



transaid

CASE STUDY:

James Otoo

Professional Driver Training project - Ghana

Transaid's Professional Driver Training project in Ghana supported by Puma Energy Foundation, aims to raise training standards through the development of a new HGV driver training standard and expand training capacity by training trainers in accordance to this standard.

James Otoo is 56 years old, has lived in Accra since 1987, and is married with four children.

James was enlisted in the Ghanaian armed forces as a driver, after being trained by the military at the armed forces driver training school.

Shortly after completing his military service, James received certification from Vivo Energy (Vivo Shell) and joined JK Horgle Transport and Company Limited as a trainer in 2017.

JK Horgle Transport and Company Limited exclusively carries petroleum products, and James' role involves training the drivers of vehicles that transport hydrocarbons and other fuel products.

"Transporting fuel is different to other products because it is highly flammable, and one mistake from a driver could cause harm to the whole community, so we train our drivers to be safety conscious on the road at all times."

In 2021, James was invited by his boss to join Transaid's training programme. Wishing to improve his knowledge and add value to his job, he accepted.

"During the training we used a new curriculum and standard that Transaid had developed. The standard of the training was very high, and I learnt so many things. I was taught about legislation and how drivers must know the laws of the road. This is a problem in Ghana because often people do not follow the rules or regulations of the government or the road, they do their own thing. During the training I was able to gain a full understanding of this issue, and truly understand the regulations."

James enjoyed the practical aspect of the training the most, "if you don't understand something, you go back and they make sure that it is explained to you and that you have a full appreciation of the matter. During the practical training I really learnt how to use the mirror, signal and the manoeuvre procedure correctly. The most important thing that I learnt during this training was when to join roundabouts, how to manoeuvre, how to position yourself, and when to use your indicators."

“All of these things have been a lesson to me, and are new to me. I have learnt so much – and this is what I am using now to train my drivers. The training from Transaid has really helped me in my job as a trainer because now I know, and I am never not ready. I do my research, I practice all the time and then it is very easy for me to teach.

“Formerly, my boss had told me that my training work was not of a sufficient standard, but since I’ve received this additional training from Transaid, to add to what I already knew, it has impacted on the drivers and we have seen so many changes for the better on the road.

“Recently some of the drivers applauded me, and said that the training is really appreciated by them.

“It’s our attitude and behaviour on the road that will motivate anyone to come into the truck driving profession — as this is what we are imparting to the drivers.”

James often does road safety monitoring, and has his own alcohol monitor, which is used to test the drivers. Road safety monitoring is taught in the training programme, in accordance with the new HGV driver training standard.

“We don’t want to see any alcohol in your system when you blow into that machine, so this is encouraging a lot of drivers to stop drinking alcohol.

“It’s a healthier lifestyle when you are a truck driver. The professionalism in the job drives you to be healthier in your home life.”

“I have seen the numbers of trucks on the roads in Ghana continuing to increase. When I first came to Accra, there was not much traffic on the road. But now, traffic congestion is prevalent and there has been very little expansion in road capacity. Also, there are more pot holes so the roads are not in as good a condition as before, and the number of speed ramps is increasing every day – as attempts are made to reduce speeds on the road. In the past a drive that might have taken thirty minutes could now take 5 to 6 hours.”

The training with Transaid has encouraged James to call out other drivers when they are not driving correctly – but often they will not listen.

“Recently, I witnessed a truck driver attempting to overtake another truck. I tried to prevent it and told the driver that he would not get past, but he refused. I have also seen drivers wanting to use the other side of the road to get past, and I tell them – please do not, you cannot forget the load that we are carrying. Instability can cause the vehicle to fall or roll over.

“I will not stop trying to teach people to drive correctly. Some will appreciate it and some will insult me.”



James in the training vehicle during the training of trainers