

Tebita Ambulance and Pre-Hospital Emergency Medical Services

Ethiopia is home to over 80 million people, 80 percent of whom live in rural areas without proper roads or nearby hospitals. Ethiopia also has high rates of maternal and infant mortality, with 1 in 27 women dying in pregnancy. The country's highly fragmented emergency medical transport system means a complicated pregnancy can easily become a life-threatening situation for a woman trying to reach a hospital.

While the Addis Ababa Red Cross has 10 ambulances, their budget limits them to running only four per day, which are staffed by minimally-trained volunteers. The Ministry of Health is working to expand the country's ambulance fleet, but there are few trained emergency medical staff. With few options, Ethiopia's pregnant women often resort to using taxis, motorbikes, or bicycles to reach a hospital in an emergency. In rural areas, transport options are further limited to mules, horses, or being carried by neighbors and relatives. The HANSHEP Health Enterprise Fund, implemented by the SHOPS project, selected Tebita Ambulance and Pre-Hospital Emergency Medical Services to receive a grant to expand the first private ambulance fleet in Ethiopia in order to fill this unmet need.

The Business Model

Tebita offers professionally staffed, well-equipped, door-to-door ambulance services. With this level of service Tebita keeps patients stable while transporting them to one of four different hospitals. With the slogan, "Dial 8035 to save lives," Tebita's four-digit telephone number makes access to ambulance services fast and easy for those in an emergency.

Many Ethiopians in need of emergency services cannot afford typical ambulance rates, which are often high due to substantial maintenance and fuel costs. However, Tebita finds limiting services to high-income patients to be unacceptable. Thus, the company is working to perfect a tiered-pricing and cross-subsidization model for their services. To subsidize services for the poor, Tebita pursues contracts with international organizations and multi-national companies. For instance, Tebita holds contracts with mining companies to provide emergency transport for employees located in harsh, rural settings. Tebita also partners with AMREF's Flying Doctors in Nairobi, International SOS, and Africa Assist to facilitate international evacuations, and works to provide other premium services that will attract



Tebita's ambulance team is prepared to serve Ethiopia

Tebita

Grantee at a Glance

- Vision: Serve as a comprehensive, internationally-accredited emergency medical service hub in East Africa
- Innovation type: Ethiopia's first private ambulance and emergency medical service provider
- Health focus: Maternal and child health
- Target population: Men, women, and children in need of emergency care
- Country: Ethiopia

international clients. The revenue from these partnerships allows Tebita to continue to serve low-income clients.

To complement their emergency transport services, Tebita is starting a home-based nursing care service to reduce the burden on hospitals with limited bed space. The company also offers first aid and paramedic training and sells well-equipped first aid kits. In the future, Tebita expects to launch the country's first paramedic training center.

Building a Strong Business


The Health Enterprise Fund is supporting Tebita to expand its existing emergency response capabilities through complementary activities, including expanding to a network of multiple dispatch centers with a larger ambulance fleet, training additional paramedics, creating first aid awareness videos in three major local languages (Amharic, Oromifa, and Tigregna), and developing a home-based nursing service.

The fund sponsored a team of MBA students to conduct a costing exercise and market analysis of cross-subsidization within Tebita's existing offerings. This support helped Tebita better understand its underlying cost structure, segment the market, and select locations for the new dispatch centers. The Health Enterprise Fund also provided support to improve Tebita's technology platforms.

At a Health Enterprise Fund event, Tebita's founder, Kibret Abebe, learned of impact investing organization, Acumen, and was selected as Acumen's first East Africa Fellow

from Ethiopia. In addition to leading to an executive MBA in leadership, this fellowship will connect Abebe with onward investors and other social entrepreneurs for training and networking. Tebita has also networked with the other fund grantees during technical assistance activities, most notably, Telemed Medical Services. As a result, Tebita is partnering with Telemed to offer seamless ambulance service to Telemed's call center customers when they require emergency assistance.

The Impact

 We are ambitious and we know we will grow, and if you give us the chance we will do it." - Dr. Kibret Tuffa, General Manager, Tebita

With support from the Health Enterprise Fund, Tebita provided emergency transport to over 1,800 patients in just one year. Approximately 20 percent of ambulance patients used the services for maternal and child health emergencies, including pregnancy complications and neonatal pre-hospital care. Tebita has also provided first aid and health safety training for more than 25,000 trainees, and produced a video on first aid principles, which includes 12 topics related to first aid management. This program aired on Ethiopian television to teach the public about basic life support. Tebita has also signed a contract with a popular radio station to broadcast first aid programming once a week for the coming year. The number of patients served by Tebita's ambulances grew by more than 50 percent within the first year of the Health Enterprise Fund, and growth should continue as Tebita expands its fleet and improves support services.

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For more information about the SHOPS project, visit: www.shopsproject.org



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