



## CASE STUDY

# Emergency Transport Scheme Helps Women Get Emergency Obstetric Care

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In a remote area of Sundumina in Jigawa State, Aisha Bala lies back exhausted, her cries of pain barely audible. The traditional birth attendant shakes her head in exasperation: Aisha has been in labour for over 12 hours. This is her fourth pregnancy. Her past deliveries were all at home; she has never been to a health facility. Aisha's sister-in-law comes running into the room; she had gone to call for help. She announces, "We need to take her to a health facility. A driver is on his way."

Twenty minutes later, Musa Baba is assisting Aisha into his taxi. He drives her to Gwaram Cottage Hospital, where Aisha, who has been in obstructed labour and needs a caesarean section, is delivered of a healthy boy.

Musa is an emergency transport scheme (ETS) volunteer driver. He is a member of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, and has been volunteering his services since 2012, when PATHS2 advocated for volunteers to join the scheme in Birnin Kudu Local Government Area of Jigawa State.

The Partnership for Transforming Health Systems Phase2 (PATHS2), funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), was originally a six-year programme in support of the health systems in Nigeria, and has received a two-year extension. The ultimate goal of the programme is to ensure that Ni-



Aisha holding her son

geria's own resources are used efficiently and effectively to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, while the programme's immediate aim is to improve the planning, financing, and delivery of sustainable and replicable pro-poor health services for common health problems in Nigeria.

One of the key focus areas of PATHS2 in this effort has been the establishment and implementation of the emergency transport scheme in its intervention states,

particularly in Northern Nigeria. The scheme's overall goal is to reduce maternal mortality by improving women's access to emergency obstetric care. The ETS is implemented in the three northern states of Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa. The scheme collaborates with Nigeria's powerful and well-organised transport union to use taxi drivers as volunteer ambulance drivers, using their own vehicles to get pregnant women to a hospital or clinic during an obstetric emergency—at any hour of the day or night.

Musa Baba sees being an ETS driver as a national call to duty: "It is the least I can do to serve my people. I feel good any time I am called. Do you know how it feels to know you contributed to sav-

ing the life of a woman and her baby? Only God can reward us for it." He points to his ETS T-Shirt and adds, "This organisation, PATHS2, has done something wonderful. We are thankful to them for coming up with this ETS. I have encouraged my colleagues to volunteer their services, too."

Aisha was discharged home two days later with her son. She says she is indebted to Musa Baba: "He saved my life. If he hadn't taken me to the hospital, I might have died."

Through the ETS, PATHS2 and these selfless union taxi drivers have transported over 4,000 women to health facilities during obstetric emergencies, saving thousands of women's and children's lives.

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**The Partnership for Transforming Health Systems Phase Two (PATHS2)** is a health systems strengthening initiative that aims to ensure Nigeria achieves important health-related Millennium Development Goals.

Funded by UKAID from the Department for International Development, PATHS2 is working in partnership with the Government of Nigeria and other stakeholders to improve the planning, financing, and delivery of sustainable health services for those most in need. In addition to its work at the federal level, the PATHS2 programme is implemented in the five states of Enugu, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, and Lagos. PATHS2 follows the successful PATHS programme, which was implemented from 2002 to 2008.

PATHS2 is managed by Abt Associates, in association with Options, Mannion Daniels, and the Axios Foundation.

