

The role of European transport and logistics industry in improving urban transport safety and regulation in sub-Saharan Africa - A case study of Uganda

Victor Ako Mengot

Transaid World-wide Services Ltd.

Transaid is a UK charity that works with partners in the public, private and not-for profit sector to build local skills and knowledge as a means of improving access to basic services and economic opportunity for poor people in developing countries. With the support of the logistics and transport industry and the UK Chartered Institute of logistics and transport, Transaid works with its beneficiaries in Africa to improve transport efficiency, develop institutional capacity and provide training for individuals/organizations faced with the challenge of managing change.

ABSTRACT: Following the Government's deregulation policy in the 1990s and with the current improvement in the road network, road transport has increased significantly in Uganda. The vehicle fleet (around 123,000 vehicles in 1999) is essentially made up of passenger vehicles (90%) of which more than two thirds are cars and utility vehicles. Mini-buses and conventional buses represent 14% and less than 1% of the total fleet but account for 50% of fatal accidents, especially in Kampala where half of the traffic vehicle kilometer is concentrated. The leading cause of accident, according to the Ministry of Transport is poor driver behavior due to low level of safety awareness and lack of standards for assessing new and existing driver competence. This paper explains the processes involved in developing options for improving driver training and vehicle safety through participatory learning and enforcement of operational standards. It also examines the role of European transport companies in providing much needed technical and financial support for the Uganda government to improve operational standards in the transport sector, while at the same time meet the social objectives (i.e. reduced accidents and improved service delivery) of civil society

RÉSUMÉ : Après la politique de déréglementation du Gouvernement dans les années 1990 et avec l'amélioration actuelle du réseau routier, le transport routier a augmenté de manière significative en Ouganda. La flotte de véhicules (environ 123 000 véhicules en 1999) est essentiellement composée de véhicules de voyageurs (90 %) dont plus de deux tiers sont des voitures et des véhicules utilitaires. Les minibus et des bus conventionnels représentent 14 % et moins de 1 % de la flotte totale, mais 50 % des accidents mortels, particulièrement à Kampala où la moitié du trafic en termes de véhicule par kilomètre est concentrée. La cause principale des accidents, selon le Ministère des Transports, est le comportement du piètre conducteur dû au faible niveau de conscience en matière de sécurité et au manque de normes pour évaluer les nouvelles compétences du conducteur et les compétences existantes. La communication explique les processus impliqués dans des options se développant pour améliorer la formation des conducteurs et la sécurité des véhicules par un apprentissage participatif et l'application de normes opérationnelles. Il examine également le rôle de sociétés européennes de transport qui fournissent le soutien technique et financier nécessaire au gouvernement de l'Ouganda pour améliorer les normes opérationnelles dans le secteur du transport, tout en satisfaisant les objectifs sociaux (c'est-à-dire moins d'accidents et prestation de service améliorée) de la société civile.

1 INTRODUCTION

The deregulation of the transport sector in Uganda in the early 1990s was part of a wider programme of economic liberalisation and a determination by the government to encourage private sector participation in the planning, finance, and operation of road transport in the country. The rationale for this policy change was that the government would continue to maintain and establish safety and operational stand-

ards by enforcing through regulatory systems at aimed improving efficiency and promoting 'best practice'.

Between 1993 and 1994 the number of new vehicle registration increased twofold and this trend continued up to 1998 with an annual growth in vehicle ownership of 22% per annum during the 1995 -1998 period. The current average vehicle ownership is about 8 vehicles per 1,000 population with half of

the traffic in vehicle kilometers concentrated within the Kampala and the central regions. (1)

1.1 *Regulating Transport Operations in Uganda*

The Ministry of Works, Housing and Communications (MOWHC) is responsible for policy development as well as the licensing and regulation of all transport activities in Uganda. MOWHC performs this function through an independent Transport Licensing Board (TLB) whose main function is to regulate and control the operation of passenger and freight transport in Uganda. The TLB normally issue the appropriate licenses after an appraisal of the safety and roadworthiness of the vehicles as well as the ability of operators to meet agreed standards.

The MOWHC performs its function under two Directorates viz. Transport and Communications and Engineering. Research by the UK Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) revealed that in the 10 years following deregulation, the Directorate of Transport had had insufficient financial and human resources to address its key activities. For example, the MOWHC employs about 1,620 staff - 80% of these are assigned to the Engineering Directorate while only 4 % are responsible for policy and regulation.

Moreover in the period 1991 - 1998 only 1.5% of the total development budget was allocated to activities relating to policy and regulation. This according to the TRL was partly responsible for a relative backlog in institutional capacity building for planning, regulating and monitoring of road transport services in the country. This has resulted in a situation wherein the growth in vehicle ownership/operation has not been matched by the corresponding improvement in the capacity of the MOWHC to provide adequate regulatory and safety control mechanisms.

2 THE EFFECT OF ROAD TRAFFIC GROWTH

The rapid growth in vehicle ownership and the demand for road space especially in Kampala, have seen an increase in traffic congestion with the associated problems of pollution, visual intrusion and accidents involving mostly pedestrians and cyclists. Moreover, Uganda relies heavily on road transport for 90% of passenger and freight movement within and outside the country. The lack of investment in transport regulation and the subsequent decline in operating standards have resulted in a corresponding increase in road accident during the last 10 years.

For example, in January 2003, the Police Chief in charge of traffic in Kampala reported that at least

312 people were killed in 9,558 road accidents in the city in 2002. This figure according to the police represented a 2% increase in road accidents. The figures for serious and slight injuries were 2,555 and 6,718 respectively. In the case of pedestrian, it was further reported that 2,387 pedestrians suffered injuries as result and of these, 278 were hit-and-run accidents. (2)

2.1 *Estimating the cost of road accidents*

"Previous global or regional reviews of road deaths undertaken by TRL, the World Bank and others have acknowledged the problems associated with data reliability and under reporting". The lack of reliable data is seen as a major obstacle in accurately accessing the cost of road accidents in most African countries. The situation in Uganda is by no means different and one has to rely on the official estimates by the government. (3)

With an accident rate of 160 fatalities per 10,000 vehicles, a TRL report in 2001 estimated that road accidents was costing the Ugandan economy approximately US\$ 101 million per year which represents 2.3% of Gross National Product (GNP). One of the main causes of road accidents according to the report was poor driver behaviour due to lack of standards and the inability of the government to develop appropriate training mechanisms for new and existing drivers.

Apart from the concern for loss of lives, a reasonable case can be made for reducing road accidents on economic and developmental grounds. Uganda like most developing countries has signed up to the United Nation's Millennium Development Goal with the aim of reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development. It could therefore be argued that road accident is a major cause of poverty due to loss income, damage to infrastructure and high cost of providing health care services for those affected.

3 IMPROVING DRIVER TRAINING STANDARDS AS A MEANS OF REDUCING ROAD ACCIDENTS

In March 2002, TRL and Transaid facilitated a Transport Stakeholders Workshop in Kampala, Uganda to identify policy measures aimed at improving vehicle efficiency in Uganda. The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) funded the workshop as part of a Knowledge and Research (KaR) to improve urban transport in sub-Saharan Africa.

Representatives of central/local government attended the workshop and were encouraged to work with

trade associations, road safety organizations and road transport operators to develop strategies for improving transport in Uganda. At the end of the process, the participants developed action plans for developing and improving road transport operations in Uganda.

In the case of driver training and vehicle safety, the participants made the following recommendations:

- Establishment of national standards for driver training and assessment
- Develop capacity building programmes for institutions and individuals in the road transport industry
- Develop successful partnership between government agencies, trade associations and operators to promote driver/vehicle safety.

The Minister of State for Transport acknowledged the effort of the facilitators and participants by commenting that: "the need for driver training and vehicle safety was part of a comprehensive programme to review road safety in Uganda. He also stated added that the challenge for those involved in driver training and road safety is not just to minimise the adverse impact of road accidents on the economy, but to identify how best to develop institutions and standards influencing driver behavior, traffic safety and improved customer care.

Despite this acknowledgement the Minister explained that due to budgetary constraints, the government was unable to provide the finance for developing and implementing a comprehensive driver-training programme. The alternative was that the government would have to appeal to external donors to provide the necessary financial and technical support for the programme.

4 AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH FOR FINANCING AND DEVELOPING DRIVER TRAINING STANDARDS IN UGANDA

Transaid is an organisation that concentrates on ensuring that transport resources are effectively and efficiently, used towards developmental goals by building local capacity to manage and use transport well. In order to achieve this, the organisation has formed a unique partnership with the European transport and logistics industry, who have in turn provided finance and technical for transport development projects in Africa.

The partnership between Transaid and the European transport and logistics is based on the notion that businesses should play a responsible role in society. By working with the voluntary sector, these businesses are now taking account of their economic, so-

cial and environmental impact by taking complementary action to address key challenges based on their core competencies nationally and internationally.

It was against this background that employees of Man Trucks UK agreed to do a sponsorship walk across Scotland to raise £10,000 for the Uganda project. This fundraising approach is not a new concept because outdoor challenge events are a popular and effective way to raise money. By bringing people together to achieve a common aim they are also motivating and rewarding and some of the participants even claim to have the 'time of their lives'.

4.1 Technical Support from the Industry

Having secured the funds for the project, the next stage in the process was to seek the required technical support in the form of experienced trainers to deliver the programme. Transaid decided to approach Bibby Distributions UK who agreed to provide two experienced trainers for the Uganda programme.

Bibby Distribution is one of the UK's leading providers of logistics services with an annual turnover of £105 million. The company employs 600 drivers operating 550 vehicles from 35 depots in various parts of the UK. Bibby was well placed to carry out the assignment in that it had developed a comprehensive Driver Development Programme that includes basic skill assessment, safe driving techniques and training in fuel economy.

In October 2002, a technical team consisting of Transaid's Programmes Manager and Bibby Distribution's Driver Development Manager visited Uganda to conduct a 'Needs Assessment Study'. The team worked with the Uganda Private Road Users Association (UPRUA), an umbrella body representing stakeholders in Uganda to address the following issues:

- The need to review the current driver training regime in Uganda
- An assessment of the various methods for training including driving theory and practice
- An analysis of the strength and weaknesses of training providers in meeting the needs of the industry in the light of changes in government policy and regulation
- An identification of the skills gap and assessment of the relevance and availability of training manuals/equipment including vehicles and learning aids.

To undertake this task, the team contacted key personnel from the police, the vehicle licensing authority, the Department of Transport, Driving School

Owners Association and road safety organisations. The objective was to gain first hand experience of the needs of the various stakeholders and their approach to driver training and enforcement of standards.

The outcome of the review was that there was an apparent lack of institutional capacity and standards of professional competence among the various stakeholders undertaking driver training. Moreover, Uganda does not have a Highway Code and the government was in the process of developing a training syllabus for drivers. A major recommendation was that:

"Consideration should be given to the need to agree and specify technical standards of competence for driving instructors in Uganda. This should be formulated through stakeholder participation, with additional input from the police (driver testing and enforcement) training institution and road safety organisations. (4)

5 DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING APPROPRIATE STANDARDS THROUGH A PARTICIPATORY LEARNING APPROACH

The next stage in the process was to develop a training model for driving instructors in Uganda. In response to the above recommendation Transaid and the Bibbys technical team in the UK set out to develop a driver training programme that will meet the needs of the stakeholders in Uganda. The programme was based on the findings of the 'Needs Assessment study.

A total of 20 trainees representing the Police, Prison Services, Driving School Owners Association, The Ministry of Transport, Road Safety Organisations and a Vocational Training Institute. The training lasted over a period of eight days and covered three main areas - traffic safety and driver licensing; teaching techniques/trainee assessment; and practical driving skills (i.e. in-cab training).

The Instructors from Bibby's acted as facilitators rather than teachers having supplied all the training manuals and teaching aids. The approach was that participants would develop their skills through group workings, peer review and assessment, and designing of teaching methodologies based on previous experience and guidance from the instructors.

The benefit of this approach was that the various stakeholders were able to identify common problems and provide solutions based on their collective experience. It also enabled the policy makers, enforcement agents and training providers to develop a better understanding of their individual roles in the

development and promotion of driver training and road safety standards.

In the case of the Bibby Instructors, the programme created the opportunity for assessing their training methods as well as interacting with the participants, who in turn provided some useful feedback on the benefit of their approach.

5.1 Programme Outcomes

At the end of the programme the Minister of State for Transport declared the training was in line with the Government's strategic objectives in the road transport sub-sector and these include:

- increased distribution and performance of road transport services through out the country
- Enhanced road safety awareness and adherence to road safety regulations
- Improved flow and safety of traffic and speed of passenger movements in Kampala and other peri-urban areas.

The Minister also stated that the training programme had set a benchmark for measuring driver competencies in Uganda and was essential element of the government's determination to reduce road accidents in Uganda.

The participants were urged to use the newly acquired skills to promote a road safety culture within their organisation and develop appropriate training programmes based on the new standards.

In reacting to the Minister's advice, the participants made the following recommendations:

- The need to translate some of the training materials into local languages in order to transfer knowledge and create opportunities for people at all levels
- Establishing a forum for developing and reviewing driver training
- The need for an established career structure for drivers/instructors in Uganda.

6 CONCLUSION AND OVERVIEW

6.1 Partnership for Development

"The growing awareness amongst multi-lateral and bilateral aid agencies of the importance of road crashes as a major cause of death and disability throughout the developing world is reflected in the recent establishment of the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP). This has been set up under the framework of the World Bank's Business Partners for development programme and is a partnership of private sectors, civil society and government organi-

sations collaboration to improve road safety situations in developing and transitional countries". (3)

Transaid, a not-for profit development organisation working in partnership with governments, civil society and businesses in developed and developing countries, has put this model to the test with their involvement in the development of driver training standards in Uganda. The organisation has expanded this partnership further, by working with the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT).

The importance of this link is to use the CILT's experience of developing professional training standards to build the capacity of our partners in Africa. The ultimate aim is develop internationally recognised standards of professional competence for transport operators. This approach is based on the notion that stakeholders in developing countries should play a leading role in improving transport efficiency through collaboration with experienced partners in developed countries.

6.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

The involvement of multinational businesses in development projects in Africa is part of new strategy to demonstrate responsible behavior. This is because of the recognition that people now believe that businesses should play an important role in meeting the social, environmental and economic needs of society.

Equally, it is now common practice in the UK and other European countries for businesses to be associated with causes that do not yield direct benefit to their shareholders, although it could argue that such involvement increases their brand image and profitability in the long run. Many businesses see their involvement in these causes as part of their core business strategy - recognising the pressure of consumers and civil society, and the growing influence of socially responsible investment. (5)

This new approach to solving societal problems has been generally referred to as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Transaid has demonstrated through their involvement in the driver development programme in Uganda that CSR could be operated on a global scale -yielding benefit for all partners. It is hoped that the experienced gained and the lessons from this partnership would be developed into a model that could be applied elsewhere in Africa.

7 REFERENCES

1. Benmaamar M et al Urban transport services in Sub-Saharan Africa: Recommendations for reform in Uganda. Unpublished TRL Project Report
2. allAfrica.com Article - 300 Killed in City Accidents in 2002
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200301130806.html>
3. US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Authority - Africa Road Safety Review
<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/fourthlevel/summary.htm>
4. Mengot V Review of Driver Training Facilities in Uganda, Transaid (unpublished research report) 2002
5. UK Department of Trade & Industry - Business and Society Corporate Social Responsibility Report 2002