



A little adventure in Burundi

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July 2009

I travelled to Burundi from the 2nd of July until the 15th for a generator assessment and an assessment of the new offices that WFP is moving to. One of the new offices is in Ngozi, a sub office about a 2:30h drive up and over the mountains. Before we go we have to pick up a military escort as this is a phase three area. So we go down to the barracks and pick up a land cruiser with four armed soldiers in the back and two in the front.

We drive for about 20 min and we reach the bottom of the mountain, the escort manages to slow down and call us to come up beside them. We go up not sure what to expect. Then the driver sticks his head out the window and says: 'we are not sure if we have enough fuel to get there, but we will see how we go'..... (umh and I thought, not really the best way to start this kind of trip...)

There hasn't been any real trouble in Burundi for a year or so, so it's not a big worry, but it's not a place where there are petrol stations along the way were you can pull in and get some fuel. So anyway we continue up the mountain hope for the escort's sake that they don't run out of fuel.

We get half way up the mountain and the escort back tire is starting to go flat, it doesn't go down straight away but the driver has not noticed this happening, and these guys don't drive slowly, we had a hard time keeping up with them! So they slow down at one point and we come up beside them and after a few attempts we manage to let them know that they have a flat tire, this would have been much simpler with radios but there was no common channels between the two cars!

So three of the guys jump out of the car and get up high on the road side and stand watch as the FOUR GUYS change the tire. As usual out of nowhere there was a swarm of local guys selling fruit and vegetables and some eggs.

So after the spare tire went on, we got back on the road and continued on our way to Ngozi without the guys running out of fuel but they were straight into the first fuel stop when we got there.

Ryan