

Going the Final Mile to Save Lives

UPS Transformation is coming to life in some unexpected places

On the surface, it's a humanitarian effort that involves The UPS Foundation, the Uganda Ministry of Health, Gavi, and UPS ISMEA operations. What it represents is something far greater – a 112-year-old company's ability to think differently, take risks, and build new partnerships in a remote region of Africa.



An 18-month pilot program began in 2018 as part of The UPS Foundation's Humanitarian Relief & Resilience Program. Gavi – a public-private global health partnership that's committed to increasing access to vaccines and immunization in poor countries – turned to The UPS Foundation to help deliver vaccines for children in some of the most difficult to reach areas of Uganda.

The Ugandan districts of Wakiso, Nakaseke, and Nakasongola represent the highest number of unimmunized children in Uganda.



Public-private partnership at its best

Jim is a retired UPS Customer Solutions district manager who came out of retirement to assist The UPS Foundation with its work with The Global Fund as a loaned executive. He helps to strengthen capacity of the UPS Foundation's humanitarian agency partners including GAVI.

The UPS Foundation's tremendous partnership with Gavi, led to an introduction with the Uganda Ministry of Health as the private company charged with establishing a final-mile delivery solution and increasing immunization coverage through the distribution of life-saving vaccines. Because the Ugandan government has oversight of all supply chains, this partnership marked the first time the country outsourced final-mile

delivery to a private company.

“Similar to UPS’s drone solutions in Rwanda, this pilot represented another innovative public-private partnership opportunity for The UPS Foundation to work with Gavi to help strengthen health systems,” said Ed Martinez, President, The UPS Foundation. “Jim, and our UPS ISMEA volunteers, are skilled and passionate volunteers and are instrumental in making these partnerships work. They are pivotal to The UPS Foundation’s mission.”



Final-mile challenges

In the beginning, the challenges were many. First, there was the logistics of creating schedules and route maps to make regular deliveries to more than 170 health clinics in three remote districts – places that require navigating dirt roads, the occasional river, and harsh conditions. There also was the matter of maintaining the correct humidity and temperature for the vaccines, which

necessitate refrigerated vehicles with a wireless temperature monitoring system.

If that wasn’t enough, UPS was tasked with helping the clinics properly store the vaccines once they arrive, which means also delivering propane tanks for their refrigerator units. And, UPS needed to provide proof of delivery tracking on all deliveries, another first in Uganda, requiring the development of a customized mobile app.

According to Jim, healthcare workers at the clinics additionally needed to learn the new protocols that this solution would bring to their day-to-day routines.

“The solution brings a predictability to their vaccine needs and improves their ability to manage their medical responsibilities,” Jim said. “The scheduled deliveries provide a consistency that allows them to forecast and plan their patient management – something they hadn’t been able to do until now.”

A solution that works

UPS is working closely with its local delivery agent in Uganda, FIT, to make the vaccine deliveries, and in six short months they have fine-tuned its process into a highly-efficient model. Three refrigerated trucks that maintain the temperature of vaccines are on the road, as well as a motorcycle and a boat. What’s more, health



clinics in three districts have already been outfitted with refrigeration units.

The pilot represented the first time UPS operated in Uganda, requiring it to simultaneously establish new relationships, build a network, and prove the quality of its supply chain services.

According to Clifford Pereira, UPS ISMEA Country Manager, there's been a lot of interest in what's being done differently on this pilot because of its success.

"We always thought we'd want to replicate this model once we had completed the project; however the excitement generated in the last three months has been unimaginable," he said. "The opportunity to serve people and save lives has always been something I'm passionate about. While working on the pilot and knowing the impact it can have on small children, I realized that I could influence the concept in my home country of India and take this initiative even further."



A risk worth taking

Participating in the pilot was a risk, to be sure, and UPS assumed the risk knowing that there are no guarantees once the pilot is complete.

According to Ed, the pilot represented an opportunity for The UPS Foundation to carry out one of its founding missions – to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages. It also addresses one of the most significant global

issues that prevents children from living productive lives.

The pilot also presented new opportunities and partnerships for UPS. While there was much to be learned – and proved – from this effort, it allowed UPS to see the potential of expanding its Uganda network to other countries with similar difficulties distributing vaccines.

First and foremost, it was a humanitarian effort. We did it knowing that we're helping the people of Uganda receive much-needed vaccines and other life-saving commodities.



"This was a unique opportunity and a breakthrough approach to establishing a new healthcare capability for the company," Jim said. "Working with our partners in Uganda, the team has proven the private sector is a viable option to managing the health supply needs of these countries."

Breakthrough could lead to healthier communities and a new growth market

UPS continues to build its infrastructure to execute a final-mile delivery model. The success in Uganda could boost network development and enable delivery services to the more challenging and remote areas of African countries for commercial clients.

The network and vehicles being used in Uganda can expand their capacity once the pilot solution is fully implemented and other goods and commodities from the developed world can be delivered to these markets in a secure, dependable approach. What's more, UPS's visibility and tracking solutions address many of the "black holes" that exist today in developing countries. The company showed that a private sector can take healthcare supplies from key centers to remote clinics.

In addition to its current work in Uganda, UPS is in early discussions to evaluate implementing a similar set of solutions for the a final-mile solution in Rwanda and Ghana.

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I love seeing that UPS is involved in activities like this.

I was fortunate enough to go on a medical mission trip

to Uganda and this makes me very proud to be a

UPSer. Innovative solutions to real world problems,

that directly help people of the world. I would love to

get to work on initiatives like this!

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We can make a difference in these children's lives!

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