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A REPORT ON MOTORCYCLE TAXI POLICY CHANGES AND ASSOCIATED EFFECTIVENESS OF LAY FIRST RESPONDER TRAINING PROGRAMS IN UGANDA

Peter G. Delaney

Mentor: Shanti Parikh

Approximately 58,500 data points on traumatic injury were collected from the Iganga District Health Office in June 2016, demonstrating that over the five months for which data was available (Oct. '15 – Feb. '16), numbers of traffic accident injuries had risen to well over 300 cases consistently (as high as 499 injuries in Dec. '15), which had not happened once in the preceding 18 measured months. The other illuminating fact gleaned from the research was that motorcycle taxi (known as “boda-bodas”)-related injuries averaged 52.05% of the total traffic accident injuries reported monthly. After researching boda-bodas more closely I proposed a boda-boda policy change to combat over-speeding and reckless driving. The proposal and data were presented to the chairmen of the respective boda-boda associations in Iganga District, which received their endorsement and backing, and was then successfully presented to representatives of all district government offices in Iganga, gaining their support in the process. The policy proposal is now passing through both the Municipal and District Government councils and awaiting approval. Following the World Health Organization’s guidelines that lay first-responders should be the first step towards developing formal emergency medical services (EMS) in settings without a formal pre-hospital system (which Iganga District lacks), I locally sourced first aid kits for and trained 154 boda-bodas in basic first aid (by partnering with a local trainer from the Iganga Branch of the Uganda Red Cross Society), in ~25-person 4.5-hour sessions. Trainees were administered pre- and post-test surveys to measure skill improvement. Across all categories (Bleeding Control, Scene Management, Airway & Breathing, Recovery Position, and Victim Transport), trainees’ scores improved, dramatically in most cases.