

## A HEART FOR



A legacy that stretches three decades. Area Sales Manager Udo Schulz (CS5A) spoke to Hilary Duff about pioneering MR's sales operations on the African continent and what it's like to train hundreds of future electrical engineers in the classrooms of Tanzania.

TEXT AND PHOTO HILARY DUFF





**T**he first thing he does is write his name on the chalkboard: Udo. The “U” is underlined for emphasis. “And that’s just the easy part,” he says with a laugh.

It’s a bright Tuesday morning in Arusha, a bustling city in Northern Tanzania. The sky is clear, and through the window you can see Mount Meru towering above. Udo Schulz is preparing for his presentation in a classroom of the Arusha Technical College. He is spending the next three days here training more than 30 electrical engineering students from the college – the country’s future technicians and engineers.

The training series by Schulz began in the spring of 2015 as part of a project for knowledge transfer by MR. The project is financed by develoPPP, a program of Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The program supports involvement of the private sector in places where entrepreneurial opportunities and the need for developmental action intersect. Both of those forces are at play here in Tanzania. The workshops build up the practical skills of the students and teachers of three technical colleges in the country. The employees of TANESCO, the Tanzanian power supply company, also develop their skills. At the same time, the durability and quality of the state-of-the-art tap changers from MR are promoted.

This coupling of training and promotion has given more than 300 students the valuable opportunity to hands-on work with the same components they’ll be working with after graduation. They were able to learn what distinguishes a solid electrical system. Tanzania has ambitious plans for their energy supply. And the training program

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UDO SCHULZ

Schulz offers is an essential part of ensuring that the workforce is ready.

“There was a gap between what our instructors were teaching and the actual situation,” says Eng. Dr. Richard J. Masika, Rector of Arusha Technical College. “The kind of training we have with MR lets our students get lessons that aren’t in the curriculum. This closes that gap. We were able to design an up-to-date and relevant training program and prepare young people for the work they would be doing.” Masika says that Schulz’s training has given students greater confidence for what comes after graduation and that it has awakened a keen interest in Germany in them. “It’s like a cultural exchange too,” he laughs.

## AN INTERCONTINENTAL LEGACY

Udo Schulz joined MR in 1980 immediately after graduating with his degree in electrical engineering. His international work started on day one, when he was assigned to cover sales in Italy, Germany, Norway, and Turkey. In the following years, he took on positions in marketing, business development, and order processing, pioneering MR's growth across Africa.

Schulz is most proud of his work on this continent – particularly in South Africa. "The South African team now has 200 people, and I'm still in contact with many of them working there. That program is my 'baby' in a sense. I'm always ready to offer my support to everybody there," Schulz says.

In addition to South Africa, Schulz's MR travels have taken him to more than 17 countries on the continent. In 2008, he became the Senior Area Sales Manager for Africa, and took over business development in East Africa. He spends about 15 weeks a year in the region. Despite often having "sales" in his job title, Schulz says his work with MR was always more about the people he was helping. "I always felt like sales was just technical support. I've never just sold a product – I've always tried to sell a solution," he says. "The important thing is to be a partner to the customers – a trusted partner whom they can ask about the best solution. This is something I did during all my time in sales."

Schulz also believes in one of MR's core values: a willingness to share expert knowledge. The technical college training this week is

a logical extension of that. Thanks to his customer service approach and the recent training programs, Schulz has built up a network of contacts across the whole continent. His large stature and friendly face are well known at local energy supply companies, regional trade shows and now at technical schools in Tanzania, as well. "MR is where I began my professional life and where I've spent my entire career. I know the product and the customers and at the end of the day, it's really just a great big family," Schulz says. It is not just the develoPPP training project that is ending this year, but also Udo Schulz's 31-year career at MR. Retirement will allow Schulz to shift his focus from his professional MR family to his personal family. Much of that will involve time spent with his wife, Regina, whom he met in his early years working at MR, and his adult son and daughter.

## A VISIT TO THE TRAINING CENTER

Leading up to retirement, Schulz will continue to concentrate on finishing the training programs in Tanzania. When it comes to electrical engineering, learning doesn't just happen in the classroom.

It's the final day of Schulz's workshop, and the class is taking a field trip to the training center MR has built to show students the parts of transformers and other electrical components.

The training center is above a gas station in Njiro, a suburb of Arusha. Electrical accessories are laid out on a long boardroom table – oil and winding temperature indicators, a protective relay, and various monitoring systems. But the training center's real crown jewel is





at the far end of the room: a transformer that's been deconstructed to display MR's on-load tap-changer. Students immediately start taking photographs with it, and kneel to get a closer look at the technology. Schulz gathers small groups of students and demonstrates how the tap changer works. Ensuring that the students have a firm grasp of the workings of a tap changer is an essential goal of Schulz's training.

MR's tap changers play an integral role in Tanzania's energy net work and can be found in more than half of the country's transformers. Just 39% of Tanzania's urban population is connected to grid electricity, a number which drops all the way down to 2% in rural areas. Blackouts, power rationing and a lack of voltage consistency exacerbate natural issues, such as a lack of rain for the country's hydro-electric dams. On-load tap-changers address the consistency issue by properly regulating the voltage level during the transformation from low voltage to high voltage and vice versa.

Today's training center visit is the first time most students have seen a tap changer and other electrical components. „We don't have this technology at the college,” says Mengi Mkina, one of the instructors at Arusha Technical College. „My students normally study things theoretically, but it's better for the learning process if they can physically observe the devices.” Some of the students won't have to wait long before applying their new knowledge.

When Adam Kileo is not studying at the college, he works as a mechanic at TANESCO. There, he troubleshoots customers' emergency problems. He aspires to someday work in a primary substation where he would deal with transformers and tap changers on a daily basis. „I had heard about tap changers at work, but I didn't know what they

were for,” says Kileo. „Most of the guys are not as well educated, so we've been working against problems for a while. These issues could have been solved a long time ago if everyone had training like this.” It's reactions like Kileo's that make training worth it for Schulz. „I like it when I get feedback, and I always get feedback from the students when we're standing in front of the products,” says Schulz. „I am proud. I feel like this is a very important and worthwhile issue. And I hope to one day perhaps hear from students saying they remember taking part in the seminar.”

After the morning at the training center, it's time to take one last group photo outside Arusha Technical College. Rain is coming down, but everyone is in good spirits, especially after the morning of hands-on learning. With a couple of snaps, Schulz wraps up his ninth training seminar in Tanzania. He has just two more to go before the develoPPP funding ends and he retires. Before his September retirement, Schulz hopes MR can apply for develoPPP funding again and continue the successful training program in Kenya or Uganda.

Here in Tanzania, the instruction is just getting started – technical college instructors that Schulz has trained will now be responsible for carrying on the lessons, with the assistance of Godfrey Kingu, a Tanzanian electrical engineer who Schulz has worked closely with for several years. Schulz hopes to someday see a local representative in each country who can serve as the „MR guy” for utilities companies. Those relationships are, after all, what Schulz worked his entire career to build.

So while this is the end of training in Arusha, it's just the start for MR in Africa.



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drop by drop,  
you can improve  
the system  
for everyone."

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