
I am a country woman driving a Yutong Bus

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There is nothing impossible for Idania Perea Leon. She does not remember how or when she started driving but she points out she is a “country woman with a helm in her hands.”

She was born and raised in the Abraham Lincoln sugar mill, in Artemisa. She confirmed she has driven everything at her 49 years old. She has been the driver of Kamaz trucks, ambulances, and buses.

We would say her determination has been paramount. She has become the one and only woman driving a Yutong Bus at the Base Business Unit Augusto Cesar Sandino, from the National Bus Company. She also is part of the group of driver that covers the route Havana-Santa Cruz del Sur and Havana-Nuevitas, both having final destination in Camaguey (more than 400 miles one-way route).

“I have spent more than twenty years as professional driver. And this has been one of the requirements to be part of the company.”

Except for the ladies working in the office, the rest of the personnel is made up of men. Have you ever been discriminated?

I started three months ago covering this very same route. They have welcomed me very well. They take care of me and help me a lot. I have not had any issue of that kind.

That man...does he share your viewpoint?

His name is Amaury Suarez, but everyone here names him Pepe. We were born in the same province. We know each other for years! He has accepted me and we help each other.

Don't you feel small in front of a Yutong Bus?

It is true it is a big bus. But the National Bus Company trains well its drivers. Those who cannot drive with skill are told not to continue the training.

If you have to have any advice to other women who loves to drive like you do, what would you tell them?

If you have experiences and you drive safe, I urge you not to fear. There are things in life harder than driving and we achieve it. It is a wonderful job. And I feel proud of being the first woman to drive a Yutong Bus.

You should always do what you want even though it may look difficult. Everything has to do with your skill and your efforts. It is also important to highlight the support of the company's director, who has encouraged me to reach this level."

What is the opinion of passengers?

Their first reaction is like...They froze. Afterwards, they realize I drive safely and they relax. It has happened many times that some of them want to take a picture with me at the end of the trip.

As professional driver, what is your biggest challenge?

As every woman, my home and my marriage. I have no children, but I do have two loving nephews who live with me.

Within a few years, you will likely go down as the first woman who drove such a big bus...

Yes, may be. But I am not thinking about it yet.

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Diaz // CubaSi Translation Staff
