Press release

European Union awards Humanity & Inclusion (HI) two prizes for its innovative projects

Paris, 24 September, 2020. Founded almost four decades ago, Humanity & Inclusion (HI) has been at the forefront of many of the innovations and initiatives that have revolutionised humanitarian assistance, from telerehabilitation to the 3D-printing of prostheses, and the use of drones to locate anti-personnel mines. The organisation explores innovative solutions adapted to humanitarian needs and believes innovation should be as widely accessible and beneficial as possible. This approach was recognised on 24 September when the European Union Horizon Prize 2020 honoured HI with two awards for its Odyssey2025 project on the use of drones in mine clearance operations and its Tele Rehabilitation For All project.

- Since it was founded in 1982, HI has continually developed innovations, launched initiatives, and fought campaigns that have revolutionised humanitarian aid.

- The organisation was founded in 1982 in the refugee camps for Cambodians in Thailand, where it assisted 6,000 amputees. These mine victims were left to fend for themselves without proper care. By producing bamboo, and leather, wood and tyre prostheses and wooden wheelchairs, HI was the first humanitarian organisation to **develop simple and cost-effective orthopaedic devices adapted to the local context**. Forty years on, **HI is the first organisation in the world to combine telerehabilitation and the production of 3D prostheses.** HI provides **physiotherapy sessions by video link and produces prostheses remotely** for amputees by scanning stumps and 3D-printing prostheses.

- In 1992, in Cambodia, a country heavily contaminated by anti-personnel mines, HI trained manual deminers and **launched humanitarian demining**. Four years later, the organisation made possible the adoption of the Ottawa Convention - the **first treaty to ban a conventional weapon**. A first in international law! With its partner Mobility Robotics, HI is now testing the use of drones in clearance operations in Chad. It is the first organisation capable of locating mines buried in the ground using drones equipped with infrared cameras.

- Since it was founded in 1982, HI has continuously improved its actions and revised its humanitarian programmes. It develops solutions based on the latest discoveries and new uses of technology. HI believes all innovations should have an immediate practical application and be simple and easy to adopt for local actors. At HI, innovation has an ethical imperative to provide real and effective aid to vulnerable people, including children, single women, and older people, and help them live in dignity.

- **Quote 1 - Global Managing Director - HI, Manuel Patrouillard:** “HI was founded in 1982 in the refugee camps for Cambodians in Thailand. A great many of the refugees were mine victims. To orthopaedically fit amputees in this region without suitable workshops, we invented bamboo prostheses. The Tele Rehabilitation For All project and the use of 3D technology reflects this desire to improve the quality and impact of our response using accessible technologies. Innovation is not just for specialists. It should be widely accessible. We have decided to continue along this path by using the Horizon prize money to set up a humanitarian fund for innovation.”

- **Quote 2 - Director of Armed Violence Reduction:** “At the end of 2019, **HI achieved a demining world-first** when it successfully located mines buried in the desert using drones equipped with infrared cameras. We can also map vast areas of contaminated land in record time. Using conventional methods, it used to take weeks to investigate a suspected hazardous area. These new methods will accelerate clearance and land release for local populations."

- **Quote 3 – Technical Director of the Rehabilitation, Isabelle Urseau:** “A person with disabilities who needs a prosthesis has to travel to a rehabilitation centre for treatment by professionals at each care stage. There are few or no centres in many parts of the world. Armed conflicts can also restrict travel. We have developed our telerehabilitation activities since 2016 to provide rehabilitation care to people who are isolated or unable to access services. By using digital technology combined with 3D printing, we can now produce and supply high-quality prostheses and orthoses for less and provide rehabilitation care to people we were unable to access previously.”

The Horizon Prize

- The **European Union Horizon Prize for Affordable High-Tech for Humanitarian Aid** was launched in 2020. It is divided into five categories: shelter and related assistance; water, hygiene, and sanitation; energy; health and medical care; and other humanitarian assistance (open category). Each category has a fund of one million euros and is awarded to an initiative that addresses major humanitarian challenges.

- HI has been awarded two of the five prizes and is the only organisation to receive two awards. It has been recognised for its Odyssey2025 project on the use of drones in demining operations in the "Other humanitarian assistance” category and for its pilot telerehabilitation project in the "Health and medical care” category.

The two projects awarded prizes by the European Union

- Funded by the Belgian Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD), the **Odyssey2025 project ran from September 2018 to March 2019**. The drones were tested in Chad where HI carries out demining operations, supervised by the National High Commission for Demining (HCND) as part of the “Support for the demining, development, and social protection of vulnerable people” project (PRODECO) funded by the European Union and supported by the Chadian government. Testing was made possible with the support of the **European Union** and the availability of an operational testing ground.

- Since 2016, HI, in collaboration with Mobility Robotics, has conducted four scientific studies on **telerehabilitation and 3D prosthesis printing**. It has worked with leading universities, private companies, and NGOs. The research was based on clinical trials and pilot projects in

six different countries, including Uganda and Togo to rapidly produce affordable, high-quality prostheses in a range of contexts.

About HI

HI is an independent international aid organisation. It has been working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict, and disaster for 36 years. Working alongside people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, our action and testimony are focused on responding to their essential needs, improving their living conditions, and promoting respect for their dignity and basic rights. Since it was founded in 1982, HI has set up development programmes in more than 60 countries and intervenes in numerous emergency situations. The network of eight national associations (Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States) works constantly to mobilise resources, jointly manage projects, and to increase the impact of the organisation's principles and actions. HI is one of six founding organisations of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), the co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 and the winner of the Conrad N. Hilton Award in 2011. HI takes action and campaigns in places where "living in dignity" is no easy task.

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