



CASE STUDY

The Emergency Transport Scheme Saves Lives in Jigawa, Northern Nigeria

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Talatu Sale with her baby

UK aid's Partnership for Transforming Health Systems Phase 2 (PATHS2) programme is working in Jigawa with the State's Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to improve access to healthcare for pregnant women through the Emergency Transport Scheme (ETS).

This scheme was set up in conjunction with the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), a local taxi drivers union. It trains and encourages volunteer drivers within the community to drive women in labour to their local health facility in emergencies. Many of the women who have benefitted from this scheme would be unable to afford any other transport. An ETS driver saved Talatu Sale's life. Talatu, 20, lives in the Kashin Dila Karama community in Jigawa. Sitting in front of her

mud-walled hut, the mother of four cradles her new daughter as she tells her story of a close shave with death. Struggling in prolonged labour, she suddenly began bleeding heavily; then the bleeding got worse and she became very weak. Responding to her shouts and pleas of help, her mother-in-law alerted Talatu's husband, who was away at work. He arrived 20 minutes later with an ETS driver, who drove Talatu to Hadejia General Hospital, 11 kilometres away. She gave birth to a healthy girl whom she named Hauwa.

Talatu was the first person in her family to be taken to a hospital for anything related to pregnancy. "This is my first time to deliver in the hospital. I gave birth to my eldest three children at home," she says. "Now I know how important it is to receive care at the hospital. Immediately I was brought in, the midwife gave me an injection, which stopped the bleeding. I am very grateful for the ETS. If not for the ETS driver, I might have lost my life and my baby. Now I share my experience with my fellow women and I advise them to go to the hospital to be checked and taken care of."

Malam Hussein Umar is among the 1,140 volunteer ETS drivers in Jigawa. He says he is "very happy to be an ETS driver, because it helps me support the government to save lives of pregnant women. This is why at any time I am called, I quickly rush to render



Hadiza Abdulwahab, Jigawa Commissioner for Women Affairs & Social Development

my services to the pregnant woman in need without collecting any money for my services.”

Maternal mortality is receiving global attention. In Nigeria, especially in the north, post-partum hemorrhage, eclampsia, and sepsis are among its major causes. According to the National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS 2008), the maternal mortality rate in Nigeria is 545 per 100,000 live births. Jigawa, unenviably, has the highest maternal mortality rate in Nigeria. The death rate there from complications in pregnancy and birth is 2,000 per 100,000 population. Physical barriers like distance, bad roads, and the cost of transportation discourage pregnant women from seeking care when they are in trouble.

The ETS started in only 36 communities, but now 355 communities are benefiting from the scheme. The Jigawa State Commissioner for Women Affairs & Social Development, Hajiya Hadiza Abdulwahab, says the target is to reach 500 communities.

“The ETS is making an impact because of our collaboration with the PATHS2 and the NURTW, and of course because our government is committed to the programme,” she said. “When the ETS started, the government purchased 10 vehicles, and gradually it went up to 51 ETS vehicles in the state. The government recently purchased another 20 vehicles, which makes a total of 71 from the government.”

Hadiza has noticed that deaths among women and newborns in the communities have declined since the ETS was set up: “It has started reducing actually compared to before, if it’s within the cycle of your environment, before you will hear of 2-3 deaths but now it takes a longer while before you can hear of a woman dying during childbirth.”

Since the ETS started it has transported over 6,000 women throughout Jigawa. Traditional leaders make announcements about ETS in the community, and the drivers’ mobile numbers are distributed to community members. The drivers’ contacts are also displayed in public places. The government uses mass media campaigns such as radio jingles to create awareness of the service.

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The Partnership for Transforming Health Systems Phase Two (PATHS2) is a six-year development 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.



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