



Ambulance Driver Training in Northern Nigeria

Project Location:	Yobe and Katsina States, Northern Nigeria.
Project Start Date:	2009
Project Duration:	2 Years

Introduction: The Partnership for Reviving Routine Immunization in Northern Nigeria (PRRINN) programme has been operational in four Northern States of Nigeria (Jigawa, Katsina, Yobe and Zamfara) since early 2007 and has been integrated with the Maternal and Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) since September 2008. Output 3 of the programme is concerned with strengthening service delivery in order to increase availability, access and utilisation of essential MNCH services with the ultimate aim of reducing maternal, neonatal and child mortality and morbidity.

Transaid has been supporting the PRRINN-MNCH project by undertaking a number of activities to improve access to health services. One of the major activities which had been underway since 2008 was the implementation of a Transport Management System which included policy development, training of transport officers, completion of a vehicle inventory etc. Key to the success of a functioning Transport Management System is the presence of trained drivers. Transaid was requested to lead two training sessions, one in Yobe State and one in Katsina State, in order to build the skills and capacity of ambulance drivers.

In each state the objective of the training was two-fold; firstly to develop a cadre of ambulance driver trainers, and secondly to monitor those trainers as they cascaded the training to a large group of ambulance drivers.

Methodology: Before the training commenced selection criteria were distributed to the Ministry of Health in order that only suitable drivers are put forward for training. The selection criteria included the following elements;

- Ownership of a driving license
- Literacy & Numeracy – in order that drivers would be able to understand the Highway Code, Vehicle Logbooks, the Vehicle Owners Manual, insurance documents etc.
- Medical Condition – a request was circulated that only drivers with good vision and adequate general health be put forward
- Experience – the minimum entry requirement for the training was 5 years experience on a similar class of vehicle
- Knowledge – basic safety (safety belt), Highway Code (speed limits, road signs etc)

In each state 6 drivers were chosen to be trained as trainers. The vehicles used for training were the same ambulances which the drivers were responsible for on a daily basis. Initially the trainers underwent a basic driving course to ensure that they were at the

appropriate standard to be trained as trainers. The curriculum of the basic driving course covered the following areas:

- Highway Code - Nigeria Highway Code, Road signs, The rules of the road (Delivered by the Nigerian Federal Road Safety Commission)
- Driving the Vehicle – Manoeuvring, Road Junctions, Vehicle Positioning, Use of Controls, Moving Off & Stopping, Emergency Stop
- Hazards - Forward Planning, Overtaking & Being Overtaken, Undertaking and its Consequences
- Maintenance - Daily Vehicle Checks, Battery, Tyres, Electrics, Fan belts, Air filter, Drive Belt, Engine Oil & Filter, Common Faults, Daily Checks, Servicing Schedules, Accidents & Breakdowns, Procedures at a Breakdown, Equipment, Procedures at an Accident
- Safety – Crash Prevention, Causes of Road Traffic Crashes, Stopping Distances, Speed and Load Markings for Tyres, Highway Code, Approved Speed Limits for Vehicles on Nigerian Roads, Defensive Driving, Use of Safety Items in the Vehicle (seat belts, triangle/caution Sign, Use of Fire Extinguishers)
- First Aid Management - Aims and Roles of First Aid, Management of Bleeding, Fracture, Shock, Heart Attack, Head Injury and Fainting, Practical Demonstration of Resuscitation, Practical Demonstration of Lifting a Patient (Delivered by the Nigerian Red Cross Society)

The drivers were assessed at the end of each module. Peer review sessions were conducted allowing drivers to comment on each other's reasoning and knowledge. The practical training, consisting of ride along sessions, concluded in a practical driving assessment. This was completed on predetermined routes which incorporated various driving conditions e.g. driving off road, driving through crowded streets, a variety of junctions etc.

Following the basic driving course the trainers underwent a Training of Trainers course which focussed on the following:

- Planning Training Sessions
- Developing a Training Plan
- Preparing Materials
- Presenting to a Group (Public Speaking)
- Producing Team Work Activities
- Practical Training

Each of the trainers then had to present one topic from the driver training curriculum in order that the Transaid team and the other trainers could evaluate and provide comment.

Outcomes: Following the execution of the Training of Trainers for participants, Transaid facilitated the step down training in the two states with a total of 49 ambulance drivers attending. The curriculum

used for the step down training was the same as that used for the training of trainers.

At the conclusion of the training a total of 61 drivers had been trained across the two states using standards based on international best practices. The drivers were exposed to input from international trainers, the Nigerian Red Cross and the Federal Road Safety Commission.

Conclusion: The stakeholders confirmed that this training had been the first such professional training of drivers in both Katsina and Yobe States. Each state now has a cadre of trainers with the knowledge and ability to pass down training to any drivers who might require it.

In Northern Nigeria the government budgets for health service provision are already stretched. Well trained drivers are the key to operating a cost effective ambulance system. The benefits received as a result of using well trained drivers are as follows:

- Maintenance costs will be reduced due to better driving, more appropriate use of the gears and brakes.
- Fewer Road Traffic Crashes; RTCs can lead to loss of life, vehicle downtime, operational disruption, and of course incurred costs.
- Lower running costs: drivers who have been trained in Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving (SAFED) can exhibit fuel consumption reductions of up to 28% thus dramatically reducing the running cost of each ambulance.
- Improved fleet management; drivers are the key to effective fleet management. The data which a driver enters into the vehicle logbook provides the foundation for fleet management and allows Transport Officers to calculate such indicators as fuel consumption, running cost per KM and vehicle utilisation.
- Improved vehicle availability; drivers who have been trained to conduct daily vehicle checks will identify potential problems before they become serious. The impact of this is an improved ability to schedule maintenance activities rather than being surprised by unexpected downtime.

It is hoped that these newly trained drivers will drive safely and efficiently, keeping the costs of the ambulance service low, and keeping themselves and other road users safe.

Tools Utilised: Driver selection Criteria, Practical Driving Assessment Tool, Driver Training Guide

Partners: The programme is managed by a consortium led by Health Partners International, with GRID Consulting, Nigeria and Save the Children, UK. The programme is funded by UKaid from the Development for International Development, UK, and the Norwegian state government.

Transaid worked alongside a professional driver trainer from the UK, Malcolm Kidd, the PRRINN-MNCH National Transport Consultant, Alhaji Balogun and also Alhaji Ibrahim Yusuf – Chief Driver, Ministry of Budgeting and Planning and facilitator who was trained in the first round of training in Yobe State. Specific topics were also delivered by the Nigerian Red Cross Society and the Federal Road Safety Commission who served as facilitators.

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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