

PRESS RELEASE



Michelin Training Instructor returns from Zambia with Transaid

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Michelin Training Instructor Nigel Williams has returned from a life saving road safety trip training commercial vehicle driver instructors in Zambia for international development charity, Transaid.

The 35-year-old from Uttroter travelled to Africa for a two week assignment that saw him assist Transaid conduct tyre related driver safety awareness and transport management training at the Industrial Training Centre Trust (ITCT) in the Zambian capital, Lusaka.

“After HIV/AIDS and malaria, the next biggest killer in Zambia are road deaths and the second leading cause of death for people aged between five and 20-years-old, with devastating impacts on families and communities,” says Williams.

“Zambia is a landlocked country that is completely reliant on overland goods distribution but lacks a sustainable, efficient and accessible transport infrastructure, which in turn has a serious impact on basic trade and business. By sharing technical skills and knowledge from Michelin and Transaid we are helping Zambia’s professional drivers tackle this by becoming safer.

Michelin is a founder member of Transaid, which enjoys the patronage of HRH The Princess Royal, and is committed to improving worldwide mobility and road safety.

“By teaching drivers advanced skills beyond vehicle manoeuvring knowledge, they have a greater understanding of risks and risk reduction which can make the roads of sub-Saharan Africa safer places to be,” adds Williams, who used the experience he has gained over the last 11 years with Michelin to provide detailed tyre safety advice.

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“No matter where you are in the world, daily tyre pressure checks and inspections are a vital part of road safety. Transaid asked me to spend quality time briefing the three full-time ITCT trainers and automotive engineering lecturers in Lusaka on detailed tyre management and best practices.”

The classroom and practical-based education programme saw specific modules on fleet auditing and truck tyre wear and damage identification, looking at tyres on vehicles to observe wear patterns and types of damage and seeing students taking tyre pressures and discussing their importance.

“The thing that shocked me the most is that there is no official Highway Code or well-policed tyre law in Zambia, with tyres removed only when they are smooth. I was told that it is also not unusual for drivers to give an eighth of their salary to a cousin of just 12 or 13 years of age who take over the driving of the 56 tonne vehicle when tired.”

Williams adds: “While there I visited a transport company with a fleet of 100 vehicles, which has seen six drivers die in accidents last year alone.”

Since 2002, Transaid has been assisting within the only commercial driver training facility in Zambia by arranging secondments of experienced driver trainers from member companies to help develop internationally recognised professional driver training standards, with Transaid Zambia Programme Manager, Caroline Barber, on secondment from Wincanton, based at the ITCT until 2010.

Caroline Barber comments: “We’re delighted to have the opportunity to draw upon Michelin’s tyre expertise which marks the start of a series of vital training inputs to the centre. It is the first time Transaid member companies have come together as a consortium to really tackle the challenges facing commercial driving in Zambia.

“Tyre safety awareness is integral to road safety and through the Professional Driver Training Project, commercial driving standards within the region will improve, making drivers safer and more efficient. The aim is to reduce the number of crashes which have devastating consequences for poorer people and local communities.

Other classroom-based and practical modules covered by Williams included truck tyre management, pre-driver checks and training to train.

“I was so impressed by the dedication of those who work abroad, full-time with charities such as Transaid. The reasons for their high level of motivation is apparent everyday - the hunger for knowledge amongst those receiving training was very significant.

“I have never been to this part of the world before and I thoroughly enjoyed working in a very different environment, but with the same message – an exciting challenge,” concludes Williams.

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