

SafetyFocus

Quarterly Journal on African aviation safety - vol 4

Issue

03

2014

Dec '14 - Jan '15



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Helicopter safety & misplaced priorities
- Hypoxia: inadequate oxygen supply
- IASS 2014 report: Inspiring Air Safety Summit
- What to do when using an overwing emergency exit?

Extended Family



Family is very important everywhere in the world. That includes Africa where, in a lot of cases, families are the building blocks of society. However, the *extended family* is quite common in Africa but it is a far less common feature of Western Europe and North America.

Sure, changes are ongoing with industrialization and 'Western' education bringing value changes which emphasize individualism over collectivity, but there are still many very good reasons that keep extended families afloat. These include sharing a house, pooling resources to underpin action that's good for all the family, sharing knowledge gained through experience and many other reasons.

An extended family includes multiple adults and multiple generations of a family living in the same household. It's a family unit that extends past the nuclear family to include other relatives such as aunts, uncles, and grandparents. There is more to an extended family, however, than just a list of relatives. Family members act as both an economic and emotional network and provide individuals with a sense of who they are and where they belong. In extended families, grandparents have been particularly appreciated for their wisdom and advice.

While the extended family may have challenges for authority figures and balancing resources, it can also be a wonderful experience to be part of a close-knit family with many different relatives and generations.

Our seven year old affiliation with Flight Safety Foundation (FSF) is maturing. The AviAssist Foundation is increasingly becoming part of the extended FSF family and that is good for safety. The board of the Foundation functions as its parents. The dedicated experts and volunteers that work for the AviAssist Foundation are part of our nuclear family. But beyond that, our extended family pivots around Flight Safety Foundation. FSF serves as grandparents providing wisdom and advice. Born in 1947, only shortly after the birth of ICAO, FSF brings together aviation professionals from all the sectors to help solve safety problems facing the industry. With a membership that spreads throughout the world, FSF brings an international perspective to aviation issues for its members, the media and the traveling public.

The AviAssist Foundation assists FSF in achieving its mission in our region. The world is made up of 195 countries and thousands of cultures that extend way beyond North American or European traditions. It is made up of regions and sub-regions that each have their own operational and safety peculiarities. For example, bringing safety statistics into the equation, it is some of the regions beyond North America and Europe that see a large part of the turboprop operations featuring so high in accident statistics. Regional affiliates are crucial for FSF to address the political, social and cultural diversity that play an important role in improving aviation safety in those other regions of the world.

In our case, we don't live in the same house, with FSF being based in Washington D.C and the AviAssist Foundation registered in the Netherlands. There is also no direct financial benefit for FSF or the AviAssist Foundation to be affiliated. We each take care of our own financial activities and fundraising. But it nonetheless makes a great arrangement for all the family members. It provides a great role model for younger family members such as the AviAssist Foundation. It gives greater security for family members to feel connected and leads to increased sharing of cultural and cross-generational values.

My latest trip to the International Air Safety Summit of FSF from 11 to 13 November in Abu Dhabi was part of that very positive family experience. Sharing plans and ideas with Lee Wan Lee from the regional affiliate from Taiwan, talking priorities with FSF vice-president of global programs Greg Marshall or learning about press releases and communication from FSF director of communications Emily McGee are crucial threads in the tapestry of our work.

As entrepreneur Lee Iacocca said "The only rock I know that stays steady, the only institution I know that works, is the family"

I look forward to deepening our affiliation with FSF in the years to come and bring more professionals in Africa on board of our extended family so we can include their wisdom and experience in our work.

Tom