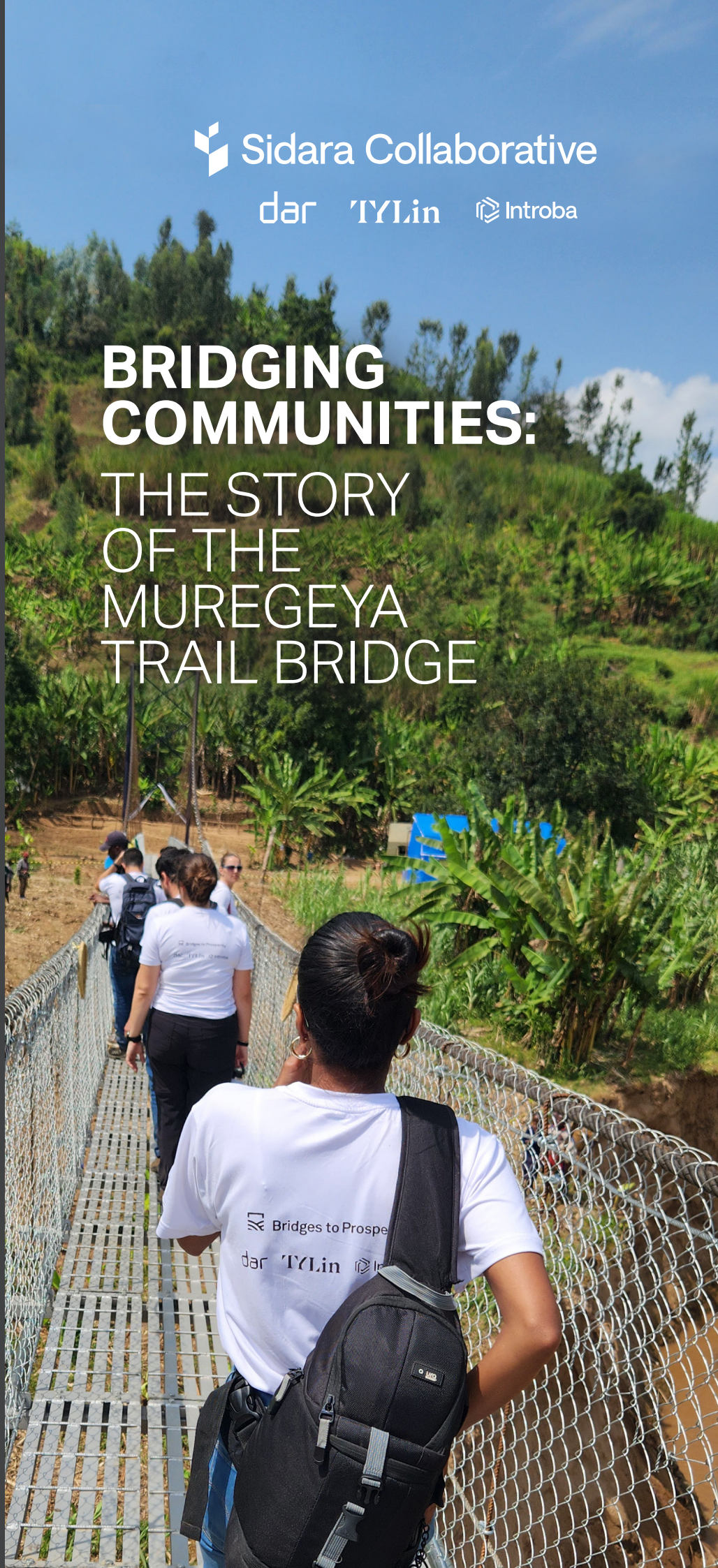


2024



dar TYLin Introba

BRIDGING COMMUNITIES: THE STORY OF THE MUREGEYA TRAIL BRIDGE



Introduction



In Rwanda, where the Muregeya River cuts through the landscape, a new symbol of hope and connection now stands tall: the Muregeya Trail Bridge. Built in May 2024 through a collaboration between Dar, its sister Sidara companies TYLin and Introba, and Bridges to Prosperity (B2P), this 100-meter hybrid suspension bridge spans across the Muregeya River in the municipality of Karongi.

The Muregeya River, notorious for its frequent floods, has long been a formidable barrier, disrupting lives and opportunities for Rwanda's Rubengera communities. Children couldn't reach schools, businesses faced disruptions, and healthcare facilities became inaccessible. Recognizing these challenges, our companies joined hands with B2P to make a difference.

Over two weeks of concerted effort, we transformed this challenge into an opportunity. The new Muregeya Bridge will serve up to 2,500 people, providing them with safe, year-round access to essential infrastructure and vital destinations on both sides of the river.

Addressing a critical need

During the dry season, crossing the river might seem feasible, but sudden floods from distant rains turn it into a life-threatening obstacle. And when the rains pour, the river becomes an impassable barrier, cutting off communities from education, commerce, and vital services.

The Muregeya Trail Bridge isn't just about connecting two points; it's about bridging the gap between isolation and opportunity. By providing a safe and reliable passage regardless of the season, it ensures that children can attend school, businesses can thrive, and healthcare remains accessible.

Meet the Team



The project team was carefully selected from over 100 experts and specialists – from across the three Sidara companies, TYLin, Dar, and Introba – who enthusiastically volunteered to support communities in Rwanda and make a positive impact. After a careful and thorough evaluation, the final team was comprised of 10 remarkable specialists:

Alexandre Kayitare | Communications Lead

Senior Coordinator | Dar | Kigali, Rwanda

Alexandre, a journalism and communication graduate from the National University of Rwanda, is a Senior Administration Coordinator at Dar, where he facilitates and coordinates projects.

Ghassan Issa | Construction Lead

Construction Manager | Dar | Beirut, Lebanon

Ghassan, an architect based in Beirut, is a Construction Project Manager at Dar, specializing in international sports facilities.

Karim Ali | Safety Lead

Engineer | Dar | Cairo, Egypt

Karim Ali is a civil engineer at Dar with nearly five years of experience across diverse construction projects. He is also pursuing a master's degree with a focus on tunnel construction.

Myriam Zoghby | Team Building Lead

Structures Engineer | Dar | Beirut, Lebanon

Myriam is a structural engineer at Dar and has diverse experience in community engagement and leadership roles, making her a dynamic force for fostering unity and building bridges.

Mary Anne Speidel | Project Lead

Senior Project Manager | Introba | Los Angeles, CA

Mary Anne is a Project Manager at Introba with 16 years of experience in the design and construction industry and a Master of Science in Building Construction Management from Purdue University.

Nikolette Mazzuola | Logistics Lead

Engineer | TYLin | San Diego, CA

Nikolette Mazzuola is an Assistant Transportation Engineer with nearly four years of experience at TYLin, focusing on highway and local road design.



Alekhya Dontham | Communications Lead

Senior Commercial Specialist | TYLin | New York, NY

Alekhya Dontham is a Commercial Manager with a Master of Science in Engineering & Operations Management from the University of Dayton and over three years of experience in the IT and construction industries.

Carlos Moscoso del Prado Gredilla | Construction Lead

Civil Structural Engineer | TYLin | Madrid, Spain

Carlos is a civil engineer specializing in bridge rehabilitation. He has a Master of Science in Steel Structures from Imperial College and nine years of experience in national and international projects.

Issah Madugu | Safety Lead

Engineer | TYLin | New York, NY

Issah Madugu is a New York-based structural engineer with experience in both new and existing building projects. Originally from Ghana, he co-founded the first African Development Conference at Cornell University.

Dahria Uwamahoro | Community Engagement Lead

Civil Engineer | TYLin | Chicago, IL

Dahria is a civil engineer with seven years of experience in the water and wastewater industry. She holds a Master of Engineering in Civil Engineering with a focus on Water Resources and Engineering Project Management from the University of Florida.



Overcoming Challenges

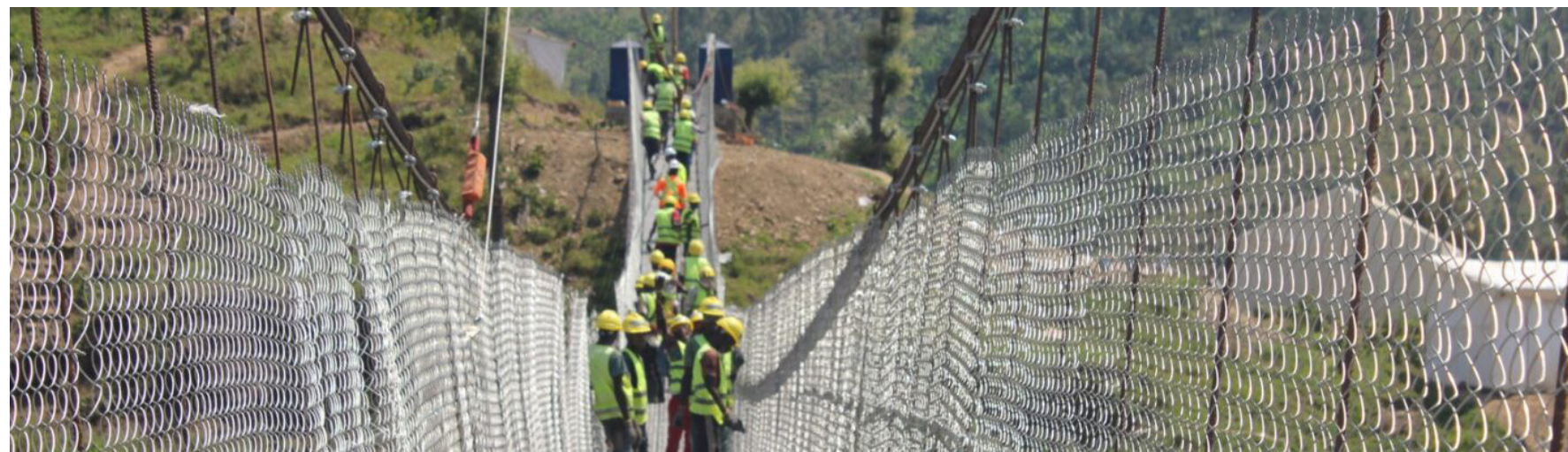
A difficult terrain, limited tools and resources, and language barriers presented significant challenges for the team. However, through resilience and collaboration, they overcame these obstacles and successfully completed the bridge within the project timeframe.

Logistics and coordination

Building the entire bridge without a power supply on site was particularly challenging, as the team relied solely on manpower and simple tools for tasks like pulling cables and winching. This work demanded precision, strength, and creativity. Additionally, transportation posed its own difficulties, with team members having to hike to the site, further testing their endurance and resourcefulness.

Physical challenges

Living together in a common house in a remote area with limited connectivity and water sources posed significant physical challenges. The team managed with daily bucket showers and early wake-up calls at 5 a.m. to hike 25 minutes up and down the valley to reach the site. The steep downhill path to the construction site was especially tough after long days working in the heat, sun, and humidity. On-site work involved climbing scaffolds, carrying materials, and pulling cables, which was strenuous but ultimately rewarding as the team pushed through these difficulties to achieve their final goal.



”

We are so different, yet so much the same.



Working with a diverse team presented some challenges but also opportunities for collaboration, connection and learning. For some team members, it was their first time collaborating directly with colleagues from Sidara.

Each member coming from different countries, backgrounds, and companies, everyone brought their own identity and culture to the project.

The team also navigated differing measurement systems, with some using imperial, while others used metric.

Through this collaboration, team members learned about each other's cultures as well as expertise, from bridges and transportation to renovation and assessment.

The challenges extended to language barriers with the local volunteer team from the community. However, the volunteers managed to learn key terms to communicate effectively with the locals, highlighting the power of collaboration and connection in overcoming challenges together.

Community Engagement

Collaborating with the local community

During the project, the team regularly engaged with the local community, particularly the dedicated workers on site.

In addition to constructing the bridge, the team focused on its long-term sustainability by training local community members in its maintenance and care.

They provided the necessary tools and manuals, ensuring that the bridge would remain safe and functional for years to come, continuing to benefit the community well into the future.





School visit

As part of the mission, the team visited Mataba Primary and Secondary School to engage with the students.

They shared insights into the construction process, emphasizing the vital role of infrastructure in fostering community development and empowering future generations. Additionally, they organized a STEM challenge for secondary students, where they tested bridge models constructed by the students using popsicle sticks and tape.

The results were astonishing, with some bridges displaying impressive resistance and innovative structures.

Moreover, the team joined students in a physics class focusing on energy conservation theory.

The students showed great enthusiasm throughout the activities and expressed their appreciation through a heartfelt dance performance and by presenting handmade drawings for the volunteers.

”

As we engaged with the students, their curiosity and eagerness to learn about the bridge project were evident. I took the opportunity to encourage the students to pursue education and consider careers in the construction industry, emphasizing their pivotal role in shaping the future of their nation. It was undeniably one of the most rewarding experiences of the entire project.

– Ghassan Issa



Inauguration

On inauguration day, the local community gathered to celebrate the new bridge. The community members, dressed in colorful attire, expressed their joy and appreciation for the project through dancing and celebration. Witnessing people crossing the bridge for the first time was a significant moment of pride and happiness for all involved.



”

Dar Team Insights

“After spending the past year and a half involved in this beautiful country, completing the bridge in just two weeks and providing safe passage for the local community feels truly fulfilling. Seeing the community’s reaction as they crossed the bridge for the first time was incredibly emotional for me. Children joyfully jumped on the bridge, and the locals celebrating with chants and dances.”

- Ghassan Issa

“I am personally grateful for the opportunity I have been given to bring this transformative bridge to the Karongi and Rutsiro communities. We could easily [see] happiness illuminating their faces when they saw the bridge completed.”

- Alexandre Kayitare

“I am really fascinated by what we have accomplished in just two weeks. Being a member of such an amazing team and sharing the same passion for having a positive impact on people’s lives and the world was really encouraging. I am blessed to have [made] connections with Sidara Group members and B2P through our project, and I was personally influenced by the team spirit. I hope what we have done will [inspire] more people to contribute positively towards humanity.”

- Karim Ali

“I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of this incredible adventure. What we have accomplished with the Muregeya Trail Bridge project and being part of this amazing team has been an honor. Seeing the joy on the faces of the Karongi and Rutsiro communities as they crossed the bridge for the first time is a memory I will cherish forever. The connections we’ve made through Sidara and B2P have been invaluable, and I am deeply moved by our collective spirit.”

- Myriam Zoghby



Impact

The Muregeya Trail Bridge has already demonstrated its immediate impact by significantly improving mobility and safety for the community. Now, people can cross the river safely, irrespective of weather conditions and water levels.

In the long term, this bridge will bring about transformative changes in the community, improving health outcomes, enhancing educational opportunities, and fostering economic growth. By establishing vital exchange routes between districts, streamlining transportation of goods, and enhancing overall accessibility, it will promote social integration within the region.

Our collaboration with Bridges to Prosperity embodies more than just building a bridge; it’s about building a brighter future. Together, we are not only constructing infrastructure but also opening doors to prosperity for the communities we serve.

