



## Riders for Health Zimbabwe update report – January 2009

### Reaching the unreached – bringing the benefits of 21<sup>st</sup> century health care to rural communities across Africa

*In Zimbabwe, GlobalGiving donors have been supporting the training of Environmental Health Technicians (EHTs) in riding and the basic maintenance of motorcycles. This report provides feedback of the progress made by Riders and the impact this will have on the communities of rural Zimbabwe.*

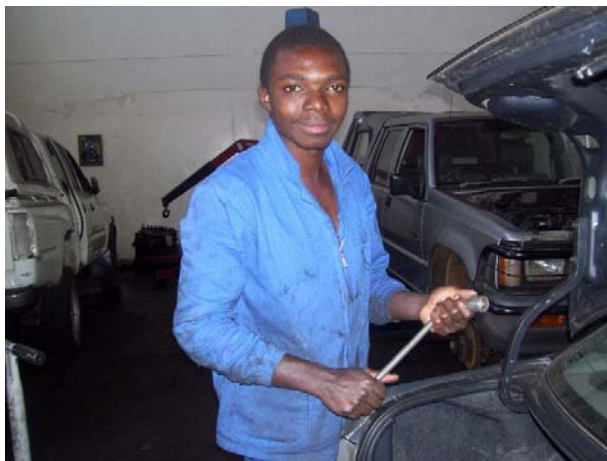
Riders for Health would like to offer a huge 'thank you' to all those who supported our work in Zimbabwe through GlobalGiving and helped us to raise a fantastic \$21,000 to mobilise EHTs across the provinces.



This warm support is particularly welcome at this difficult time for the country. As you will have seen or heard in the media, Zimbabwe is a country in a state of great flux and the hope remains that the situation can and will improve. However, at the current time the need for Riders for Health and the work we do is greater than ever before. Naturally we are greatly concerned for the welfare of our staff and partners but they are all safe and well and, despite restrictions, they are continuing their essential and lifesaving work.

The Ministry of Health are focussing what few resources they have on controlling the cholera outbreak and Riders is with them every step of the way. We are also continuing to help other non-governmental organisations to ensure that isolated communities receive the health care they so desperately need at this time.

Riders is also maintaining our work of training riders, drivers and technicians to service the vehicles that are so vital for the delivery of health care. Training technicians not only ensures motorcycles and ambulances don't break down, it also creates jobs and increases the confidence and skills of local men and women.



*"My most memorable achievement is when I carried out a complete service on a motorcycle that was due to participate in controlling a cholera outbreak. I am happy that I am saving lives, through maintenance," says twenty-year old Munyaradzi Chinoera, an apprentice technician in the Riders' workshop.*

*Photo: An apprentice learning his way round a car motor*

## Riders for Health in Zimbabwe

Since 1996, Riders for Health has supported the delivery of health care to remote communities in Zimbabwe, by mobilising community health workers within our Transport Resource Management system. Although the situation is difficult at present, because of Riders' focus on long-term, sustainable development and our ethos of only employing local men and women, we know that we will weather this storm and be ready to work even harder as the country regains political and economic stability.



*Photo: Barbara Nayat an EHT in Zimbabwe.*

Riders know from past experience that increasing the mobility of the health workers in rural Zimbabwe means that they can make regular visits to communities and schools to give advice on preventative health measures such as hygiene rules, family planning and ways to prevent the spread of diseases such as cholera and HIV/AIDS.

## The story of Barbara Nayat

In Binga district, for example, one of the poorest areas of the country, Riders helped health workers like Barbara Nayat to reach even the most isolated villages regularly. As the district's family planning worker, Barbara was on the front line in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and her work providing contraception and health education was vital.

Binga district is in the north west of Zimbabwe on Lake Kariba, which forms the border between Zimbabwe and Zambia. It is one of the most underdeveloped parts of Zimbabwe, with few health facilities and hardly any roads. It is also one of the most sparsely populated areas of the country.

*Photo: Barbara raising awareness of health issues in a village.*

Together with her 15 fellow health workers, Barbara was responsible for covering an area of 250km, where there are almost no roads. Since 2002, her tough job has been made easier by a simple motorcycle, managed by Riders for Health.



Being able to talk about subjects like HIV/AIDS required the health worker to have a good relationship with the patient, as they have to be able to trust her. Barbara's motorcycle meant she no longer had to walk between villages, and as she spent less time travelling between villages she could spend longer with her patients. A well-

maintained motorcycle also meant that her visits became more reliable and predicable. This was vital in building up trust with the people she cared for.

“It’s difficult talking about diseases like HIV,” Barbara told us. “You need to be particularly sensitive and encourage the listener to trust you”.

*Photo: Barbara talking to a community nurse.*



### **Thank you**

None of Riders’ achievements would have been possible without the generous support we have received through GlobalGiving. Thank you from all the team at Riders for Health, and especially our colleagues in Zimbabwe, who have been moved by the generosity shown to them at this difficult time.

### **For more information**

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