



transaid

CASE STUDY:

## Rachel Lwanga

Professional Driver Training Uganda project Phase Two (PDTU-2)

**The Professional Driver Training Uganda project Phase Two (PDTU-2), which is part of the GIZ E4D programme, aims to upskill drivers to take advantage of employment opportunities, while equipping them with the knowledge to be safer on Uganda's roads.**

Rachel Lwanga is a female tondeka bus driver who is challenging gender stereotypes, travelling on routes in Kampala and the greater metropolitan area every day.

**“What I love about my job is that I’m unique. Everywhere I go, people are shocked that it’s a lady driving the bus. They shout out my name and call me a pioneer bus driver, and treat me like a celebrity!”**

From a young age, Rachel was inspired by her Aunt’s hard work transporting matoke bananas to the markets every day, and wanting to follow in her footsteps, Rachel contacted Transaid’s partner organisation, Safe Way Right Way Driver Training Centre.

“I did the training because I had a love of big trucks, buses and cars. I had a dream, and I had to follow that dream, so when I was offered the chance to train at Safe Way Right Way I had to take it,” Rachel told us.

Before training at Safe Way Right Way, Rachel had worked as a chauffeur for Silver Fleet and also as a bus driver for Pioneer Bus.

“I have a degree from Makerere University in graphic design. This is my talent, but it is not my passion. My passion is being behind the driving wheel.

“The training at Safe Way Right Way has changed my life and my driving style. It opened my mind to the things that we do unknowingly on the road because it is a defensive driving school.

“Before, there were certain things that I thought I could do because I was driving a big car, but I have learnt to be patient. At a junction or roundabout who goes first? Even if you have a big vehicle, you must wait. Wait just a few seconds, and you will save years, and lives - and much more besides.

“A driver might think they know how to drive, but do they know how to drive safely? We get our driving permits and think we are ready to go. This is not the case, we don’t know how to drive safely. Even the smallest car on the road is a beast, and if you are not patient, you will ruin lives.

At Safe Way Right Way, we are taught to look at the road markings, sign posts and lights. The yellow light is warning you, and so many people just drive through and crash. This is why the training at Safe Way Right Way is so important.

“Everyone thinks of me as a safer driver because I am female, and this may be true, I am very safe. But it is also because I have been trained and my gender did not affect my selection for that training.

**“I encourage other women to train at Safe Way Right Way because I want to spread the news and leave a legacy, but some women are concerned about the size of the trucks and how they will be perceived.”**

Male colleagues were shocked when Rachel started working on tondeka buses, even passengers were surprised to see her behind the wheel.

**Rachel recently received an award for Professional Driver of the Year, from the Uganda Professional Drivers Network (UPDN). She described it as the biggest day of her life.**

At first, Rachel’s family were unsure of her choice of profession, but they are now so proud of her.

“My daughter is very happy. Every time I collect her from school, she calls to her friends and teachers to see me! They are interested because I have been on TV, and in the newspapers and magazines.”

Rachel aspires to become a driver trainer and plans to build a foundation for women in transport.

“I want to connect the foundation with a driving school for ladies from the age of eighteen. If they want to learn how to drive, come and we will do it together.

“For Uganda to prosper, for the roads to be safer and for the number of accidents to reduce, everyone must go through training at a driving school - whether it’s a boda boda [motorcycle], a small car, a bus, or a truck. Things are changing every day, and similarly we must keep training and advancing our knowledge.

“I think maybe thirty percent of people know the roads well in terms of the signs, the markings and the rules. Attitudes and mindsets need to change, everyone must drive defensively.”

