

## Global Giving report- Motorcycle Training in The Gambia

Riders for Health (Riders) are transforming the face of global health in Africa; transport cannot, and will not remain a barrier to the delivery of vital health care.

Over the past 25 years we have shown that reliable motorcycles can provide a critical tool in preventing and halting the outbreak of disease. A prime example of this is the development of a unique motorcycle courier service to tackle one of the unseen challenges in health care delivery: the transportation of patient samples from health centres to laboratories, and the timely return of results. It might sound obvious, but without this link patients cannot get the diagnosis they need to start life-saving treatment. But Rider's Sample Transport service is turning this situation around. Building on the success of programmes in Lesotho, Zambia and Zimbabwe, in 2012 we expanded this system into seven districts of rural Malawi.

Thanks to Riders' Sample Transport service, for 4.2 million women, men and children in rural Malawi, getting that diagnosis is now much easier

### **Replicating success to keep Liberia Ebola-free**

As the world responded to the Ebola crisis throughout the last year, Liberia became overwhelmed by emergency medical assistance yet the prominent lack of reliable transport weakened the ability to rapidly respond. Available health services could not be accessed by those in further away villages. During the outbreak, there was a need of reliable transport for delivering blood samples for diagnosing patients, referring patients to health centres and the monitoring and education of communities. Yet the weak health system could not respond to the demand.

After discussions with the Liberian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Riders now operate on national scale in the country. Our 70 motorcycle couriers serve all 15 counties in Liberia driving down uncovered tracks to reach and connect with 268 health facilities. Mobilising a reliable health system, Riders are ensuring a rapid turnaround of patient samples from health centre to laboratory, ensuring fast diagnosis and treatment of diseases.

Further, Riders have established a comprehensive and well-managed health fleet of motorcycles, ambulances and trekking vehicles that can ensure that even the most rural communities can be reached with essential health care. With sustainability at the crux of an organisation, our programme continues to train more drivers and ensure that our vehicle remain well-maintained.

Riders are proud to be providing the missing link to mobilise health care within this disaster-affected area, as Andrea Coleman, our CEO, expressed at the programme's launch:

*'The Ebola outbreak showed the world what Riders for Health has been saying for a long time – reliable transport really is essential to a strong health system. Without the means to reach the most rural communities with health care and advice, diseases will continue to spread. We are delighted that we are able to extend our reach and work closely with the Liberian Ministry of Health to develop a strong transport system for delivering the country's health care needs.'*

The Liberian Ministry of Health have nominated Riders for the prestigious Hilton Humanitarian Award, for an outstanding contribution to the alleviation of human suffering,

## Mobilising health workers in The Gambia

At Riders for Health our technicians are the backbone to our work. It is their high level of ability and competency that enhances Riders for Health's superb reputation across sub-Saharan Africa.

In order to maintain a workforce capable of providing this essential service, it is imperative to train technicians for the future and not just today. These technicians of the future will be the legacy of the outstanding workers who currently uphold the 230 vehicles in operation in The Gambia. This is why in the latter stages of 2014, Riders launched a scheme that sought to provide training for seven female apprentices for three years, with the eventual aim that all seven women will gain a professional qualification as a 'class one' mechanic.



We hope that all the women will join Riders' national fleet management at the end of their three years of training, serving rural communities and ensuring that health care continues to be mobilised effectively. This project is also aiding the national initiative to enhance the status of women in The Gambia. Through our work, Riders is able to provide women with an opportunity to succeed and embark on a career without the restriction of gender.

Well-maintained vehicles provide the missing link for emergency referral in rural communities throughout The Gambia. Jainabou Jawara from Sare Pirasu, 11km from nearest town, went into labour. Just under 7 miles, at home we can quickly drive to the nearest hospital or dial 999 for immediate assistance, The Gambia it is not that simple. Transport is essential and life-saving. Because of Riders, Jainabou was able to call the head of the Maternity Unity at Basse Health Centre to receive the immediate health care she needed for a supported delivery.

**“Without this transport available on that night, I might have lost the babies or even myself as has happened to others previously” - Jainabou Jawara, Mother**

Riders for Health is very proud of the courage and determination demonstrated by our teams across Africa, and the energy they put into getting health care on the road and out into rural communities. In fact, the effectiveness of Rider's innovative solution the barrier to healthcare has been recognised and consequently Riders for Health were extremely pleased to be recently awarded the prestigious Lipton Prize, a celebration of leadership and innovation among organisations creating social impact.

**“Riders for Health is a stellar example of thoughtful and innovative leadership battling a global issue that carries enormous social impact: providing truly equitable healthcare to the world.” - Geoff Garrett, Dean of the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania**

**On behalf of everyone at Riders for Health, I would like to take this opportunity to once again say 'Thank you' for your support of Riders. Your generous support is vital us, and greatly appreciated. We look forward to keeping you updated on our work as we continue into the 2016.**