

## Emergency Transport Scheme (ETS) in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

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| <b>Project Location:</b>   | Nasarawa State, North Central Nigeria |
| <b>Project Start Date:</b> | November 2017                         |
| <b>Project Duration:</b>   | 18 months                             |

### Introduction:

According to the World Bank (2017), Nigeria has the fourth worst estimated maternal mortality rate (MMR) in the world of 917 deaths per 100,000 live births. Nasarawa State, located in North Central Nigeria, has been estimated to have a maternal mortality rate (MMR) of 1,000 deaths per 100,000 live births. Among the many factors contributing to the alarming MMR figures, transport availability and affordability are some of the key barriers to safe motherhood in Nasarawa. To address these constraints, Transaid established an Emergency Transport Scheme (ETS) in two Local Government Authorities (LGA) in 2016-2017 that aimed to bridge the gap in available and affordable transport solutions for women seeking institutional deliveries. Programmatic operations involved the training of ETS volunteer drivers, equipping them with the skills to safely transport women in need to a health facility in the six Local Government Authorities (LGA). Building on the learnings from this pilot intervention, in partnership with the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), the Ministry of Women Affairs and the Ministry of Health in Nasarawa State, ETS activities were expanded into four new LGAs in November 2017.



*NURTW motorpark – Lafia, Nasarawa State*

### Methodology:

Needs assessments that were carried out in the four new LGAs to understand the current structure of the NURTW and women's health seeking behaviour during a maternal emergency and delivery led the formulation of a tailored ETS approach. The project team assisted in the recruitment and training of NURTW Focal Persons (FPs) and ETS drivers for each LGA, completed in consultation with the NURTW officials at state and LGA levels.

A total of 16 FPs in the four new LGAs were selected based on pre-determined criteria including being a senior member of the NURTW, a willingness to partake in ETS and an acceptable level of literacy for data

collection. Ninety-four ETS drivers across all six LGAs, 81 from the four new LGAs and 13 from the existing two LGAs, were selected based on being a registered member of the NURTW, having a willingness and ability to park their vehicles at their homes overnight and having a demonstrable track record of integrity as demonstrated by NURTW character references. The LGA FPs from the four new intervention sites were trained as master trainers and successively delivered cascade training to the newly recruited ETS drivers on all aspects of ETS. The training included topics such as volunteerism, the structure of ETS, data collection, road safety and correct lifting techniques. The eight FPs from the pilot LGAs received refresher training.

To contribute to the sustainability of the intervention beyond Transaid's presence in-country, a Technical Steering Group (TSG) comprising of key stakeholders including government ministries, religious organisation and the police was established. The TSG's role was to advocate on behalf of ETS, oversee activities and share information. A total of six TSG meetings were held throughout the project's lifecycle. ETS Clubs, periodic meetings held in each LGA providing a forum for drivers to meet, were also organised for drivers to share experiences, key learnings and to overcome challenges.



*ETS Club meeting – Nasarawa State*

To support the uptake and embedment of ETS, a series of support and supervision visits were conducted to collect data and to provide support to the NURTW in establishing the scheme. The health workers of 19 health facilities were sensitised on the existence and operations of ETS in order to secure their support through the verification of drivers' log sheets and the overall promotion of the scheme to the intervention communities. Community engagement activities were also conducted across all intervention LGAs informing communities about ETS, the drivers, how the scheme works and the role they play in terms of motivation of the volunteer drivers and ownership of the scheme.

An ETS User Survey was carried out with 64 female beneficiaries in order to gather qualitative and quantitative data regarding ETS, as well

as to provide information regarding the effectiveness of the project management. The focus of these surveys was on women who had used ETS for a complication during pregnancy or delivery, or for a normal delivery.

Findings from ETS User Surveys were compiled in a report and headline findings were shared with the wider stakeholders during the project dissemination event. This event, which took place in the last month of the project, was represented by ETS drivers, ETS beneficiaries, stakeholders such as the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Women Affairs, traditional leaders and TSG members. The event communicated the project's main success factors and to officially hand over ownership of the project to the TSG members and the NURTW.

#### Outcomes:

During the 18-month period, 1,752 women were transported using the ETS in the six intervention LGAs.



Mariam and Halir "ETS Baby" – Lafia, Nasarawa State

For the purpose of this project, a timely service was defined as a woman reaching a health facility within two hours of having contacted an ETS driver. Based on this, the ETS User Survey found that 97% of women who used ETS were provided with a timely service.

Given that a major barrier for maternal health care is the cost of transport, ETS was promoted as a free or lost cost service for pregnant women, dependant on journey length. The ETS User Survey found that 100% of women interviewed were not asked for a payment for utilising the ETS.

Part of ETS being accepted by target communities is a trust for ETS and the NURTW drivers that operate it. The opinion of NURTW drivers can sometimes be negative however through sensitisation about ETS and how it operates communities trust the trained ETS drivers to transport pregnant women which indicates a shift in behaviour.

#### ETS drivers:

"In Nigerian culture, people view NURTW drivers as *park boys* or *area boys*, meaning [...] no-good people who hang around the motor-parks waiting to collect a few bucks for their work. ETS has changed the mind sets of people [...] and people praise us and give us blessings".

"My wife would ask me what I was going to do so late at night and I would tell her *I am going to save a life*. She was clapping her hands for me. She would go to places in the community and people would thank her saying that her husband had *done good for them*".

#### Conclusion:

ETS was expected to contribute to reducing maternal and new-born mortality by providing an affordable, accessible, safe and timely means of transporting women to a health facility. Through logbook data, the ETS User Survey, ETS Clubs and the dissemination event, the ETS is considered to have been successful in its role.

The project intended to provide an affordable, accessible and timely means of transport for women through an emergency transport scheme. Based on the information collected through driver logbooks, ETS User Surveys, ETS Clubs and the dissemination event, the ETS has been shown to be successful.

The success of the ETS can be attributed to both the NURTW and the integration of stakeholders within the project. While NURTW drivers provide the service under the guidance and support of NURTW officials, the support of partners and the sensitisation of the health facilities and community members were essential to uptake. The support of a TSG provided sustainable support to drivers during the project, however their commitment beyond the project's completion encourages sustainability of the scheme. In addition, granting ownership of ETS to the NURTW enforces local ownership and the responsibility that should continue beyond the project.



ETS Club meeting – Doma LGA, Nasarawa State

This project aimed to contribute to the dissemination of evidence about the benefits of ETS in order to motivate donors, funders and local governments to support the establishment of ETS within projects and existing health initiatives and programmes. Interactions with stakeholders and beneficiaries of this project have advocated for the continuation of ETS and its expansion into additional states.

ETS is an intervention model that is nationally scalable, taking into account contextual adjustments that may need to be made. The NURTW at the national, state and LGA level are well structured, which shows that ETS has the potential to be successful in other states in Nigeria. The need and feasibility of ETS in urban and peri-urban settings should also be further explored as a potential opportunity for expansion.

#### Tools Utilised:

ETS User Survey questionnaire, Follow Up Form, Referral Form,

#### Partners:

National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Nasarawa State Ministry of Women's Affairs, Nasarawa State Ministry of Health.

### About Transaid:

Transaid is an international development charity that seeks to transform lives through safe, available, and sustainable transport. Founded by Save the Children, The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT), and its Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, the international development organisation shares 25 years' worth of expertise in over 30 countries with partners and governments. Transaid focuses on:

#### Access to health services through

- improving access to emergency transport and healthcare for communities in rural areas to ensure that no community is left behind
- working with health providers to ensure safe and efficient management of vehicle fleets for the benefit of communities
- delivering work that is locally driven and appropriate to ensure long lasting impact and sustainability

#### Driver training and road safety by

- building the skills of training providers for truck and bus drivers in both urban and rural areas, to reduce death and injury on the roads
- developing and influencing the adoption of national and regional standards for professional driver training
- working with the private sector to measure and learn from the impact of driver training on improved road safety

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, GIZ and USAID, and implementing organizations such as DAI Global Health, Society for Family Health, TRL and World Bicycle Relief.

### Contact:

Transaid  
137 Euston Road, London NW1 2AA  
United Kingdom

t: +44 (0)20 7387 8136  
f: +44 (0)20 7387 2669  
e: [info@transaid.org](mailto:info@transaid.org)  
**[www.transaid.org](http://www.transaid.org)**

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