



Development Minerals: Truck Drivers' Working Conditions in Tanzania

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Key Messages

Truck drivers in the development minerals sub-sector play a key role in establishing a network to facilitate the supply of materials from the sources to consumers.

The majority of truck drivers do not possess written employment contracts to give them employment security which makes their jobs vulnerable, at the discretion of owners.

Oral agreements between truck owners and drivers make the latter work beyond formal working hours to meet given targets.

Truck drivers carry a burden of emerging costs including breakdowns, bribes to unscrupulous authorities and time wasted due to road challenges.

Some community members associate truck drivers with adverse consequences of the sub-sector including environmental pollution, soil erosion and noise pollution.

Introduction

Development minerals such as sands, stones, and aggregates are raw materials vital for constructing buildings, roads, and other types of infrastructure (Blachowski, 2014). Moreover, they offer economic benefits such as direct and indirect employment, improved income and living conditions and extend a transformative path for the development of a nation (Farahani & Bayazidi, 2018) and (Lebdioui, 2018). The growth in demand for these resources causes the intensification of mining operations and related activities in the value chain, including transportation (Sverdrup, Koca, & Schlyter, 2017).

In Tanzania, the increased demand for sand, stones, and aggregates results in pressure to increase output from existing sources and start new mining operations. Undeniably, various stakeholders are involved in the construction mineral value chain - ranging from pit owners, transporters, heapers, processors, and consumers. Industrial minerals are often bulky in volume and weight, placing undue stress on transport networks and infrastructure (i.e., roads and railways) used to access markets (Blachowski, 2014).

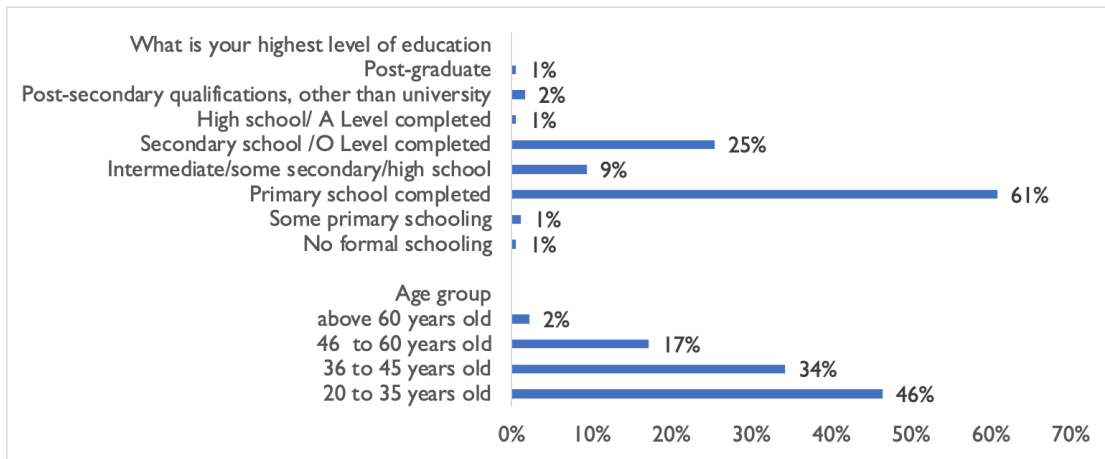
The typical means of transport for sand, stones, and aggregates in Tanzania are roads using tipper trucks and semitrailer tippers, usually appropriate for shorter distances (i.e., tens/hundreds of km). Transporters act as the main lubricant in the value chain connecting the pit owners (mineral sources) to the consumers-heapers, companies, and households.

This policy brief explores the working conditions of transporters, truck drivers in particular in the development mineral value chain. It uses data collected through questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted in nine districts of Dar es Salaam and Coastal regions in September 2020.

Findings

9 out of 10 truck drivers interviewed had received formal schooling-primary education (61%), secondary school education (26%), and post-secondary education (3%). Young people in the age group of 20-35 (46%) are more likely to engage in truck driving in the development mineral sub-sector.

Figure 1: The highest level of education and age group

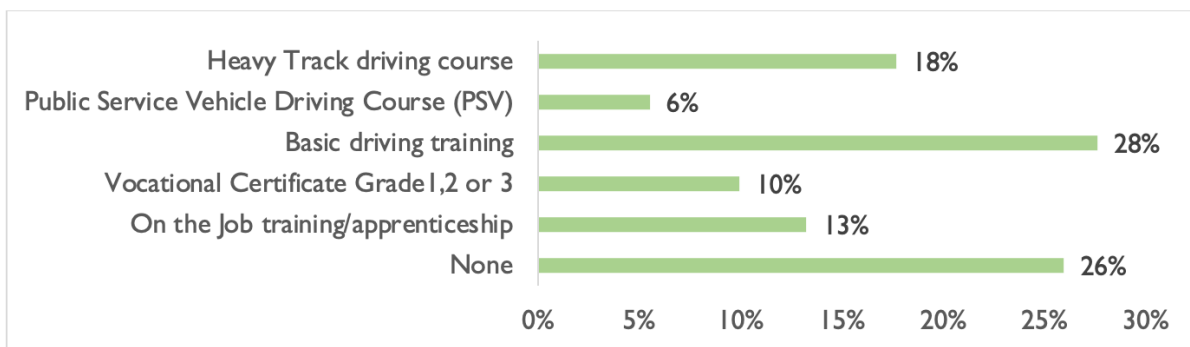


Specialized Training by transporters

Findings indicate that most truck drivers do not receive formal training despite owning valid driving licenses. Drivers learn the trade informally from their peers. Drivers initially enter the trade as turnboys and progress to learn how to operate trucks on the job from the main drivers. With time, the main driver lets the turnboy practice driving and operating major truck parts with and without a load. After a period of informal training, turnboys then seek to formalize their knowledge by attending short courses at accredited institutions like the National Institute of Transport (NIT) and Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA). The training usually lasts for two weeks since one is considered to be a driver, only that he/she want is to upgrade his/her standards and obtain a driving license.

When you go to a college while already knowing how to drive a tipper, they will not train you as a beginner but rather as a driver who wants to upgrade a license and the training gets completed in a relatively short time. But when you go to college as a beginner, you will spend a long time, like one month or more doing theoretical and practical sessions, and finally, examinations. (FGD at Kisarawe)

Moreover, Figure 2 indicates that 28% attended basic driving training, 18% got a heavy truck driving course and 26% had no opportunity to participate in any formal driver’s training before obtaining their licenses.



Employment Terms and Contracts

Mostly there are no written contracts but rather on the verbal terms of agreements between truck owners or companies and the drivers. These terms and conditions are mainly based on payment arrangements to the owner, refueling and maintenance of the truck. Usually, the payment to the owners of trucks are arranged daily basis, but most of the payments are made weekly. Truck owners do the major truck services, while the drivers do the minor truck services of between TZS 1,000 and 100,000.

Furthermore, fuelling of trucks are done under two arrangements. Some owners give a truck to a driver with a full tank of fuel at the start of the contract, and other truck owners give trucks to drivers with no fuel. The fueled truck will be returned to the owner with the full tank refueled while the non-refueled track does not have to be fueled upon return.

Verbal agreements also cover the number of typical working hours with provisions for either early or late operations, depending on clients’ needs. Truck owners do not set time for a driver to start working each day since a driver will be needed to deliver the money as agreed beforehand. But for the few formally employed company drivers, there is a set time to report to work and to close business for the day.

Verbal agreements also consider emergencies including drivers’ absence from work which are often dealt with by the owner entrusting a truck to another driver of his choice - or by asking his driver to find a temporary replacement driver that he/she trusts to undertake the operations. A driver may also be required to park a truck until he is available to work again without pay during his/her absence.

We generally get no pay when we are unable to work, save for the goodwill of the owner. Generally, the terms and conditions agreed are in favour of the owner. There is neither severance pay nor social security in this business, even when one has worked with a particular boss for ten years. (FGD at Mkuranga)

Tanzania recently issued directives for formalizing employment contracts in the logistics and haulage industry. Two major initiatives have been undertaken in recent years, including forming a special committee to address and resolve problems in the transportation sector. Moreover, a vow by the fifth phase President, late Dr. John Pombe Magufuli while inaugurating the 12th National Assembly on November 13, 2020, promised that the government would ensure that truck owners provide employment contracts to drivers to give them the status they deserve and stimulate transportation services, but nothing has been done so far. Truck owners continue not to submit drivers' contracts when applying for motor vehicle licenses as directed.

If you mention a written contract to the truck owner, you will likely lose your job. Our agreements have no guarantors, just a car owner and a driver. We only trust each other as most drivers get trucks from people within the community who know them and their homes. (FGD at Temeke)

Figure 3 depicts that out of the interviewed drivers, 10% were employed by transportation companies with a written contract, whilst the rest of the drivers (90%) were not formally employed; where 5% among them had formal written contracts, 43% had oral contracts with no witnesses, and 34% had no contract at all.

Figure 3: Types of driving contracts



The high level of competition in the driver's labour market hinders them from having strong bargaining power with the truck owners. . At the same time, there is low enforcement from the responsible organs.

Jobs in this sector are hard to come by, so once an opportunity presents itself, you don't waste time negotiating with the truck owner for a written contract. Otherwise, another driver will come along and accept the job without questions. (FGD at Bagamoyo)

Drivers that deliver remittances per trip made are generally considered lucky because they are exempted from making such payments to truck owners when they cannot find business. However, drivers that are tied to making daily remittances end up indebted to truck owners even during business downturns.

When business is not good and you fail to pay what you have agreed, the truck will be taken back and given to someone else. Sometimes a driver may work for only two days a week because there are no customers, but the boss wants you to meet the payment agreement. (FGD at Mkuranga)

Days worked in a week and compensation

In most cases, drivers overwork throughout the week because, by any means, the owner's agreed amount has to be reached. The amount paid to the truck owner per day varies depending on the condition and size of the vehicle. On average for a small truck of 6 cubic meters, the owner is paid TZS 100,000, while the for biggest semitrailer of 20 cubic meters the owner is paid TZS 500,000. Regardless of whether the driver has customers on a typical day, only a few owners are considerate for the failure to meet the agreed targets, while the majority count the gap as a debt.

Nevertheless, on an average day, a driver's income is between TZS 50,000 to TZS 100,000, some of which go for minor car repairs and bribes to unscrupulous officials. In this sense, the drivers find it difficult to estimate, ex-ante, their daily take-home incomes. Noncompany drivers usually have no limitations on the number of days worked. In contrast, company drivers work for six days and one day, usually, Sunday is an off-duty day.. Working on Sunday for the company drivers would mean overtime compensation.

Working at night is dependent on agreements with truck owners. Some owners do not permit the operation of their trucks at night, while others do. There is also a restriction from authorities on working at night as some pits are located in remote areas. Remoteness of an area makes it unsafe for officials responsible for tax collection to be present at night. Several reasons were mentioned for drivers to work at night; first, it is the only way a driver can meet the owner's target agreement and get his income. Second, to minimize legal and informal payments to the tax collectors and unofficial payments to traffic police on the roads. Third, it is the time when there is no traffic jam hence less time to reach the destination points. However, in the case of drivers belonging to companies, when a driver must work at night, this would mean an overtime payment.

Formal payment

By the law, pit owners are responsible for paying 1% and 3% of revenue as inspection fees and royalty to the mining commission, respectively. In practice, however, drivers have continued to pay levies and duties at district and village levels. Even though the mining commission charges its rates on the percentage of revenue accrued by the pit owner, drivers have continued to find it difficult to pay these levies and duties, which vary between the councils and villages.

Table 1: Formal charges by local authorities

	Fees and levies charged by Council per trip	Fees and levies charged by village per trip
Mean	10,920	2,508
Minimum	2,000	1,000
Maximum	20,000	5,000

Informal payment

It was uncovered that in their operations, drivers make informal payments in cash to law enforcers and regulators. These payments are often made secretly. The informal fine to unfaithful traffic police, for example, is charged per trip. This charge ranges between TZS 5,000 to TZS 10,000 per traffic station that the drivers meet on their way to the heaping site or the market. As one driver remarked, “The more police you meet on the road, the more you pay.” Typically, the bigger the truck or the faultier the truck, the more likely it is to make the higher end of these informal payments. *The police never tell you that your tipper is fined; they always come with faults. We cannot afford to pay TZS 30,000 which is the official government fine for each fault found in the tipper. So we negotiate and give them some little token like TZS 5,000 - and they let us go. You need to prepare at least TZS 10,000 or more per trip for these informal payments. However, some police officers have become our friends, so they sometimes let us go without paying anything.* (FGD at Bagamoyo)

Operational Challenges

Respondents revealed a loathing of truck drivers amongst the community around their operations. One driver remarked that “People do not like us because they see truck drivers and pit owners as the source of destruction to their environment.” There are challenges to the community, including air pollution (dust), noise, soil erosion, and health problems (coughing and sneezing) resulting from the trucks crossing their residences. Also, narrow and bad roads to the sources of raw material and customers cause trouble to the drivers and other users. Sometimes they may cause damage to one’s property like cars, trees, crops, houses/fences and are obliged to pay from their pockets. In addition, when a truck gets stuck, one loses extra fuel and time at his own cost. Given the nature of the activity, there is much destruction to the environment, which leads to misunderstandings between stakeholders of this activity and the National Environmental Management Council (NEMC). The working environment in development minerals poses a high risk to the health and safety of drivers because of excessive exposure to dust, noise, and poor roads to the pits and construction sites. The risks are exacerbated by low possession of health insurance (7%).

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Further, the frequent targeting of trucks by unscrupulous officials means that drivers spend most of their time trying to evade the authorities or run away for fear of reducing their revenue by bribing these authorities such as the police or tax officials. This further increases the risk of road accidents.

Conclusions and recommendations

Drivers are a key component of the development minerals value chain. However, drivers face a myriad of challenges from the absence of employment protection, poor infrastructure, and unfair targeting by unscrupulous authorities.

Against these findings, this policy brief recommends:

The Ministry responsible for Labour, Youth and Employment keeps ensuring that drivers are given official written contracts to enhance job security but also to contribute to the government’s revenue through income tax. The Ministry should also champion career development through time-to-time short courses, and these need to be considered and be well stated between government, employers, and employees.

- The association that represents truck drivers should have more voice and dialogues with the government. Employers should also improve work conditions in terms of payments, working hours, compensation, health and safety.
- The government should keep improving infrastructure, especially roads leading to the development mineral extraction sites, to cater for the size and weight of the trucks.
- Local government authorities should collaborate with the development mineral agents to strengthen the relationship between mineral dealers and the local community. It can be done through stakeholders' meetings, formulation and enforcement of by-laws that take care of interests of stakeholders and the environment.
- The relevant authorities such as the police force and tax authorities must provide clear and appropriate guidance to be followed by all drivers and traffic officers, establish a system of reporting deviant officers, and most importantly, take disciplinary action against officers who break their work ethic.