

Global Giving report- Motorcycle Training in Nigeria

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 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 Nigeria

Riders has been operating in Nigeria since 1999 and currently maintain 370 vehicles for the delivery of health care to those in most need. Amongst those in most need of reliable health care are HIV-affected individuals. Because of the mobilisation of health care delivery by our riders anti-retroviral drugs can be distributed from central locations to regional health centres in more remote locations. This means that regular administration of vital treatment can happen, health workers are kept, and remain, on the road ensuring that health care delivery remains available to all.

Recently, 6 further community health workers have been mobilised thanks to Riders. Responsible for key public health interventions, (health education, immunisations, disease surveillance and home-based care) community health workers are ensuring that communities are kept disease-free, preventing rural communities from easily treated and prevented diseases. For instance, malaria remains a threat to rural communities, yet because of our mobilised community health workers, disease prevention measures such mosquito nets and rapid diagnostic testing are easily distributed across rural communities. This supply-chain service provided by our health workers is supporting Nigeria's National Malaria Elimination Programme, working to halt the spread of easily preventable and treatable diseases.

Our health workers are also working to improve access to maternal and child health services for an estimated 197,632 women in rural Nigeria. Our managed vehicles are used to mobilise outreach care. Emergency referrals for the safe transportation of pregnant woman and their birth attendant to hospital can happen because of our reliable, maintained vehicles. Community-level referrals can occur reliably and quickly with well-maintained vehicles ensuring that women are kept safe during delivery and new-born babies receive immediate health care they deserve. In particular, in the summer Riders launched a pilot project to introduce managed transportation to mobilise integrated maternal, newborn and child health services in support of Nigeria's Midwives Service Scheme.

A final word of thanks

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