Utilization of Local Private Transplanters for Improved Lab Sample Transport

**INTRODUCTION**

Polio, a crippling and potentially fatal infectious disease, remains a threat to global health. To accelerate polio eradication efforts, we are implementing customized programs in 15 countries at high risk for outbreaks. These programs aim to improve the speed and quality of polio sample transportation from communities and health facilities to national and international laboratories.

**METHODOLOGY**

The decision to utilize commercial transporters was primarily driven by the following factors:

- Polo lab sample timeliness & quality concerns
- Insufficient utilization of health workers for transport
- Availability of reliable commercial couriers
- Data gaps and challenges: insufficient data on sample transport processes

Country-specific interventions were co-created with the Ministries of Health and WHO, and tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities identified in each setting:

- On-demand sample transport by local transporters
- Development of standard operating procedures (SOPs)
- Biosafety training for health workers and transporters
- Real-time GPS sample tracking & temperature monitoring
- Focus on data quality (Chain of custody & Case investigation forms)

**On-Demand Transport System in 9 Countries** (3 highlighted below)

Over the past year, local private transporters have moved over 10,000 acute-affected paralytic (AAPP) samples across 9 countries, plus Environmental Surveillance (ES) and other outbreak-prone disease samples (i.e., measles, yellow fever, Ebola), maintaining high sample quality

### RESULTS

**Guinea**

APP Sample Transport: By Month

- Average of days from collection to community health facility

- Average of days from community health facility to health district

- Average of days from health district to provincial EPI

**DRC**

APP Sample Transport: Per Province

- Average of days from sample collection to provincial health facility

- Average of days from provincial health facility to provincial EPI office

**Mozambique**

APP Sample Transport: Routine & On-Demand

- Average of days from sample to collection to provincial health facility

### RECOMMENDATIONS

For successful implementation, we recommend an optimal mix of community health workers and private transporters to support Governments to:

- Introduce fast, on-demand lab sample transport to strengthen routine disease surveillance & contain outbreaks as soon as they occur

- Professionalize private transporters by providing guidelines on proper packaging, handling, sample delivery times and data for accountability

- Establish or improve monitoring and reporting mechanisms to evaluate the performance of private transporters and ensure the traceability and temperature of polio samples in almost real-time by using tracking devices such as TecMed

**The Outsourced Transport Resource Center** is available to help with the selection of private transporters that meet the necessary qualifications and safety standards.

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**AUTHOR BIO**

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Yves Rolland Kouabenan is a public health practitioner and an experienced monitoring and evaluation professional. He has over 10 years of experience in program management and data analysis in the food and water sector from VillageReach’s headquarters in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Yves Rolland has worked on several public health programs, with a focus on developing strategies to prevent vaccine preventable diseases such as polio, pertussis and COVID-19. He has also been working on strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems in many countries to provide high quality data that supports decision making.

Currently, Yves Rolland works as the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager of VillageReach’s Tanzania program and health program manager in Mozambique. Through his work, he has developed strong public health program management and data analysis skills.

Before joining VillageReach, Yves Rolland worked as a Monitoring and Evaluation advisor with the International Center for Training and Education Center for Health under the WHO/Tanzania. He worked on improving the performance of health care providers in vulnerable communities. His passion for reducing health disparities in vulnerable communities is guided by the work he has done over the years.

**Photo Credit:** Luciana Maxim, VillageReach, Guinea