



Case study: Justine Nassiwa Thomas

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

The Professional Driver Training Uganda Project Phase Two, which is part of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Employment and Skills for Development in Africa (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. It was implemented jointly by Transaid and Safe Way Right Way (SWRW) on behalf of GIZ E4D.

With the support of industry partners, Transaid has built the capacity of Master Trainers and Trainers in Uganda, in turn enabling them to train drivers to a level in accordance with the East African Community Standardised Curriculum for drivers of large commercial vehicles.

Justine is a professional heavy goods truck driver who has always loved to be exceptional and to stand out, whether that's during her time at university, in the workplace, or in her personal life. She has always loved to drive, and inspired by her father who was a race car driver, Justine started driving at seventeen years old.

In the past, Justine has worked as a human resources manager and sometimes stepped in to drive the company's trucks when there were difficulties finding a driver. In 2017, Justine purchased her own farm and started to use a truck to transport resources for her garden and deliver sand to building sites.

"I wanted to continue to add value to myself and improve my skills in driving. Early on in my career in professional driving, I saw an advert for SWRW on television. This changed my life forever."

SWRW has been Transaid's partner since 2016, helping to respond to the huge rise in demand for Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) and Passenger Service Vehicle (PSV) drivers in Uganda, by offering training courses in safe defensive driving, refresher courses for those that have completed their training, and helping to find employment opportunities.

Following her interview, Justine commenced Class C training at SWRW.

When Justine first started training at SWRW, she realised that she had been making mistakes as a driver despite already having experience using vehicles on her farm. She enjoyed the training and said: **“Since the training at SWRW, my driving confidence has gone so high, my male counterparts who used to make fun of my job are left in shock. The training has made me a better and safer driver.”**

For Justine, the benefits of her professional driver training are extensive. It has enabled her to grow her own business, as well as feeling safer while driving. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Justine transported food and other supplies to her friends and family using her truck: **“I could bring goods to my tenant, to my mother, to my friends, and even to my colleagues. The trucks continued to move, and I could move too and deliver food in plenty – everything from pineapples to yams, matoke, and even firewood.”**

Justine also emphasises the importance of professional training for women: **“It is very important that more women drive trucks because we need to change the perception that it is only men who can manage these vehicles.”**

Justine sees that some women in Uganda have concerns about their safety whilst driving HGVs, as well as issues with childcare, or their husbands disagreeing with their choice of career. Justine said: **“I want to inspire and motivate other women, and show them how to balance work, family and personal development.”** To do this, Justine has a YouTube channel and has appeared on TV, **“when women see other women behind the wheel, they become motivated.”**

Justine is a wife and a mother to three children. Her husband is very supportive of her profession, they communicate about everything and work together to see the value it will bring. The children are very proud of her. When she goes to collect them from school the other children say they have seen her on TV and on YouTube.

“I am changing the trend. I am very honoured and privileged, and I want to inspire and motivate other women to become truck drivers. I want to change things for the better.

“The beauty of learning how to drive these vehicles is that you will never know from where the blessings will come.”

