

Learning by Ear 2012

"Everyone's Different – Respect for Minorities"

Episode 05

Title: A Passion for Driving – A Woman in a Man's World in Uganda

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List of characters:

<i>Narrator</i>	male/female	about 35	english
<i>Stella Mary Nampijja</i> Pronunciation: Stella Mary Nampidja (dj like in "Jazz")	female	25	english
<i>Abbey Lulemiro</i> Pronunciation: Abbey Lulemirò	male	about 40	english
<i>Anthony Wesaka</i> Pronunciation: Anthony Wessacka	male	about 30	english
<i>Patience Atuhaire</i> Pronunciation: Patience Atuha-i-re	female	about 35	english

Intro:

Hello and welcome to episode five of our Learning by Ear-series about minorities and their fight against discrimination in Africa. Women, of course, are not a minority at all. However, that doesn't mean that they are always given equal rights. In many parts of the world, not only in Africa, women have to fight for their rights. They often find themselves at a disadvantage, especially when it comes to career chances or job opportunities. Today we're travelling to the Ugandan capital, Kampala. It is not unusual here to see female drivers on the streets, but it *is* unusual to see a woman driving a company car. We've come to meet a young lady who decided to beat the odds.

1. SFX environment

2. Narrator

It's a sunny Thursday afternoon, the kind of afternoon you'd like to spend in a swimming pool to cool off from the scorching sun. But very few people can afford such a luxury, because work demands that they have to be in the office.

In the Monitor Publications parking lot in Namuwongo, a Kampala suburb, not much is going on. Three men and a woman are sitting on wooden benches, chatting the afternoon away. These wooden benches are a blessing for the drivers at the Monitor Publications: they're roofed with a sheet of iron, allowing the drivers to cheat the sun and sit in the shade as they wait for their next assignment.

It's on these benches that I meet Stella Mary Nampijja.

The fourth in a family of five, Stella is light-skinned and stands about five foot three inches tall. She's 25, soft-spoken, and brimming with confidence.

Stella graduated in information technology from APTEC college in Kampala. So why did she decide to become a driver instead?

3. Soundbite Stella Mary Nampijja

"I chose to drive because I love driving. I just love it. I just love driving."

4. Narrator

A smile plays about Stella's face as she talks about what inspired her to become a driver.

5. Soundbite Stella Mary Nampijja

"What inspired me to go into driving is: during most of my leisure time I go to watch motor rallies, like those who drive. So that inspired me to start driving. I was like: "Will I do it?" So I said, let me just try being a driver in some company. Maybe in time to come I will also be driving rallies."

6. Narrator

Stella doesn't believe that a lack of the kind of jobs traditionally done by women should stop a woman finding work. She says that, after completing her higher diploma education, she saw an advert by Nation Courier Uganda in one of the local dailies. Its subsidiary company Daily Monitor Publications was looking for drivers. Nation Courier is a branch of the Nation Media Group, a conglomerate of daily and weekly newspapers and television and radio stations in east and central Africa.

Stella handed in her application letter, but she didn't get any feedback from Nation Courier for almost three months. Then one day she was finally called for a test. Her supervisor Abbey Lulemiro talks about her performance.

7. Soundbite - Abbey

"She passed, and did even better than the male candidates. So we continued to oral interviews, and she was the fourth, and we wanted eight. So we recruited her."

8. Narrator

Supervisor Lulemiro recounts how fellow drivers and staff reacted when they were told that the company had employed a female driver.

9. Soundbite Abbey

"Most of them got excited. They said, 'They have brought a woman, they have brought a female.' Everyone got excited and they wanted to see how she performs. Can she really drive? Because we have a belief here that women cannot manage manual transmission cars. Everyone wanted to work in a shift where the woman is, to really get convinced if she can do this work, because they believe it is hard work and a woman can't do it. In that process, they have been very supportive."

10. Narrator

Stella has no complaints about the treatment she receives from her male counterparts.

11. Soundbite- Stella

"Our male drivers treat me well because I'm the only lady in the section. They help me where I can't manage. Yeah, they treat me well."

12. Narration

Stella has been in her job for three months now. She's the only woman driver working with Nation Courier Uganda. Her job involves dropping news reporters off in the field and picking them up after their assignments, as well as delivering newspapers and parcels to different locations in Uganda.

13. Soundbite Stella

"It is not easy for a woman to drive. Like, in my section you do not sit and relax. They come and tell you, you are taking editorial to Kasangati, from Kasangati you come back, you don't sit, you are taking a news reporter to Mulago. You drop him and come back. So it's tiring. I like it. I like my job."

14. Narration

Stella says the fastest she can drive is 120 kilometres per hour. She hasn't had many bad experiences on the road. Her biggest challenges are heavy traffic, and poor roads, which slow her down. She understands that time is of the essence to news reporters, so she gets a little bit anxious when the traffic is moving slowly and reporters are running late for their assignments.

By the time we are through with our interview, there are already people waiting for Stella. Her supervisor Abbey Lulemiro has another assignment for her.

15. Soundbite Abbey

"Stella, take this gentleman. He is going to Bugolobi- KK security."

16. SFX- Stella starting her car and driving off

17. Narrator

Now that Stella's gone, it's time to talk to some of the news reporters and get their opinions of Stella's driving.

18. Soundbite - Male reporter - Anthony Wesaka

"My experience was that she observes traffic lights, she doesn't overtake like her male counterparts. Given there is a lot of traffic in the city, so if you rush you might crash. This is basically to our disadvantage, because you are rushing for a story and she is driving at a slow pace and you might miss out on the story, but the good thing is you're alive when you get there. So it's better to get there late than in pieces."

19. Narrator

Patience Atuhaire, a news reporter, remembers her first experience of being driven by Stella.

20. Soundbite - Female reporter - Patience Atuhaire

"My first encounter, she dropped me at Makerere, and before she left, she asked if she should wait for me, which was unusual for drivers at Monitor Publications. So I told her, "Let me find out if it would take long, and I will let you know". So I went and came back, gave her feedback, and she left. She was patient. She was not quarrelling or giving excuses that they needed her at the office."

KW begin

21. Narrator

Given the choice, would these reporters prefer to be driven by a male driver, or by Stella?

22. Soundbite - Anthony Wesaka

"Given our kind of business that is the media industry, I would go with a man because sometimes you need to be fast to get news so that you don't miss news. If you are a photographer you will miss the action. So I would prefer men, but if I am on the business desk and am not so busy, I would prefer Stella because she is steady and observes traffic laws."

23. Soundbite - Patience Atuhaire

"I would go for her. Being a lady, I'm thinking she would have a motherly touch. Especially when you have explained: We need this story and we need to file it in. Or: If you are to leave, inform me so I know you have left so I can find other means."

KW end

24. Narrator

In many African countries, women have reason to complain that they are discriminated against at work or in school. But this doesn't seem to be the case in Uganda.

According to the Uganda chapter of the United Nations Development Project, since 1990 Uganda has exercised affirmative action in favour of women regarding admission to university and other institutes of higher education. Women applicants are awarded extra points in addition to their scores to increase their chances of success. And this policy has in fact led to a significant increase in the number of women going to university.

KW begin

The Ugandan constitution is also credited with promoting the wellbeing of women at all levels, even leadership. For example, every district in Uganda has a female representative whose main task is to tackle issues affecting women in her area.

KW end

With many women graduating from universities and other institutes of higher education, it's very rare to hear cases of women being discriminated against because of their gender. That probably explains why Stella feels so comfortable working with men.

Her boss Abbey Lulemiro is full of praise for her.

25. Soundbite Stella's Boss - Abbey Lulemiro

"She is an active lady, she is hardworking, she loves driving. Because initially what I thought when she was coming - and I even asked her that question during the interview - was if she had really come to drive or she was just passing through driving to look for other alternatives in other departments. She said, 'No, however much I can do other work, I have come to drive because my main purpose is to drive, because I love driving.' I asked her which other work she could do and she said data work. Sometimes I give her data work because she understands it. She comes here in the office to help me when she is not busy with driving."

26. Narrator

Although she's an information and technology graduate, Stella says she doesn't ever see herself pursuing the career she trained for. She says her life now is behind the steering wheel. In future, she would like to concentrate on rally driving.

27. Soundbite- Stella

"Driving is a good job, because you move to places which you do not know and you interact with people. Driving to me is my source of income and is my hobby."

Outro:

We hope you enjoyed listening to this story about a woman driver in the Ugandan capital, Kampala. Our reporter was Leylah Ndinda. If you would like to listen to this episode again, or hear other stories about minorities and their fight against discrimination in Africa, please visit our website at www.dw.de/lbe. You're also welcome to join our Facebook page.

Goodbye for now, and don't forget to tune in next time!