

## WSP, B2P co-build third footbridge in Rwanda

Volunteers from WSP recently worked with the team from Bridges to Prosperity (B2P) on the ground in Rwanda to build the Kazo Suspended Footbridge situated over the Sebeya River within the Rutsiro municipality. It is the third suspended footbridge the teams have co-built in Rwandan communities this year.



The official opening of the footbridge was marked with an inauguration ceremony attended by members of the Rutsiro municipality, the teams from B2P and WSP, and community members – to celebrate the greater access to social services and economic opportunities that this bridge makes possible for the residents of the Kazo-Gashihe communities.

### Agricultural communities

Residents of the Kazo-Gashihe communities are engaged in agricultural commerce, growing beans, potatoes, peas and maize to provide for their families. Of the 3,375 community members who will be directly affected by the construction of a footbridge, there are 453 children and about 1,125 women of child-bearing age.

Before the Kazo Suspended Footbridge was built, the main method of pedestrian transit across the Sebeya River included the use of an unstable timber bridge, which could take people up to 2-3 hours to travel from their homes to the necessary community amenities. Additionally, crossing the Sebeya River over a timber bridge posed many potential personal risks for these communities, due to flooding 180-days of the year and that when the river floods, timber crossings are destroyed and access to critical resources is cut off.

“This would mean that the residents wouldn’t be able to access Mahoko market centre to trade and sell, and students wouldn’t be able to access Kazo Secondary School. Access to the Terimbere Health Centre would also be blocked off by the flooded river – and communities from both sides wouldn’t be able to cross the river to access farms,” says Stephanie May, B2P Rwanda programme manager. “This reality demonstrates the very real difference that the Kazo Suspended Footbridge has made and will continue to make as it provides safe, year-round access for the residents of these communities.”

Bridges to Prosperity (B2P) is a US-based non-profit organisation that partners with local communities, partners and foundations to build footbridges that connect residents to education, healthcare and economic opportunities. Since its establishment, B2P have built over 300 footbridges in 21 countries, serving over one million community members throughout the world.



## **B2P, WSP partnership**

The partnership between B2P and WSP has grown over the past few years and this year B2P and WSP embarked on a joint mission to build three footbridges within well deserving isolated communities across Rwanda. The Kazo Suspended Footbridge, which was completed in August, follows the steps of the WSP USA team who helped build the Kabere Suspended Bridge in May and the Louis Berger team who worked on the Karambi Suspended Bridge in June.

A team of 10 WSP colleagues from the United Kingdom, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand and The Philippines spent two weeks on the ground in Rwanda, collaborating with B2P and residents of the Kazo-Gashihe communities to build the 58-metre-long Kazo Suspended Footbridge.

Speaking on behalf of WSP, African director of transport and infrastructure Patrick Riley, said: “We are very proud of the participation by our global team in this project. And I am humbled by the contribution that this footbridge will make to the lives of the residents of these communities, thereby empowering the people to conduct their trade more fluidly in support of inclusive growth - that their communities may thrive well into the future!”

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>