
Burundi GIS/Mapping/OSM project – Digital Humanitarian Network (DHN) project

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The request for volunteers came from DHN. This project was originally intended to improve the quality of hospital and school data within the country of Burundi to support the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). The goal was to download the existing data in OpenStreetMap (OSM), improve it, and upload it back into OSM to be shared within the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) to support UNOCHA and other humanitarian response organizations. Volunteers from The Humanitarian OpenStreetmap Team (HOT), GISCorps, StandbyTaskForce (SBTF) and Humanity Road were initially tasked to help meet this goal

The primary steps involved downloading the available hospital and school data from OSM, and improving it by adding more features and additional fields compatible with a common data model that was being developed by multiple agencies. Troy Wirth, a volunteer GIS professional from GISCorps, created a crosswalk table that would correlate fields from the healthsites.io data model to commonly used tags in OSM (https://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/Burundi_Hospital_School_Import).

Sami Snunu, another volunteer GIS professional from GISCorps, developed python scripts that would convert (.osm) to (.shp) file formats and vice-versa, and others to help streamline in the bulk data upload process into OSM production server. These scripts are publicly accessed via the github repository, with the intention to be reusable for future GISCorps voluntary projects.

Ultimately, the data was not able to be ground-verified which precluded it from being imported back into OSM. Despite the fact that the project did not meet its primary goal, GISCorps volunteers learned a great deal about OSM and humanitarian organizations open data standards, and created deliverables that will benefit GISCorps future humanitarian missions.