-services.com

Internet :

www.energy-assistance.be

Layout :

T. Moens de Hase, G. Dumont

Translation : F. Behaegel,
N. Walker, R. Rosseel, P. Maes,
X. Desmarests

Responsible editor:

J. Bouckaert

The ENERGY ASSISTANCE NEWSLETTER is written and composed by the Energy Assistance bureau and communication committee. The authors are responsible for the articles published.