



transaid

Women in Africa face substantial discrimination in the transport sector, both as users of transport and as transport sector employees.

Transaid and the University of Durham have investigated youth engagement and skills acquisition within Africa's transport sector, under the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF). The aim of the project is to address the specific challenges of Africa's highly gendered transport environment, with a view to encouraging Africa's young women into the labour force, transitioning them to meaningful employment and promoting a greater gender balance.

Sharon Petrus has a deep understanding of the minibus taxi industry in South Africa, having driven a minibus herself for a living for a number of years.

Sharon explained that for fifty years, the transport sector in South Africa has been a male-dominated industry.

"Historically, a woman's place has been in the home. This is a male dominated society and industry, and men often don't want women to participate. We had a policy document at SANTACO (South African National Taxi Council) that speaks to women but we found it didn't actually speak to us. We have decided that we can't sit behind a desk - we need to stand up for ourselves."

Sharon Petrus



CASE STUDY:

Sharon Petrus

SANTACO NEC member & Northern
Region Transport Solutions Pty Ltd.
Minibus Office Manager

Sharon

Sharon knows all too well the dangers associated with working in this sector in South Africa, having herself been attacked when she was working in her minibus at the rank. A man attempted to drag her from the taxi and beat her. This was the moment that Sharon decided to stop driving. She managed to survive the attack but decided that it was far too dangerous to continue. Today, Sharon is the owner of a number of minibus taxis and instead, her sons take the wheel.

Sharon said that women have often entered the sector as widows, whose late husbands previously worked in the industry and they have found themselves taking up this role.

Sharing some background about SANTACO, Sharon explained that in 2007 the organisation attempted to attract more involvement from women - to enlarge the numbers moving forward. Spouses of male operators and daughters (aged over 21) were encouraged to enter the sector. In November 2008 an interim women's desk was formed. Sharon now represents SANTACO at the national level and is a powerful advocate for women working in the transport sector.