

PRESS RELEASE



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STAGECOACH AND TRANSAID CONTINUE TO DRIVE UP ROAD SAFETY STANDARDS IN AFRICA

Stagecoach Group is continuing its strong partnership with international development charity Transaid to improve road safety in sub-Saharan Africa. The Perth-based transport group, which has previously provided driver training in Ghana and Zambia, has agreed to fund Stagecoach Driving Instructor Neil Rettie on a two-year secondment to help improve driving standards in Tanzania.

Stagecoach has also donated a coach to the Industrial Training Centre (ITC) in Zambia which will be used to improve the standard of training for bus drivers in the country.

Neil, who previously spent six months training bus and coach drivers in Zambia, has been appointed Project Manager of Transaid's Professional Driver Training Project in Tanzania. He will oversee a professional driver training programme for bus and coach drivers in the East African country in a bid to improve driving standards and road safety.

The Tanzanian city of Dar-es-Salaam is extremely congested. As a result, the government is introducing a bus rapid transit system which will consist of dedicated bus lanes operating across the busiest routes and there is a need to find and train up to 1000 drivers to operate the new bus system in the first phase of the government project.

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Neil's two-year secondment from his post as a Driving Instructor for Stagecoach Highlands in Inverness began in November and will run until December 2012. He will work at the National Institute of Transport (NIT) in Dar-es-Salaam, where his aim is to improve the quality and delivery of practical elements of the driver training course. He will also work closely with the NIT, the Tanzanian Government and bus associations to create and implement an appropriate bus driver training curriculum.

Speaking before leaving for Tanzania, Neil said: "I'm absolutely delighted to have this role. It's a huge opportunity for me to play an active part in improving driving standards over there.

"I never expected this chance to come up but it's a great challenge and a totally new experience. It's a steep learning curve but I'm enjoying it and it's an extremely worthwhile project which we all hope will lead to improved road safety in Tanzania."

Before travelling to Tanzania this month, Neil returned to Zambia to deliver bus driver training to six trainers at the ITC. While there, he also welcomed the coach which Stagecoach has donated to the centre. The single deck Volvo vehicle will allow more effective training for bus drivers in Zambia and is the latest support to be provided by Stagecoach which is a founding member of Transaid.

Chris Saunders, Chief Executive of Transaid says, "We are delighted to receive continued support from Stagecoach for our work to improve driving standards in Africa and thank Neil for his commitment. In Tanzania, bus driving is often seen as a job of last resort and as such there is little formal training. Neil's practical input will go a long way to ensuring that bus drivers in Tanzania, of which there are over 40,000, receive more quality training to operate more safely and efficiently."

Road crashes are the third highest cause of premature death in sub-Saharan Africa after HIV/AIDS and malaria. Many accidents can often be attributed to poor driving skills and poor vehicle maintenance, as many drivers have received little formal education and virtually no driver training. Transaid and its partner organisations, including Stagecoach, are trying to address these issues.

Stagecoach UK Bus Managing Director Les Warneford said: “Our partnership with Transaid is very important to us. We know first-hand the challenges involved in running bus services in Africa and fully recognise the need for improved driver training. We provide a comprehensive training programme for all of our drivers here in the UK and we hope that Neil’s input in Tanzania, and the bus we have donated in Zambia, will go some way to improving driving standards and road safety in those countries too.”

For further information on Stagecoach UK Bus visit www.stagecoachbus.com.

For more details on Transaid projects visit www.transaid.org

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 road safety awareness and shares its specialist knowledge with the industry and the active involvement of its Patron, HRH The Princess Royal.

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