

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JULY- SEPTEMBER 2025



ENHANCING MEDICAL SAMPLE TRANSPORT IN MCHINJI: A SUCCESS STORY OF TIMELY HIV DIAGNOSTICS

VCT / KOYEZETSA MAGAZI →



Austin Aven, HIV Diagnostic Assistant (HDA) (L) , posing with Alice Mbozi, R4H Sample Transport Coordinator(M), Lufina Hamison, HDA and Angellina Mwase, R4H Sample Transport Manager, Quality Assurance (R) at St Gabriel Hospital, Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) Center

In August 2025, Angellina Mwase, the R4H Sample Transport Manager for Quality Assurance, and Alice Mbozi, the Sample Transport Coordinator for the Central Region, conducted a spot check activity at St Gabriel Hospital in Lilongwe rural. This exercise highlighted the dedication of R4H's sample transport couriers in enhancing medical sample transportation. In Mchinji District, these couriers play an important role in ensuring the timely delivery of medical samples, which is very important for effective HIV diagnosis and treatment in the region.

The efficient transportation of samples in all R4H implementing districts significantly reduces turnaround time (TAT), allowing for faster clinical decisions and improved patient outcomes.

Lufina Hamison, an HIV Diagnostics Assistant at ST Gabriel Hospital, noted that R4H's medical sample transportation system is instrumental in minimizing delays. This system ensures that samples reach their

destinations on time, facilitating quicker diagnostic processes. In Mchinji, the allocated couriers, Geoffrey Mphepo and Madalitso Mtonda, also contribute significantly by transporting quality controls (QCs) for recency testing and delivering reports to and from the District Hospital. This effort further strengthens the diagnostic process, ensuring accuracy and reliability. The collaborative work of these couriers and healthcare professionals is enhancing healthcare delivery and improving medication effectiveness across the district

ALI'S RIDE: DELIVERING HOPE AND HEALTH

My name is Ali Galanje, and I have been working as a medical sample transport courier with R4H for over four years. I started in July 2020, and it has been an amazing journey since then.

I like riding motorcycles, and this job allows me to do that while also helping people in need of quality healthcare services. Every day, I transport medical samples that help healthcare workers treat patients on time, which saves lives.

My job is important for both the community and R4H. For the community, I help ensure that people receive the medical care they need on time. For R4H, I help the organization achieve its goal of strengthening the health system through effective and efficient healthcare logistics by ensuring that medical samples and results are transported smoothly.

To anyone aspiring to work as a courier in medical sample transportation, remember that R4H is a humanitarian organization working in the health sector. Our work is about saving lives, so it is important to be dedicated, attentive to details and caring.

Each week, I visit about 30 health facilities, usually five to eight each day. Some of the places I go to include Chabvala, Chimembe, and Chikowa, among others. R4H uses a system to plan our routes based on the needs of the facilities.

One of my most memorable experiences was during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. I transported COVID-19 samples from Mwanza DHO to Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital for testing. It was a challenging time, but I felt proud to help in the fight against the pandemic. With my colleagues, we were travelling almost 240 kilometers each day to make sure the samples got to the laboratories safely.

Working with R4H has been a wonderful experience, and I'm grateful to help my community in such an important way. I am proud, as every ride and delivery reminds me of the difference I make for the betterment of my community.

BY ALI GALANJE



SAMPLE TRANSPORT OPTIMIZATION SCALE UP TRAINING FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS IN NSANJE, NTCHEU, NKHATABAY, MZIMBA SOUTH AND MACHINGA DISTRICTS



Matias Nkolhombizo, OST Assistant Program Officer, interacting with HTS staff, TB Officers, and Facility In charge, at Ndamera healthcare centre in Nsanje, during OST scale-up facility-based training, 25th August 2025.

From August 25 to September 12, 2025, R4H conducted a significant training across five districts in Malawi: Nsanje, Ntcheu, Nkhatabay, Mzimba South, and Machinga. A total of 354 healthcare workers were trained in Optimized Sample Transport (OST). The system is designed to enhance the efficiency of medical sample transport using a pull system and USSD technology. This innovative approach allows healthcare facilities to report available samples efficiently, enabling R4H route optimization officers to determine facility visit route schedules, that improve transport efficiency and reduce costs.

The training used a group discussion approach at individual facilities, with R4H facilitators guiding healthcare workers through the process of USSD reporting for various sample types. The training had three main objectives: to introduce OST to healthcare workers, to train them on sample notification and transport requests, and to train healthcare workers on practical steps for USSD reporting.

From October 2023 to September 2024, OST had been implemented in Phalombe, Rumphi, Salima, Lilongwe, and Mzimba North. The program was then scaled up to include Mangochi, Blantyre, Zomba, Chikwawa, Chiradzulu, and Mulanje, and later to 5 newly scaled-up districts, Machinga, Nsanje, Mzimba South, Nkhatabay, and Ntcheu, in quarter 4 of 2024-25 FY, bringing the total to 16 districts under the OST program.

OST operates as a demand-driven system where healthcare workers use specific codes to report sample volumes. These reports are sent to the R4H central office, where an OST team creates courier routes for the following day. This system not only increases efficiency, but also results in significant cost savings[CII] , for instance., Empty trips, reduced TAT, samples rejections, wear and tear, among others. The training targeted key personnel at each facility, including the facility in charge, HIV Diagnostic Assistant (HDA), and a TB officer, to ensure a comprehensive understanding and implementation of the OST system.

DRIVING SCHOOL UPDATE

JULY- SEPTEMBER 2025



August 2025

Japan Tobacco International (JTI)

11 new motorcycle trainees

July 2025

Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)

34 trainees under motorcycle refresher training program

MOTOR CENTER UPDATE



July 2025

R4H Motor Center conducted Pre-Delivery Inspection (PDI) for 300 motorcycles for UNICEF Malawi, in July 2025

September 2025

conducted Pre-Delivery Inspection (PDI) for 7 motorcycles for UNICEF Malawi



Kelvin Kholoma

Human Resource
and Administration
Manager

HR AND ADMIN UPDATES

30th September 2025

Greetings!

Contract Renewals for 2025-2026 Financial Year

All staff contracts will be renewed for 6 months (30th September 2025 to 31st March 2026), excluding those who have performance-related issues. This is due to the current funding status.

Management will be providing regular updates to staff in due course when there are new developments regarding the same.
Sincerely,

LEAVERS

Chikondi Makawa, **Sample Transport Courier- Thyolo** 19th September 2025

Grace Mwausegha , **Procurement Officer** 30th July 2025

Alice Mbozi, **Sample Transport Coordinator- Central Region** 29th September 2025

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