

# PRESS RELEASE



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## **NATIONAL EXPRESS DRIVERS DELIVER LIFE-SAVING TRAINING IN AFRICA**

Two National Express bus training instructors travelled to Tanzania to deliver an intensive training course designed to reduce the number of road deaths in Africa.

Qualified instructors Raj Bhutta and John Mitchell, who are both based in the West Midlands, shared their skills and expertise with six driver trainers during a two-week programme held at the National Institute of Transport (NIT) in Dar Es Salaam, organised by international development charity Transaid.

Sessions were designed to enhance the practical driving skills of the trainers in addition to giving advice on instructional techniques. Training also included carrying out vehicle safety checks, fault analysis and giving constructive feedback to students. This input will form the basis of future driver training in Tanzania where an estimated 80% of bus drivers are not in possession of a proper licence.

Buttha said: "It is astonishing to think that so few bus drivers in Tanzania have had any formal training.

"There, bus driving is often a last resort job and many drivers have little understanding of the basic rules of the road, the risks they take and the danger they pose to other road users."

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Mitchell added: “We tailored the sessions specifically for the group, and we got some really positive feedback. We are confident that the knowledge we shared will be repeated to scores of other drivers so the potential exists to save hundreds of lives.”

Transaid’s work in Tanzania is an extension of its Professional Driver Training Project which focuses on the shortage of skilled commercial truck and bus drivers in Zambia and is supported by a consortium of European transport and logistics companies.

Gary Forster, the charity’s Chief Executive, said: “A third of Tanzania’s driver training schools have recently closed down due to poor standards which means the training Raj and John have delivered is more important than ever.

“The NIT has been mandated by the government to re-train more than 30,000 bus drivers under new licensing laws and this input will ensure the delivery of quality training to help reduce the 3,500 road deaths occurring annually in the country each year.”

“Our sincere thanks go to them and to National Express for its generous donation of staff time and its continued financial support.”

**Note to Editor:**

**Transaid** ([www.transaid.org](http://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.

### **About National Express West Midlands:**

National Express is the market leader in the UK's largest urban bus market outside of London. It operates more than 1,600 vehicles and covers over 70 million miles a year.

National Express West Midlands is accredited for quality in driver training by the IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) and The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). RoSPA and IAM created a new industry benchmark based on the efforts of the company's in-house trainers having already recognised the training courses, delivered to the 5,000 bus drivers in the West Midlands, are exceeding all EU Directives. National Express was the first company in the transport industry to be given the licence to deliver training in house and the first to be recognised for its driver assessment programme.

### **About National Express Group.**

More than 700 million journeys a year are made on its bus, train, light rail and express coach operations in the UK, North America and Spain.

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