

riders

BINGA: A RIDERS SUCCESS STORY



In Zimbabwe, Riders has developed a unique process which is revolutionising the delivery of healthcare. Our policy of designating motorcycles for health workers district by district ensures that, slowly but steadily, entire districts are becoming mobile.

The success of this approach has been proven in Binga, one of the poorest districts in the country. In 2002 we provided motorcycles and running costs (funding courtesy of the Laury Minard Social Fund) for 15 environmental health technicians and one family planning worker in Binga. At the time this made it probably the only district in Africa in which every appropriate community health worker was mobile.

The 16 health workers - known locally as the Riders - are a tight-knit group and together they check the hygiene conditions of a 250km wide area, where there are almost no roads. Their head office is at Binga hospital where they meet to plan their work based on the needs of the various villages.

Pumilani (pictured below) is the youngest of the Binga Riders. 'I am extremely proud of my bike', she says. 'I live in a village near the hospital and I feel very important knowing that thanks to this bike I can help my people.'



Simangiwe is a nurse at Binga hospital. She says of the Riders: 'Months have passed since we last saw a doctor here. Medical care is entirely in our hands and in the hands of the Riders. People are very suspicious about coming to the hospital for medical help. Only the Riders, whom everyone trusts, manage to convince the people to come.'



The increased mobility of the health workers means that they can make regular visits to communities and schools to give advice on preventative health measures such as hygiene rules, family planning and other ways

to prevent the spread of diseases like cholera and HIV/Aids. 'It's difficult talking about sexually transmitted diseases,' says Barbara, one of the Riders. 'You need to be particularly sensitive and encourage the listener to trust you.'

The Riders are also responsible for the fight against malaria - one of the region's biggest killers. As well as advising villagers on the necessary precautions, the health workers distribute mosquito nets and tools for disinfections, and instruct the village volunteers on how to use them. Academic research suggests that this systematic approach has resulted in a 20% drop in deaths from malaria in the district, even while cases in the neighbouring district of Gokwe have continued to rise.



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www.riders.org

For more information on the work that Riders for Health is carrying out visit the website at www.riders.org

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