



## AFCAP Research Project: An Investigation into the Role of Transport Operator Associations in Shaping Transport Services in Africa's Rural Areas

**Project Location:** Desk Research conducted in UK.  
Interviews conducted in Madagascar, Nigeria & Tanzania.  
Remote interviews conducted in South Africa, Uganda & Zambia. Workshop conducted in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

**Project Start date:** October 2013

**Project duration:** 4 months

**Introduction:** Transport operator associations are a key feature of urban, inter-urban and rural transport services in Africa. Transport services are essential to allow men, women and children to access vital services such as healthcare, markets and education. However, the role they have in shaping transport services in Africa's rural areas is under-researched. This research study addressed this knowledge gap by exploring the role of both public and private transport operator associations in influencing issues such as routing, scheduling and fare setting. The research also explored the role that associations play in shaping rural access as well as the influence they have regarding road safety issues and their interaction with the police and authorities. The overall aim was to achieve an enhanced understanding of the role of transport operator associations to allow for meaningful analysis of the potential to work with such associations to find solutions for enhancing transport services in rural areas. This research study was made possible by the Africa Community Access Programme (AFCAP), which is funded by UKaid from the Department of International Development (DfID) and managed by Crown Agents.

**Methodology:** This study was comprised of both desk and field research. A comprehensive literature review of existing published and grey literature was conducted. This literature review focused on the following themes:

- Rural African communities
- Passenger and freight transport services
- The organisational structure of transport operator associations
- The characteristics of transport operation (route designation, timetabling etc.)
- The outcome of transport service delivery for rural African communities (costs, access to economic and social services)

The literature review determined how much literature already exists and also the key findings of past studies on this topic.

Interviews with representatives from transport operator associations and relevant transport stakeholders from six different African countries (Madagascar, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia) were conducted to determine how transport operator associations function, how they influence issues such as routing and fares and how they think transport services to rural areas can be improved. The field research used Tanzania as a critical case study and a workshop was conducted on 12th December 2013 in Dar es Salaam that brought together relevant transport stakeholders within Tanzania. The aim of the workshop was to explore the issue of rural access and discuss potential solutions with a particular focus on the role of transport operator associations.

### Findings/Outcomes:

Key findings from the literature review:

- There is very little existing literature on the area of rural transport services and rural transport associations in Africa.
- There is much to be gained from a more in-depth understanding of the operation of transport services in Africa and the role that association amongst operators plays in maintaining services at commercially viable levels, disadvantages users or provides opportunities to control markets and make excess profits.
- We need a better understanding of which policy direction to take in order to improve transport services
- There is a need to understand the incentives and benefits to operators of being members of an association and in particular the nature of the business environment that makes membership attractive.
- The literature highlighted the differentiated nature of rural transport services and the risks inherent in a business environment where infrastructure is poor and potential economic shocks and loss of earnings are significant may make associations attractive
- The literature also points to the rational and strategic nature of association membership and the benefit that may come for policy development if policies are designed with these rational choices in mind.

Key findings from the interviews-

- Most associations welcome new associations forming



- The authorities and regulators seem eager to work with transport operator associations towards collaborative solutions. There are opportunities for the regulators/authorities to bring associations into the dialogue through arranging forums and to make it easier to create associations and make guidelines for this available
- Associations can help to build trust between passengers and operators if the association is well-known and respected.
- Some evidence suggests that in a hostile business environment, such co-operation amongst operators may be reasonable and rational. There is also a case to be made for working with existing transport operator associations in the efforts to improve rural transport services
- The increasing use of motorcycle taxis in rural areas means there is potential for demonstration projects that look at setting up formal associations in collaboration with some motorcycle taxi groups.
- Funding is required to address identified institutional weaknesses – provide capacity building on driver training, transport management, management of operator associations, mentoring schemes for small operators and business training.

#### Key findings from the workshop-

- Transport Operator Associations can play a very critical role in shaping rural transport services
- There is a need to strengthen and support new transport operator associations to be established
- Associations can help transporters self-regulate – ideas around road safety (e.g. helmets, reflector jackets, training etc.)
- Consumers need to be aware of their rights. There is a need for improved public awareness.
- It is important to bring associations into key events (e.g. road safety events)
- The voice of the community needs to be encouraged
- Transport Operator Associations provide their members with a 'safety net' in the event of an accident or emergency
- Transport Operator Associations provide their members with a platform on which they can raise issues and allow dialogue with authorities and regulators

**Conclusions:** This research highlighted the role that associations can have on shaping rural access and what may be done to enhance this. The stakeholder workshop in Tanzania and the development of a collaborative road map for action contributed an element of capacity building to the transport operator associations and helped to promote the identification of win-win solutions between the associations, public authorities and civil society. The workshop served as a catalyst for action and it is

recommended that the specific opportunities identified are developed further.

**Partners:** AFCAP (funded by DfID and managed by Crown Agents), National Institute of Transport (NIT) Tanzania. (For full list of interviewees and workshop participants please see the Final Report).

**Tools utilised:** Interview questions for transport operator associations.

#### About Transaid:

Transaid is an international UK development charity that aims to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods across Africa and the developing world through creating better transport. Transaid was founded by Save the Children and the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport. Our Patron is HRH The Princess Royal. Transaid specializes in the following:

- Building the capacity of public health authorities to provide effective, safe and cost efficient transport management systems to promote equitable access to primary health care services.
- Developing and improving logistics and supply chain systems to enhance the delivery of medicines, equipment and relief services to vulnerable communities.
- Promoting effective partnerships to support and enhance community participation in developing sustainable transport solutions in rural areas.
- Developing and delivering transport and logistics training and qualifications for public and private sector operators.

Transaid has the capacity and reach to lead projects throughout the developing world, but is equally capable of providing niche technical assistance to large scale health systems strengthening projects. Transaid maintains strong relationships with a number of leading international organizations including donor agencies such as DfID, DANIDA and USAID, and implementing organizations such as Health Partners International, Options Consulting, John Snow Inc. and Management Sciences for Health.

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