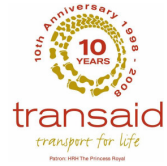


PRESS RELEASE



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MOTORCYCLE AMBULANCE TRAILER PROJECT GETS OFF THE GROUND WITH MAN ERF UK

A team from commercial vehicle manufacturer MAN ERF UK and S&B Training, the company which runs its apprenticeships, have returned from a two week trip to Nigeria where they have been overseeing the construction of the first motorcycle ambulance trailers.

The Transaid project is part of a major, UK government funded programme to reduce delays for women who need to access emergency care in pregnancy. The long distances to clinics, high costs of using commercial passenger transport and lack of transport at night have led to the development of a volunteer scheme where motorcycle taxi union members will use their bikes, the dominant mode of public transport in Nigeria, to take women to clinics if an emergency arises.

Prior to the trip, MAN ERF UK gave its young apprentices at S&B Training the opportunity to make a real difference in developing-world Africa, by briefing them to design a lightweight prototype motorcycle ambulance trailer. The brief stated the trailer must offer significant structural stability to withstand rugged terrain and be capable of carrying both the patient and a passenger at speed, and in reasonable comfort.

Declan Donnelly, a third year apprentice based in Northern Ireland emerged with the simplest, most robust and cost-effective design, which he named the 'Dec-Lander'. Together with Pete Vill, Senior HGV Lecturer at S&B and Paul Sadler, Regional Sales Manager (South West) at MAN ERF, he travelled to rural Dutse in northern Nigeria to ensure the trailer could be manufactured locally using available expertise and materials.

"Four local garages were in competition to construct the winning interpretation of the Dec-Lander and when we arrived they each had the bodies already built," explains Declan, who was visiting Africa for the first time. "Problems set-in when it came to the suspension mounting and braking systems, so our time was spent helping the teams find the necessary solutions, as well as providing professional driver training to the riders.

"At the formal commissioning ceremony on the final day of our trip, the riders arrived in convoy and it was a proud moment to see the Dec-Landers brought to life. We left the garages with recommendations on further modifications to make the trailers even stronger and safer," adds Declan.

Des Evans, CEO at MAN ERF UK says: "This is a fabulous initiative by Transaid, and I'm thrilled our own Declan Donnelly is taking such a leading role in the project. The enthusiasm shown by all the MAN ERF UK apprentices on the Dec-Lander project makes me proud, and I'm confident the future of MAN ERF UK is in safe hands after our apprentices graduate to full time employment."

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The next step of the project will see Transaid oversee additional safety trials and official vehicle licensing for the trailer. It is hoped that mass manufacture will begin this autumn.

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Note to Editor: Transaid (www.transaid.org) is an international development agency that aims to improve people's quality of life in the developing world by making transport more available and affordable. It was founded by Save The Children and the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (UK) and works by sharing skills and knowledge with local people to enable them to put in place and manage efficient transport systems.

Transaid's core work includes creating transport management systems for the public sector and assisting with the provision of professional driving qualification development and the training of driver trainers. It also assists with teaching preventive vehicle maintenance management and introducing local, low cost transport solutions including its innovative bicycle ambulance. Transaid also helps promote HIV, AIDS and road safety awareness and shares its specialist knowledge with the humanitarian aid sector.

Transaid enjoys strong backing from the transport and logistics industry and the active involvement of its patron, HRH The Princess Royal.

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