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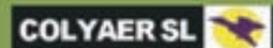
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# + *Medicine on* **THE MOVE**

FEATURE

by Johanthan  
Ingensson  
Logan



**W**E pilots are exceptional people. Fight your reflex to feign humility and just roll with it for the moment. We rise to the occasion, soar with eagles, fly in the face of adversity and inspire ground dwellers to devise magnificent descriptive metaphors with flying colours. We have achieved this greatness on skill and merit alone, so we have the right to feel a bit smug. Congratulations. Yay, us! So, of course, we are devoting our lives to bettering those of mere mortals. Right?

>> The AvTech Girls with the first Zenith CH801 to be built in Ghana



>> Below: Girls from Kete Krachi on selection flights with Patricia Mawuli Nyekodz; From top left: First aid as required to those in need - the post-operative wound on Lydia Wetsi, a disabled student pilot, is being dressed; Lydia Wetsi, a disabled student takes a flying lesson from Capt Yaw.

Well, here are some angels who are.

In 2007, a young Ghanaian girl, Patricia, was chopping wood in the forest near her home and saw an aeroplane flying overhead. She walked to the airfield, asked for a job and was soon put to work clearing the airstrip by hand for Medicine on the Move (MoM). That one act changed her life. Now she is a pilot, flying instructor, one of the world's first female Rotax Engineer, and an inspirational speaker promoting safe and effective health care in rural communities all over Ghana. Now she is changing other people's lives forever. Quite auspicious for a girl from a mud hut.

Sound miraculous? It is. And it's the sort of miracle MoM performs every day. MoM's mission is "to improve the lives of West Africans by providing healthcare, education and regular medical services to rural communities in Ghana." It began in 1994 when Jonathan Porter (Captain Yaw) and his family visited Ghana and found the ground transportation network limited to only major cities, a nation with a life expectancy under 60 due in part to an insufficient number of medical facilities and poor to non-existent health education in rural areas. The obvious solution, to bring health care professionals and educators to rural communities by using factory built and regulated aircraft proved problematic due to, among a host of other things, Certificates of Airworthiness requiring original factory parts and not allowing for bush repairs.

Jonathan's solution was to create a local aircraft build and maintenance centre with a flying school to support flying doctors. It met strong bureaucratic stonewalling. In 2006 Jonathan's son, Matthew, required medical attention so urgent he was airlifted to the UK. By his son's hospital bed, Jonathan vowed to let no apathy, bureaucracy, inefficiency, mysticism or anything else stand in his way of creating a flying doctor service in Ghana.

In conjunction with another of Jonathan's labours, WAASPS (West African Aviation Solutions Proposal) MoM enables student pilots to conduct their flight lessons to "reach communities, monitor projects, conduct photographic research, and perform air drops for the purpose of MoM's humanitarian activities."

In a manner true to the heart of all RA-Aus members, MoM achieves these lofty goals in large part due to its use of planes like the Aussie X-Air (my main wings in Korea) for pilot training and the kit built, Zenith 701s and 801s, for logistics.

Because the X-Air is such a forgiving plane, it is used as the primary trainer. It is also used for banner towing but that role will soon be taken by the CH701s. 'It's all about range,' says the Cap-

tain. 'The X-Airs have 80 litre tanks and cruise at 100km/hr. The CH701s carry 140 litres, cruise at 120km/hr and can stay aloft all day.'

Nobody can proclaim the benefits of Zenith's aircraft better than the Captain.

"The CH701 is the most copied aircraft in that category around. It wins the game for a number of reasons.

1. The 701 can be plans built - meaning we can make with factory 'sanction' all of the parts in country should we need to;
2. T6 is an excellent corrosion resistant material for tropical applications;
3. Factory support is second to none - and they stand by their product like no other;
4. They are in use around the world, making CAA acceptance easier;
5. They fly like a dream and are robust, of simple construction and are easy to understand for first time builders.

The CH801 is the 'Mother' of the 701 and has incredible payload flexibility and power plant options. We chose the XP360 because it can run on low octane fuels."

The Zenith aircraft are proven rugged designs, purchased inexpensively and built using the most basic of tools. The CH701 and CH801 are renowned for their short take off and landing (STOL) performance, rugged all metal design, ease of construction, and basic field maintenance. They were designed from the ground up for off-airport operations.

Matching the right plane to the right mission is critical to success. Via the WAASPS, MoM is also using an X-Air H as a transition trainer from X-Air F to CH701 and above. The CH701 is primarily used as a mission plane flying aerial supply, aerial photo and long range support. Under construction, but held up due to monetary constraints, are a float equipped CH801 as an Air Ambulance and a float equipped CH701 as another mission plane.

This pilot, being passionate about the Sport Cub, had to ask why MoM wasn't flying tundra tyred tail draggers.

The Captain said it was simple. "Imagine a crosswind on every landing, gusting from any of 280 degrees and changing every few minutes. Approaching with a headwind and touching down with a 15kt crosswind or tail gust is not unusual."

So what does a pilot need to handle these conditions? "Passion, enthusiasm, humour..." Check, go on. "Love of people, a big heart,"

Do planes count as people and is that 'heart' thing between the throttle and the fuel mixture? "Preparedness for frustrations and perseverance..." Is that the stall warning

>> From top left: Many of the parts are made from scratch using hand tools and skills learned at Kpong; making aircraft engine baffles for the Superiour IO360 engine used on the CH801 air ambulance; Patricia back from another successful flight in the MoM CH701 STOL aircraft she built.

I hear?

"Ability to FLY the plane no matter what the weather does."

Recovering... "And the ability to work with maps that are wrong. Ability to read the weather from the sky, water and birds..." You have control, Captain Yaw.

Despite having volunteers from all walks of life (engineers, mechanics, biochemists, teachers, film-makers, bank clerks and many others) who "always gain more than they give," the biggest thunderheads to MoM's operations are not in the sky, but in the rarified-air-conditioned offices of bureaucrats. "We are flying uphill in a storm of paperwork," says Jonathan. "We cannot handle the cost of customs, duties and CAA challenges related to 'not-built-in-Ghana' items. So everything (like the desperately needed floats for the CH701 and CH801) must be in kit form."

The genius of using plan and kit built planes not only circumvents much of the expensive and time consuming red tape, but also enables the formation of the AvTech Academy (another of Mr. Porter's MoM Team projects) which trains up to four Ghanaian young women per year in aviation, engineering, first aid and many other skills.

Like Patricia, who wandered onto the field from the bush, MoM inspires these bright students by contributing to the servicing and staffing of field operations. As inspiring as her (and all the other creators and volunteers) stories are, it is important to keep in mind the people for whom they selflessly sacrifice their time, labour and care.

Someone like Lydia.

At the age of three, she was bitten by an insect and was treated with good intentions and a great deal of medical ignorance. She ended up being a 14 year old with a withered and misshapen arm. Jonathan and MoM discovered her in a village market. They have since provided her with modern surgery, physical therapy and respect. They have provided resources, education and care to enable Lydia to begin her flight training and give her the opportunity to become an inspiration and also "change lives one flight at a time."

For more information visit the website at [www.medicineonthemove.org](http://www.medicineonthemove.org).