



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MERU NG'UURU GAKIRWE WATER PROJECT

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The story of a bridge

The story starts in 1984 when in the area there was a great drought and some relief food was provided by the CRS (Catholic Relief Services). The only bridge on the river Kitheno between Mitunguu and Kanyakine broke down while one lorry carrying a load of supplies was crossing the bridge and someone died in the accident. For ten years there was no way between Mitunguu and Kanyakine and the bridge was rebuilt only in 1994.



When the project of Ng'uuru Gakirwe started in 1988 the need of bridge became immediately clear and the plan given to the Contractors included a pedestrian bridge over the intake weir. The steel structure of the bridge was prepared by the now famous Don Bosco Technical School of Embu, under the direction of Bro. Alfonso. It was eleven meters long and 1.2 m. wide, designed to stand 400 kg per sq.m. The bridge was carried on a lorry from Embu and placed on its pillars across the river by the Contractors Putton Ltd. The main purpose of the bridge was for team of the water project but soon it became evident that the bridge was the only means of transit for all the public to and from Mitunguu. Because of a conflict between the private use of the camp and the public use it was then decided that when finance became available a new bridge would be built for the public.



the 3 bridges were destroyed by the flood.

In the year 2000 2 new bridges were built for the public use up-river from the intake across the island. The work was done entirely by the Development & Maintenance team, which is made of ex Don Bosco students. The cost of about two hundred thousand Ksh. had been provided by the European Union thru' CTM. It all went well until one night during the heavy rains of april 2003 all

In 2004 the D&M team managed to rebuild all the 3 damaged bridges, placing them on higher pillars by raising the supporting pillars up to 3 meters from river level. But all that work proved again in vain because one night at the end of



April 2007 all 3 bridges were swept away. In fact the longest bridge literally disappeared in the falls down below the camp and a message was relayed to me that the evil spirits had carried away the bridge. Since then camp staff and the public had to revert to cross on a temporary swinging wooden bridge from where more than one person including a motorcycle rider had fallen on the river.

Finally in 2010 our friends from Bari, inspired by Dr. Achille Sigliuzzo and Eng. Gianni Russo came to our rescue by planning and obtaining the finance from the University of Bari Aldo Moro, for this new bridge, which today is officially opened to camp personnel and the public. In building the bridge below the intake weir the engineers made to serve both the public and private use and hope that it will not be easily carried away, neither by the water nor by the evil spirits.

One span of the new bridge is 18 meters and the other 8.4 m. The total cost has been in excess of 2 million Ksh.

Funded by Regione Puglia and Università di Bari (Italy) and about 300 thousand Ksh. by the Diocese of Meru.

All the steel parts of the bridge were delivered by lorry from Don Bosco Embu last December. This year in January and February the D&M team had to build the supporting pillars then the actual work of assembly and erection of the bridge was completed during the month of March. The team of 20 managed to do put across the river this heavy structure. A great achievement if we consider it was done without the use of any machinery, and we have to congratulate them.



We take this opportunity to ask the two representative from Bari, Eng. Gianni Russo and Prof. Lorenzo Vecchetti to convey to Dr. Achille Sigliuzzo and to all our friends of Regione Puglia and Bari our sincere thanks. May this great example of cooperation inspire more projects like this not with words but concrete action.

Mab 17 april 2012