

# The Gambia - *Building a healthier future through reliable transportation*

A. Coleman<sup>1</sup>, B. Coleman<sup>1</sup>, V. Nagaraju<sup>1</sup>, T. Drammeh<sup>2</sup>, C. Jallow<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Riders for Health, Northampton, UK

<sup>2</sup> Riders for Health, Kanifing, The Gambia



For more information, please contact [partnerships@riders.org](mailto:partnerships@riders.org) or [gambia@riders.org](mailto:gambia@riders.org)

## Background

Riders believes in a world in which health care reaches everyone, everywhere. We focus on one essential area of development: transport fleet management and logistics for physical delivery of 'last mile' health care services.

Driven by the belief that vehicles themselves are not enough, Riders has created an innovative, appropriate transportation infrastructure that enables public health care services to reach rural communities, predictably, reliably and cost-effectively. To do this, in-country programme teams – all local men and women – strengthen health care delivery platforms by maintaining the vehicle fleets of partner organisations to a 'zero-breakdown' target.

## Outreach maintenance: 'taking service to the customer'

Riders is the only organisation in Africa providing comprehensive health transport maintenance on an outreach basis. Riders' technicians meet the vehicles in the field, in distant rural locations, to service them regularly.

In some countries, Ministries of Health and other humanitarian agencies sometimes attempt to bring vehicles into the capital and provincial cities for servicing. Even when this approach results in appropriate servicing, the cost is very high. Forcing vehicle users to travel for service lowers adherence rates for servicing, wastes fuel, and increases the burden on the already strained health resources.

Outreach maintenance principle is used also for Riders' networks of sample transport couriers to ensure increased efficiency and lack of downtime for the service.

## Our services

### Mobilising health workers



Often the most effective form of transport for these health workers is the motorcycle which is cheaper to run than a four-wheeled vehicle and can cover more challenging terrain.

### Emergency referrals



Riders' managed-transport systems make emergency referrals possible, and we can also help with planning and budgeting, assessing current ambulance fleets, and route planning.

### Supply chain distributions



Riders' managed-transport systems form the foundation of a strong supply distribution network, reaching down to primary health facilities and even communities.

### Training



We offer training courses in safe vehicle use and in maintenance in all of our programmes and we can even offer training in countries where we don't currently work.

### Sample transport



Riders' Sample Transport (ST) system ensures that medical samples taken from patients at health centres are transported to laboratories reliably and quickly.

## Public Private Partnerships

Riders believes that PPPs offer an opportunity to **leverage resources** as well as bringing a **focus** and a **core competence** from each partner in the collaboration. This reduces duplication, confusion and lack of expertise. An effective consortium can create an impact that is far greater than the sum of its parts.

PPP's are not a well understood concept and can vary in degrees in terms of partnership so Riders' success relies on **building trust** within a government and its ministries.

### Total fleet reliability

Riders' zero breakdown vehicle management system ensures that vehicles never have any unplanned downtime. We provide a high-quality service, which crucially, enables long-term reliability to our partners.

### Accountability & Motivation

As an NGO and not-for-profit social enterprise, Riders is committed to providing a service for its partners at the lowest possible cost. Our services are designed for the developing country market and organisational mission and integrity are prioritized in all our work.

### Transparency

Riders' data systems ensure there is an audit trail of every journey traveled by every vehicle. This means that the vehicles under management are only used to provide journeys that contribute towards provision of health care services – providing increased efficiency in the healthcare system.

## Riders for Health in The Gambia

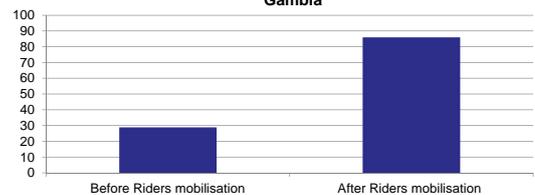


The project brought together many sectors: commercial banking, government and civil society to provide a comprehensive health transport network for an entire country; the Gambia. This offers a unique example of a PPP.

- The TAM – Transport Asset Management model is a full service lease model. The fleet management component is similar to all other operational models.
- Riders has leased 90 motorcycles, 14 trekking vehicles, 36 ambulances and 12 multi-purpose vehicles providing national coverage for health care interventions
- Running costs being paid by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW).
- Leveraged a loan of USD 3.5 million for the Guaranty Trust Bank
- Loan has been underwritten by the Skoll Foundation for Social Entrepreneurs
- The income from this programme contributes to 60% of Riders' earned income and 23% of the overall income.
- As the final phase another nine ambulances, 12 trekking vehicles and 60 motorcycles will be introduced in 2013. Riders' has the potential to make the Gambia the first country in Africa with enough vehicles to ensure primary-level health care access for the entire population.
- The fleet has run more than 10,000,000 kms so far delivering healthcare.

## The impact:

Average number of people seen in a week by a health worker in the Gambia



Based on a sample of 30 outreach health workers - around 30% of those mobilised by Riders in the Gambia.

- 32% of health centres are scheduling more outreach clinics for maternal and child health services, immunisations and other life-saving treatment to 1.7 million people.
- No outreach clinic is cancelled due to transport or fuel constraints, whereas before 32% of cancelled outreach clinics were because of this.
- 8% more referrals from health centres to hospitals are made by ambulance.
- Outreach health workers spend four days each week doing outreach work, compared to just two days before. This means they can visit three times more villages each week.
- Health workers can increase the frequency of visits to villages and increase the number of new villages reached - this is especially important when considering equity of health service availability and coverage.
- The motorcycles have also meant that 63% of outreach health workers are now able to provide follow up care to patients at least every fortnight (before, just 10% did).

