



Emmanuel Danso

Case study: Emmanuel Danso

Professional Driver Training - Ghana

Transaid's Professional Driver Training (PDT) programme in Ghana began in 2021 with funding from the Puma Energy Foundation. The project aimed to improve road safety by raising training standards for professional drivers and concluded in July 2024 with the launch of a new national heavy goods vehicle (HGV) driver training standard. Developed by Transaid with input from more than 30 stakeholders, the new standard aims to equip HGV drivers with the knowledge and techniques needed to navigate the roads safely.

Emmanuel Danso passed his driving test 37 years ago and has been training drivers for the past 17 years. He believes that a lack of professional driver training for larger vehicle classes is contributing to the number of road crashes in Ghana. Whereas road planners, mechanical engineers and drivers of light vehicles receive training, HGV drivers are often able to find work without formal training.

"The route that we take is programmed by the road engineer. The vehicle that we use is programmed by the mechanical engineer, and so the driver must also be professionally trained to understand the road and the vehicle. This is where we are failing."

The World Health Organisation's Global Status Report on Road Safety (2023) estimates that more than 8,000 people lost their lives on Ghana's roads in 2021. Emmanuel says: "every year road crashes increase – as do injuries and deaths. In Ghana, we talk about it and that's the end of the story. And again, crashes increase."

For Emmanuel, the lack of formal training opportunities presents a big challenge, acknowledging that many of his colleagues

learnt to drive 'on the job' under the supervision of a more experienced driver.

He says: "Driving is a mindset. If the mindset is not right, I bet you everything on the road will not be right. We need to combine both the theory and the practical training to make the driver on the road competent. We should push for training and education of the driver behind the wheel. That's what I think has brought me now to be sitting in Transaid's training of trainers (ToT)."

Emmanuel was one of 19 driver trainers to receive training from Transaid through the 'train the trainer' model, which aims to build institutional training capacity in accordance with the newly developed national standard.

The training manual includes 19 modules and provides a holistic approach to driver training, including how to navigate congested and rural roads, as well as how to manage economic pressures such as fuel efficiency and vehicle maintenance. Emmanuel explains, "It gives me a broader idea that you are going to meet dangers on the roads as a driver, so you must prepare. Whatever happens, you have a solution for it.

"We have to really hammer it home so people understand that it is not by chance that accidents happen, it is through mistakes and ignorance. If we can teach the driver to truly understand the consequences of their mistake, we will save a lot of lives."

Following a successful grant from the Benefact Group's Movement for Good Award, Transaid was able to deliver a second refresher ToT training, allowing Emmanuel to practice his skills and instructional techniques for a third time under the supervision of a master trainer. As one of the first

driver trainers in Ghana to receive training aligned with the new standard, Emmanuel believes that the new manual will help to reduce road traffic crashes in Ghana.

"We should find a way, whatever means we can, to get drivers the knowledge I have acquired through Transaid. I encourage you to push the new curriculum hard so it is accepted, because it will help to reduce crashes. I think this standardisation will save a lot of lives on Ghanaian roads."

In addition to using the new HGV standard in his trainings, Emmanuel points out that the industry needs to attract more driver trainers to meet demand. For him, encouraging more women into the industry is a vital component for increasing the number of professional drivers and improving road safety: "I have the passion to train over a thousand women, because women are more careful when it comes to risky things. When we train women, it will help."

In the future, he hopes to become the president of a drivers' association to use his driver training experience to improve road safety.

"I have longed to drive an HGV and Transaid gave me this opportunity. When I meet other drivers, I let them know about any upcoming opportunities for training, and they will be on board."

