

SELAVIP VISIT TO EASTERN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

29 May to 14 June

PROGRAMME

30 -31 May	Visit to projects 39/04,34/06 & 31/08 in Kayové (EPM)
1 June	Visit projects 33/07 (INUKA) - Goma
2 June	Visit project 32/06 & 30/07 BEPAD- APSDI - Bukavu
3 June	Visit projects 28/08 - ADC and 29/08- UPASSO, Bukavu Follow up meeting for BUKAVU projects
4 June	Visit projects 30/06 & 32/07 ABEM
5- 6 June	Cont. Visit projects 33/07 (INUKA) - Bunia
7 -8 June	Visit projects 23/07 & 22/08 ACTION BATWA - Bujumbura
9 June	cont. visit projects 23/07 & 22/08 in Gitega
10 June	Visit projects 22/07 & 21/08 JRS - Bujumbura
11 June	cont. visit projects 22/07 & 21/08 in Bujumbura
12 June	Meeting for future projects

1. RUANDA - KAYOVÉ & GISENYI

Projects 39/04; 34/06; 31/08 Rwanda, Kayové: Housing for Widows and Orphans - ENFANTS DU PÈRE MARTIN.



All projects built from 2004 to 2009 were visited with the local staff of EPM (Adrienne and Claude). 230 widows had been originally identified by EPM; 100 have received houses and 130 are still living in the open or in transitory shelter. The villages all have the same type of houses: one living room, 3 bedrooms, outside kitchen and toilet. They are built with sun-dried bricks. We proposed to EPM that they consider building smaller houses (1 or 3 bedrooms) in the future, so the cost of each unit could be reduced and the families that are still unattended could be housed in the near future. At first they were reluctant because the Bishop demands that the widow, boys and girls should have separate rooms. To help them think about this issue we had a meeting with the group of widows still waiting for a house, and they unanimously expressed that even one room would be enough if they can end their very painful situation in the bush. We hope that EPM will revise their standard and become more realistic. We also discussed the request that would be made to the widows to sign a letter stating that if they marry in the future they would have to leave the houses. Considering that the goal of this project is to insert these families in the local society, we argued that this letter could disincentive the widows to remarry; the document should only prevent that they sell the house in case of marriage (or other causes) so it remains as a property of the widow and all her orphans. The project promoted self esteem

among the widows. The houses are well built and no serious problems could be observed, except one house that was destroyed by an earthquake. The limitations are mainly i) weak organization of the widow that limits empowerment and further progress; ii) absence of a comprehensive strategy to make the project sustainable, as it deals with problems one by one if resources are available; iii) no explicit strategy to reach all the target group (230 widows) and iv) a view of what is a “proper house” that is not compatible with the resources and the houses that need to be built (230). We suggested to: i) lower standards so all 130 remaining widows can be housed with small incremental units; ii) recognize and enforce local organization of widows (the group that received houses and the still homeless families) providing space for them to take over the project; iii) organize activities such as a seminar or workshop at a local or national level to show the project to authorities, professionals and University (for this the political and academic context of Rwanda should be explored); iv) link the project to other activities of the Diocese so it becomes more autonomous. SELAVIP should condition future funding to the inclusion of these suggestions in new projects. Another limitation that needs to be overcome is the lack of operational facilities. Even if the local team is very motivated they lack basic infrastructure, computer, internet, funds to operate, fuel to visit projects, etc.



2. DEMOCRATIC REP. OF CONGO: BUKAVU, GOMA, BUNIA



32/06 & 30/07 DRC-Bukavu Housing improvement in Kadutu & Ibanda-BEPAD-APSDI. Action pour la Paix Sociale et le Developpement Integre-APSDI – implemented 2 projects with SELAVIP funds (32/06 and 30/07) in the area of Bukavu. For both projects families were selected and involved in the process. BEPAD/APSDI bought the building materials and the beneficiaries leveled the sites, transported the materials and components and stored them in a safe place. Their sites were inspected by BEPAD to check if building was possible. Both projects are built on steep slopes, one on the riverside and the other one on

a hill. The cost of the projects is relatively high for the quality we observed. The houses follow the same design and are built by an external staff, with no participation of the families except in preliminary tasks described above.

We could not assess if beneficiaries were organized and if they were now advancing towards new challenges. Our comments to APSDI are i) costs of housing units should be lowered; ii) families need to be empowered to address other issues once they have built their houses; iii) external impact of the project on the local environment should be clarified; iv) a saving strategy should be implemented.

28/08 D.R.C- Bukavu Houses for victims of 2008 earthquake- Action pour le Développement du Citoyen

A meeting was first held in ADC headquarters with the Coordinator of ADC and technical staff such as the person in charge of the SELAVIP project, coordinator for women and children initiatives and legal advisor to obtain an overall view of the work developed by ADC. The project considers building small but safe houses for numerous families in Kavumu - about 40 km. from Bukavu. We visited the houses with the ADC team, 5 field facilitators, a delegation of local authorities and the beneficiaries. The families who received houses were very



poor but we could not assess if all had been affected by the earthquake as stated in the project presentation. A warm welcome followed by a lively exchange of ideas and presentations provided a good insight of the project both physically and socially, as we could recognize the vulnerability of the families, caused by illness and physical/ sexual violence. While visiting houses under construction we could evaluate the work of ADC in a positive way, even if the quality and cost of each unit should be adjusted.

29/08 D.R.C- Bukavu Housing for families stigmatized by HIV/AIDS. UPASSO



The follow up continued in KABAMBA, where the project from UPASSO is implemented. This is an NGO directed by motivated and strong women. As informed before, families stigmatized by HIV/SIDA had been selected and informed about the project. Besides negotiating land, UPASSO bought iron sheets, wood, nails and other basic materials. Boards were produced with help of families. The houses are similar to the ADC project. Again, the extreme poverty and vulnerability of the beneficiaries could be assessed, and in this context housing might be a good starts but not enough. The housing programme needs to be complemented with other initiatives to alleviate poverty. Besides, families with HIV are not the only or most affected by homelessness. We could see many other situations which require attention (raped women, disabled, etc.) in this very poor community. UPASSO wanted this project to be an opportunity to reflect upon ways of overcoming discrimination but we could not assess if there is a follow up to

build an approach to be applied to other situations. UPASSO was encouraged to find other funds to extend their work and implement complementary projects.

Meetings in Bukavu, with ADC, UPASSO and Fr. Didier de Faily

Main results of the visit were analyzed with 2 local partners (ADC and UPASSO). APSDI did attend the meeting. SELAVIP comments were: i) both NGOs are doing a good work in a very difficult context so they should persevere to address the problems of the poor; ii) houses should be smaller and costs revised in order to have realistic solutions to the massive housing need that prevails in DRC; iii) quality could also be improved without rising costs; iv) to meet many other needs of these families the local teams should look for other funds (international and local); v) we would try to find a SELAVIP "resource person" in Bukavu to provide a closer follow up. This person could be Fr. De Faily, who also joined the meeting and offered to collaborate with SELAVIP. We think he can play an important role to extend our work in South Kivu.

30/06 & 32/07 DRC-Goma Housing improvements by Association pour le Bien-Etre des Menages ABEM.

ABEM is also a small NGO formed by 7 permanent workers and occasional field facilitators, all directed by Mr. Honoré Ciraba. We did not visit ABEM



headquarters. The project started with a survey and seminars with potential beneficiaries. Finally 60 families were selected in Virunga, Mabamba and Majengo - Goma; in the area of volcano eruptions. 38 sq m houses are built with wooden structure and walls, and tin roof. The sites were donated by the government on areas that could be in risk if a new volcano eruption occurs. Building materials were provided by the project to the families for US\$ 1.200. Observing that some families started houses that were too big and could not finish them, we suggested that ABEM provides a standard design. Technical assistance could be improved and community organization encouraged in future projects. We could not evaluate if the project had an impact at regional level as stated in the project proposal but it would be better to achieve that if houses not scattered all over extensive areas. For now the potential to trigger new initiatives is uncertain. We suggested to lower the cost of materials to US\$ 800, provide them in sequential phases to prevent that they are sold by families, increase technical assistance, focus on some areas where ABEM can help organize beneficiaries in groups of



max 10 to promote collaboration and social control.



33/07 Goma INUKA: Building and rehabilitation of houses in Goma & Bunia.

INUKA-ALE is a relatively big, well organized NGO with good infrastructure and technical level, devoted to assist children-mostly orphans. For this project they selected homeless families with many children in a very poor neighborhood in the periphery of Goma and built /repaired their houses. Again, we suggested that the cost of each house can be reduced in order to benefit more households. In Bunia 5 houses were built with sun dried bricks, with costs that ranked from US\$ 1.000 to nearly US\$ 2.000. INUKA can become a

good partner to inform/ supervise our work in North Kivu, if they agree to reinforce the technical team that would build houses, help them to set up a standard design at affordable costs and "institutionalize" this activity within the Foundation.

BURUNDI

23/07 and 22/08 BUJUMBURA & GITEGA Construction of houses for the Batwa. Missionnaires d'Afrique Burundi



MAB promotes- through their program ACTION BATWA - processes to build villages and homes for poor Batwa families who live in precarious and unhealthy conditions, and suffer from hunger and social exclusion. We could assess the advantages of creating within Missionnaires d'Afrique a "project" or institutional arrangement (Action Batwa) which provides a good environment to manage this kind of initiatives within a larger organization. With Fr. Elias and his assistants we could visit several villages near both cities. Some were built some years ago, others recently and a few are in the process of construction. Each initiative implies a 2 years preliminary period to motivate the communities and prepare them to start building. After negotiating land the families level the ground and produce sun-dried bricks. Action Batwa contributes with a team of builders and additional materials (doors, windows, tin or tile roof). After the houses are completed AB continues in touch with the families, promotes plantations for subsistence, helps with schooling and tries to favor integration into local society. Villages range from 150 to 30 houses, depending on the size of each batwa group. In Gitega we could also visit other facilities such as a

dispensary, a "centre d'accueil" and a boarding school that makes possible for some batwa children to go to secondary school. Our suggestions to Fr. Elias were to: i) present a new project that would innovate on strategies to overcome exclusion of batwa, based on lessons learned in former projects; ii) it should be as urban as possible, considering the Burundian context; iii) it could include a small amount of funds for community services and advocacy; iv) houses could be incremental, start with max. 2 bedrooms; v) the size of plots should be revised in order to reach higher density in the city; vi) also, the possibility to include toilets should be analyzed.

Projects 22/07 & 21/08- Bujumbura: Social and economic integration of Batwa by Jesuit Refugee Service.



JRS Burundi built 47 houses and 30 toilets for the Batwa community of Gasure (Murehe), District of Mbuye, Muramvya. We visited the construction of adobe houses and latrines. Families were extremely poor and still motivated to progress. Our comment for future projects were i) to eliminate unnecessary items such as 5 doors for a small house; ii) incentive plastering by people to protect the adobe from deterioration; iii) the project deals exclusively with housing, it does not include a preliminary process and does not follow up after finishing the houses. On the other hand, the addition of toilets is an important improvement that the other batwa project does not include, but it should not increase the cost. Funds for this item could be minimized if families participate by digging the pit and building the latrine walls and roof.

CONCLUSIONS

A. Should we continue working in Eastern Africa?

The extreme poverty we could see in the 3 countries justifies that we continue financing projects there if we want to help the poorest of poor. But there are serious problems because of operational weakness to implement effective projects. Technical resources are scarce and most organizations have no reliable or transparent procedures than can ensure an effective use of funds.

B. Our local counterparts

We have 2 types of local partners in this area:

i) "Bigger" foundations based on external (European) help with a "charity" approach expressed by direct help to individuals- children, women, etc.- to cover many important needs such as food, schools, health, etc. Here housing is part of their general charity program and probably will be included only if total or partial funding from SELAVIP or others is provided. This is the case of "En Avant les Enfants" linked to the Diocese of Gisenyi (Rwanda); INUKA in Goma (DRC); Misson Batwa (Burundi)- here housing is a more important component- and JRS

(Burundi). All these foundations have access to other international funds and use SELAVIP funds to complement them. They have technical and organizational resources.

ii) Small NGOs formed by persons committed to help the poor and vulnerable, such as "BEPAD_ APSDI", "ADC" and "UPASSO" in Bukavu or "ABEM" in Goma. They do a good job but have problems to finance infrastructure, operation, etc.. This limits their work and/or implies the risk of diverting our funds to the survival of their NGOs. We could notice that some small NGOs are closely linked to communities (they actually could be considered CBOs) and inspired to work with the poor; they could eventually reach more technical skills if we help them do so. But in general we should screen these projects carefully before assigning funds, as we could detect some situations that would have needed more follow up.

C. What projects we should support

After observing all projects in the area we would suggest:

i) If needed, continue supporting ALE, INUKA and ACTION BATWA, but condition the funds to the existence of a "housing programme" that will be functionally separated from their other activities, so they can increase their expertise on this field and are able to lower the cost of houses. A connection with SDI could be a good start to move into a more developmental attitude.

ii) Some selected small NGOs could be encouraged to get sustainable under closer supervision.

D. Local supervision

We detected potential "resource persons" who could become local supervisors for SELAVIP in the future for Rwanda, Goma and Bukavu. We would study a strategy to gradually incorporate these persons to make our projects work better and guarantee that the funds will be spent in an effective manner.

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