



CASE STUDY

Improving Women's Access to Obstetric Care through the Emergency Transport Scheme

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Rakiya Addo has been living with her father since her husband divorced her seven months ago. A 29-year-old mother of four, she says she doesn't know PATHS2, but she is grateful to Allah for the way the health workers at the Indabo health facility in Wudil Local Government Area of Kano State attended to her during antenatal care, and then during labour. Indabo is one of the health facilities benefitting from the PATHS2 service delivery model.

"May Allah bless them," she says. "I went into labour in the early morning, for about two hours, then my father went to call Mallam Danlami to carry me to the clinic, as I couldn't walk anymore because of the pain. He treated me very well. No problem at all. If they [PATHS2] are helping us, I am very happy."

Mallam Danlami Umar, a member of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, is a PATHS2-trained Emergency Transport Scheme (ETS) driver based in Wudil Local Government Area. He has a lot of stories to tell about transporting women to deliver in health facilities—some sad ones, but a lot of happy ones. "About two years ago, I travelled to Abuja and returned to Indabo about 8 p.m. I had hardly rested when I was called upon to transport a pregnant woman, whose baby had presented her hand, to Wudil General Hospital. The woman had been in labour all day, and because of the situation and that she was already weak, her family decided they wanted to take her straight to the General Hospital, instead of the Indabo primary health facility. On the way, the woman relations who were in the car told me to



Rakiya Addo, a client of the PATHS2-supported Indabo health facility, tends her two-day-old baby at home in Indabo

park, that she wanted to push. Since the hospital was still far off, and the road was bad, I agreed. Maybe it was the state of the road from Indabo that made her labour progress. I left them for her privacy. She pushed, and the baby was born. Her relations told me to take everyone back home since she had delivered, but I said no, and advised them that because she was bleeding very heavily we should continue to the hospital. They agreed. The back of my car was covered in blood, which I washed with plenty of water and bleach, but I thank Allah that the mother and child are well today."

PATHS2's goal is to reduce maternal mortality by improving women's access to emergency obstetric care through the ETS. 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. 1,288 number of women has been transported to health facilities in Kano since 2012. Danlami himself has transported 25 women.

“When you see these women, it is hard to turn your back,” Danlami reminisces. “At times, you don't even remember that you have the ETS uniform [branded t-shirt and face-cap] to wear so that you can be quickly identified as part of an emergency when you get to the hospital. But they know me now. The babies always want to come late at night or early in the morning. One time a family woke me up at about 1:30 a.m. I saw her condition and we had to rush immediately. I didn't even remember to put on the ETS uniform. They recognised me at the health facility and I explained everything. This woman was also an eclamptic patient. Her eyes were dilated and fixed.”

Despite the need to buy and pay for a plastic cover to protect the back of his car seat from blood and other fluids, strong disinfectants to wash the car interior after transporting a woman in labour, and fuel for these trips, he says he finds being a volunteer ETS driver very fulfilling and enjoyable. His family now accepts this as his calling. “One day it was raining and I heard a knock on the door. I stood up to get it but my wife wanted to



Mallam Danlami Umar, PATHS2-trained ETS driver, at the entrance of the Indabo health facility

prevent me, saying I didn't know who it was and it could be a thief, but I told her a thief won't knock—they would just break in, and I explained to her that this is my job. I am a volunteer and I could be called upon at any time.

“I do this for God. When ETS drivers return from this work, our union lets us load passengers first before others in the queue at the motor park. We get no other benefits. I have even had to pay some fees charged by the hospital when I carried a woman there. Her husband had no money at all, so I had to pay because, as a volunteer, my reward is in heaven. As long as I live and I continue doing this job as a driver, I will keep assisting these women; I'll stop only if I am no longer alive or I can't drive anymore.”

Danlami is 38 and has three wives. All his 12 children were born in a health facility.

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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.

