

MEET THE TEAM: ALFRED GONGA



Riders for Health's teams in Africa are made up entirely of nationals of the countries in which we work. In Zimbabwe GlobalGiving donors are helping to support the training of health workers in vital riding and maintenance skills. In 2002 Riders opened the International Academy of Vehicle Management in Harare. Since that time, the IAVM has trained over 1,200 people in everything from fleet management to safe riding. Here we meet the man responsible for training health workers, the principal of the IAVM, Alfred Gongga.

When and how did you first get involved with Riders for Health?

I was working as a field officer for Save the Children Fund (UK) before I joined Riders. The job involved food distribution, growth monitoring of the beneficiaries and food aid impact assessment. I first got involved with Riders for Health in 1997, when Riders - then working in partnership with Save the Children - offered me the job to be a motorcycle fleet coordinator for 110 motorcycles which had been donated to the Department of Social Welfare.



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What made you want to work for Riders?

I decided to take up the offer of a job because of Riders' vision and mission. It had and still has a different approach to assisting those in need, the key word being sustainability. Other organisations run projects that have time limits, maybe two years, then they leave whoever they were assisting in a worse situation. I joined Riders at its inception in Zimbabwe and I wanted to be part of that approach. In addition, I have always been a motorsports fan and I saw this as an opportunity to get involved and get closer to the people on motorsport, as well as helping those in need.

What is a typical day in the office for you?

Each time I get to the office I do my mail. I discuss training applicants and do the schedule with the team. I talk with instructors on trainee performance and problems. On Mondays and Tuesdays I welcome the new delegates. Once a week we discuss trainees' post training comments and opinions.





What is the most rewarding aspect of working for Riders?

It really motivates and gives me a great sense of satisfaction when people come in for training scared and jittery, and at the end of the training they will be enjoying it so much we have to force them off their bike! You can tell what it means to them and the difference it will make to the way they will do their work of helping the needy.



What is the biggest challenge of working for Riders?

What we do as an organisation has never been done and its a huge challenge to convince people that it works and that it can be done.



What has been your biggest achievement at Riders so far?

Being a prominent member of the team that set up Riders in Zimbabwe, managing the first 8 motor vehicles and 55 motorcycles for the Ministry of Health under Riders Transport Resource Management programme.

What is your vision for the IAVM over the next five years?

My vision is for the Academy to become the 'centre of excellence' we have always envisaged. A centre where people from all over the world will be coming to learn how to run vehicles without breakdown. In five years there should be a lot more people coming and a lot more training courses on offer.

What do you like to do when you are not at work?

Most of my free time is taken up watching F1, MotoGP and international football on TV. Fortunately it is a family passion.

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For more information on the work that Riders for Health is carrying out visit the website at www.riders.org

