

October 2024

Quarterly Boda Report

UIXP

lubyanza (n); a boda rider without a stage.

This quarter we worked with UIXP to explore how Internet service providers (ISPs) use bodas to build, maintain, and operate their networks. Next quarter, we're going to look at the new regulations on reflector jackets with personal identification. And coming soon - a data portal 🙄



4%

share their
bike at least
once a week



72%

have *never*
had a drivers
license



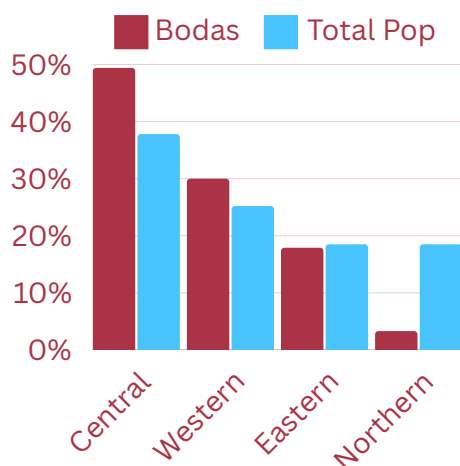
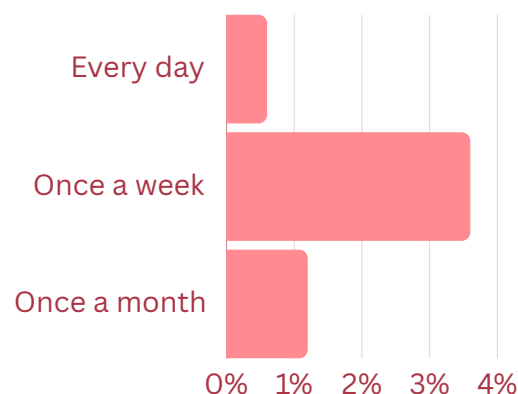
40 min

time savings ISPs
report from using
bodas to fix
internet infra

Sharing Bikes

One of the most common facts heard when discussing boda reform is “but a lot of these guys are even sharing the bike.” It turns out - it's not *that* common. 95% of boda riders claim no one else regularly uses their motorcycle.

Our take: while the few motorcycles being regularly shared may complicate efforts, much of this sharing is only for learning to drive - and rare, short-term cases.



The Origins of Riders

Kampala is the capital of Uganda - and it is also the capital of Central Region, and as a result, boda riders from Central are overrepresented. Northern is heavily underrepresented. Despite making up 18.5% of the national population, only 3.5% of boda riders surveyed were from Northern.

Our take: Northern Region continues to lag behind others due to the LRA war which took 20 years to end, and Northerners have traditionally been restricted to working in security.

The Internet and Bodas: Part Two of a Special Report

This report expands on our April 2024 report, which explored how bodas use the Internet, by exploring how the Internet industry uses bodas to deliver social media, ride hailing apps, and e-government services.

How Internet Companies Use Bodas

Internet infrastructure companies, most of whom report using bodas daily or more, tend to use a mixture of nearby stages and app-based bodas. They are used to move contractors and installation teams, handle paperwork and documentation, and keep an eye on critical infrastructure.

However, the risk and insurance costs are a concern for some companies, who then in-house the work by hiring one or more riders on a full-time basis, with the company covering the motorcycle, fuel, and maintenance. This helps ensure the rider is always available for anything needed.



In-housing boda trips can improve reliability.

📷 Katumba Badru / Lubyanza

Why Internet Companies Use Bodas

Bodas are critical to keeping Uganda's Internet infrastructure working. Internet cable outages - often from construction or bad weather in the rainy season - require rapid fixes, which bodas are best at.

When the Internet goes down due to a fault, the clock starts ticking. Trips that might take an hour (or more) in a car or taxi in Kampala jam take just twenty minutes by boda - getting the Internet switched back on 40 minutes earlier.

When it comes to monitoring infrastructure, nothing is more effective than a motorcycle for moving around the city to check on the roads, water, and building construction that often causes internet fiber lines to be cut.



Bodas ability to cut through traffic is critical.

📷 Katumba Badru / Lubyanza



Bikes Changing Hands

Kalungi James

Many bodas who get bikes on loan get them from friends and family other than the formal asset financiers. One rider I spoke with on Mulindwa road owns a bike through a friend and family loan, which he says this is due to the fact that formal companies bureaucracy and price made it impossible. He doesn't have a driving license and the national ID which were required by the asset financiers he approached.

He got his bike when he was new in Kampala, so it wasn't easy for him to get the guarantors needed to get a bike on loan. Most importantly, he never had the 500k to 800k (\$135-\$215) needed upfront by most companies. Instead, he spoke with a friend at the stage who had just finished his loan with Watu credit to offer the bike to him on credit, and the friend in turn returned to Watu for another loan. Motorcycles move along the chain of riders depending on riders ability to access them from different sources.



Helmet Usage Dips Again

Geoffrey Ndhogezi

Our quarterly boda surveys reveal a concerning trend: There has been a gradual decrease in helmet use over the past year, coincident with a decrease in police presence and crackdowns on the roads. Indicating that boda riders appear less inclined to wear helmets whenever enforcement is relaxed.



Katumba Badru / Lubyanza



5,600

Bodas
observed



336

Riders
interviewed



8

Divisions of
the GKMA

The report was designed by Tom Courtright with input from Kalungi James, Geoffrey Ndhogezi, Dr. Paul Mukwaya, and Peter Kasaija. It was carried out from October 1-22 by Geoffrey and Kalungi. You can download all past reports [here](#).

Interested in sponsoring a report? Reach out to tomrcourtright@gmail.com.