

Increasing Access to Healthcare

How AFCAP is helping to provide safe, reliable and sustainable access to healthcare in Tanzania

Over 95% of the Tanzanian population are at risk of Malaria. With approximately one million deaths and more than 400 million cases a year in sub-Saharan Africa, it is the leading cause of morbidity and mortality. In the Siha district of Northern Tanzania access to health facilities can be the difference between life and death.

The Lawate to Kibongoto road, on the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro, is characterised by steep hills and red volcanic soils which immediately becomes impassable when wet. This makes accessing health facilities problematic. But, Roughton is currently providing consultancy services to the upgrading of the road to all weather standard, under the African Community Access Programme (AFCAP), so that health facilities can be accessed all year round.

Nursing officer Aingaya Mlay has lived on the road in Lawate for eight years. "The road was not good and it was slippery especially during the rainy season," she recalls, "Someone may be suffering from Malaria and the road is bad and it is far because there is no transportation and they decide to sit at home."



"The road will be very helpful for us because when people are getting sick they can get to the hospital in a short time"
Nursing Officer, Aingaya Mlay

"Now the patients will not delay," says the 50-year-old. "Most people will access the hospital because of the road."

Eliamani Maimu, a 52-year-old farmer from Orumwi, agrees that lack of transport limits access to healthcare. She says: "Sometimes people are carried by chekecheke." "This is a kind of sieve used to clean maize which villagers use as a kind of improvised stretcher," she explains.

"When it is dry you might get transport but when it is raining even if you call someone they will not come to pick you up," she recalls. But, "Now I think it will be easier because even when it is raining you will call a boda-boda owner and they will come and take patient to the hospital," she adds. "My life will change for the better completely."

"A big problem was the delivery, at night pregnant women who want to deliver would wake people in the village to escort them to the hospital," explains Aingaya. "But now they can call from their home or a neighbours phone and the motorcycle will come and take them to hospital." "I was not sleeping. They used to wake me up to escort them but now I am sleeping.

They go straight to the hospital without disturbing me," she says.

Health workers used to visit the villages once a month to provide vaccination services. But, now mothers are able to take their babies to the hospital because there is transport. "The road will be very helpful for us because when people are getting sick they can get to the hospital in a short time," she says.

The construction of the road has already improved Aingaya's travel time to her workplace at Hai District Hospital. "Before, it took four hours so I had to wake up very early in the morning. Now it takes one hour to half an hour," she says. "I used to wake up at 4am to get to work but now I can get up at 5.30am. I sleep more without thinking of waking up early."



Kirisha Primary School students holding the chekecheke, which is used as an improvised stretcher