



## Inclusion of Transport Management in Pre-Service Training in Malawi: The Case of Malawi College of Health Sciences

<b>Project Location:</b>	Malawi
<b>Project Start Date:</b>	2002
<b>Project Duration:</b>	6 Months

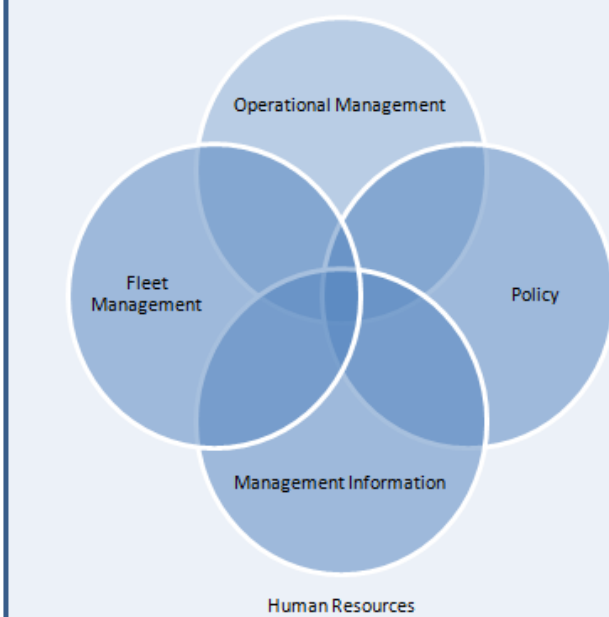
**Introduction:** Before 2002 Transaid was active in the Malawi health sector for over two years. Transaid worked on the transport management component of the European Union-funded Health Sector Reform and Decentralisation Project, part of a programme of support for the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP). This project saw the development of transport management policy at all levels within the MoHP and the training of District Transport Officers and Transport Managers in the key aspects of the Transaid Transport Management System (TMS). To complement this intervention, Transaid also undertook the basic training of transport officers (TOs) and transport managers (TMs) from non-government organisations in the health sector including the Malawi College of Health Sciences. Health sector support also included an intervention with the Central Medical Stores to assess and improve logistics systems for the supply and distribution of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment.

All of Transaid's TMS interventions revolve around the best practise principles first developed in Ghana in 1993. The transport management system that has evolved since 1993 can best be depicted as four linked, interdependent parts (see diagram opposite). Each part can be addressed in isolation but best results are achieved from a combined approach to transport management. Most organisations recognise the importance of fleet and operational management but fail to address the whole picture.

The Malawi College of Health Sciences (MCHS) is a key educational and training centre for health sector personnel in clinical and ancillary support roles, providing a high standard of training to many of Malawi's front-line health workers, both in Government and in NGOs. These workers are the people transport users in the health sector who need to interact with transport officers and play a significant role in the successful implementation of an integrated TMS. Problems of user failure to liaise with TOs on vehicle usage requirements were indicated in a review of the MoHP TMS.

MCHS was interested in developing a transport management module as part of their students' general management training. This provided an opportunity to increase awareness and commitment to good transport management practice among these potential health service transport users *before* they were posted. MCHS asked Transaid to develop and deliver a tailored 'Introduction to Transport Management' course on three of its campuses.

**A Diagrammatic Representation of an Effective Transport Management System**



**Methodology:** A three-week training was conducted in 2002 on Introduction to Transport Management, Training of Trainers, and Practice Training of Students. This was facilitated by both Transaid and MCHS representatives.

During Week 1 15 participants, (MCHS lecturers and administrative staff from all three campuses and representatives from Churches Health Association of Malawi) were trained in the standard Introduction to Transport Management.

In Week 2 a Training of Trainers course was delivered covering:

- ◆ Introduction to the trainers resource pack (trainers notes, transparencies, handouts and activities)
- ◆ Training styles
- ◆ Adult learning skills
- ◆ Common errors of facilitators
- ◆ Facilitator's role in group work
- ◆ Skills of a facilitator
- ◆ Discussion techniques
- ◆ The training cycle

Participants were organised into three groups, each with a specific transport management topic, and tasked to prepare materials and exercises. They then trained others from their class in the topic.

**Outcomes:** After each personal and group presentation the trainers and other participants provided constructive feedback. It was immediately clear that participants struggled with timings, and that they were nervous of referring back to the Transport Management Manual when they became stuck. The Transaid team reminded the participants of the need to ensure the quality of the training, especially through accurate presentation of the TMS components.

A particular value of the session was that, by criticising themselves and each other, participants developed ways to improve their teaching methods and delivery by the end of the week.

**Conclusion:** The Transaid Transport Management System Manual was established in a consultative and participative manner and targeted at non-transport professionals. As a means of service delivery, transport resources are best managed by the people who use them. This is reflected in the training and practical, workplace-oriented methodology and tools which Transaid uses to build the capacity of health sector personnel.

It is likewise mirrored in the Transaid Transport Management Manual, which is a user-friendly handbook for transport managers in service delivery organisations. TMS is concerned with the effectiveness and efficiency of transport utilisation – increasing coverage and reducing costs, always with the consciousness that money saved can be released for other service delivery activities. Attention is therefore given to the seven transport key performance indicators and the target values that Transaid has established to provide simple management information to monitor and improve performance and guide transport budgeting and accounting.

It was the vision of Malawi College of Health Sciences which led to the initiation of this project. MCHS envisaged a health sector where all newly qualified staff were competent in a variety of health system functions including the management of transport resources.

A 2008 evaluation visit to MCHS found the Transport Management course still firmly set within the curriculum for all new frontline health workers.

**Tools Utilised:** Transaid Transport Management Systems Manual, Transaid Training of Trainers Manual

**Partners:** Malawi College of Health Sciences (MCHS), Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), Churches Association of Malawi.

#### 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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