

April 2024

# Quarterly Boda Report



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

This quarterly report is the first of two reports sponsored by the Uganda Internet Exchange Point (UIXP), a non-profit Internet infrastructure provider that enables local and international networks to interconnect and exchange data traffic within the country. The UIXP's sponsorship will enable Lubyanza to explore the relationship between boda bodas and Uganda's telecommunications industry. For more information, visit the UIXP website at <https://uixp.co.ug/>.



**7.8**  
years on  
average in the  
boda business



**72%**  
of data  
purchases  
are 1k or 2k

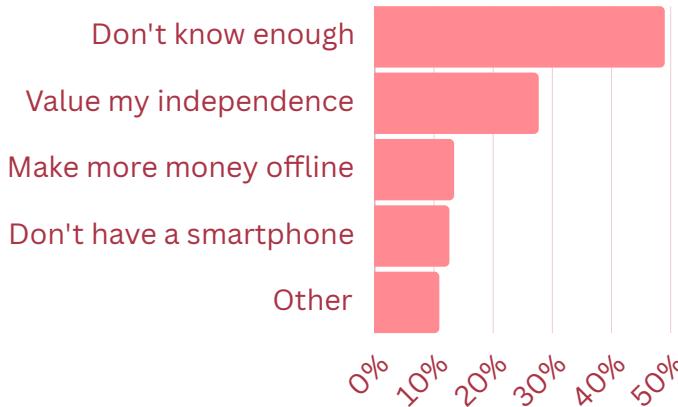
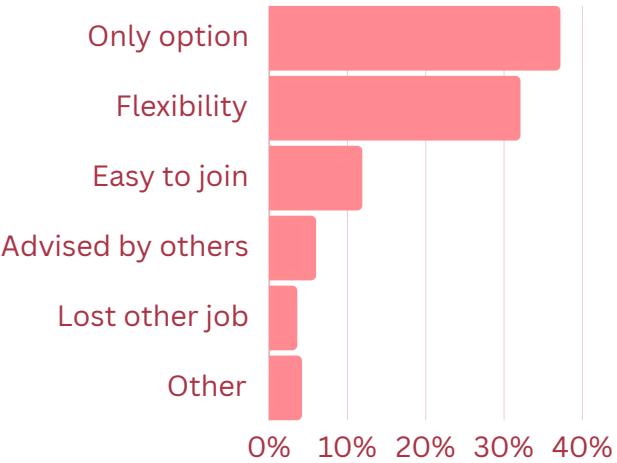


**80%**  
have never  
joined an  
association

## Why Riders First Get On a Boda

Boda riders join the sector for two main reasons: it is either the only option, or they are attracted to its flexibility.

**Our take:** Reasons to join are tied to the social & financial capital needed to get stage membership and get started. When riders have the capital, stages are a good place to wait with friends, get passengers, and avoid police.



## Why I Didn't Join a Boda App

Boda apps have struggled to recruit and retain riders, and half of the riders said they simply don't know enough about how the apps work.

**Our take:** We know that apps like SafeBoda make trips safer through tracking and more efficient for riders by picking a passenger anywhere. Communication could be better.

## SACCOs & Boda Boda Associations

Boda riders are famously independent. Unlike the taxi (minibus) sector, boda riders do not have conductors or touts, and they can operate from anywhere including narrow backstreets and rural villages. For the most part, they have avoided being drafted into umbrella organizations bigger than local stages.

### SACCO Membership

More than half of the riders in Kampala have never been in a Savings And Credit Cooperative Organization (SACCO). Current members have a high opinion of them, while those who have left them or never joined do not. The most popular SACCO types were stage SACCOs and village SACCOs.

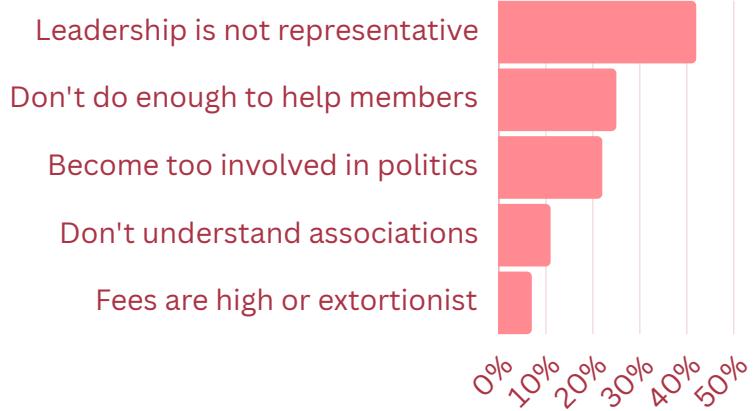
**Our take:** SACCOs in Uganda have long been the subject of interference, fraud and theft, which has reduced trust in them. That stage and village SACCOs are the most popular describes the life of a stereotypical boda rider - one foot in the city, one in the village, both on the pedals.



### Boda Association Membership

Boda association membership is very low. Only 16% of boda riders claim membership to an association, and 80% say they have never joined an association.

**Our take:** This raises serious questions about who boda associations claim to represent. The reasons riders listed for not joining were unfortunately unsurprising: association leadership is considered unrepresentative, overly politicized, and disengaged from helping boda riders.



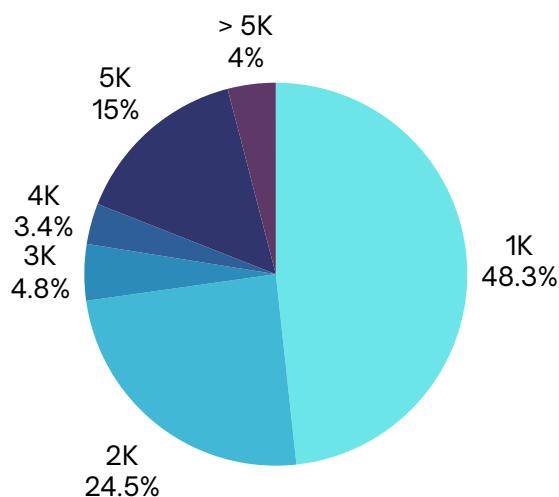
The coronation of Abdu Kiyimba as patron of Boda Boda Industry Uganda.

Uganda Radio Network.

## Bodas and the Internet: A Special Report

With support from our friends at the Uganda Internet Exchange Point (UIXP), we are carrying out a two-part investigation to explore the relationship between bodas and the telecommunications industry. In this first survey, we are looking into the boda side of things - how boda riders use the internet. In the next survey, we'll look at how the industry uses bodas.

<b>Own a Phone</b>	99%
<b>Feature Phone</b>	68%
<b>Smartphone</b>	50%
<b>Both</b>	19%

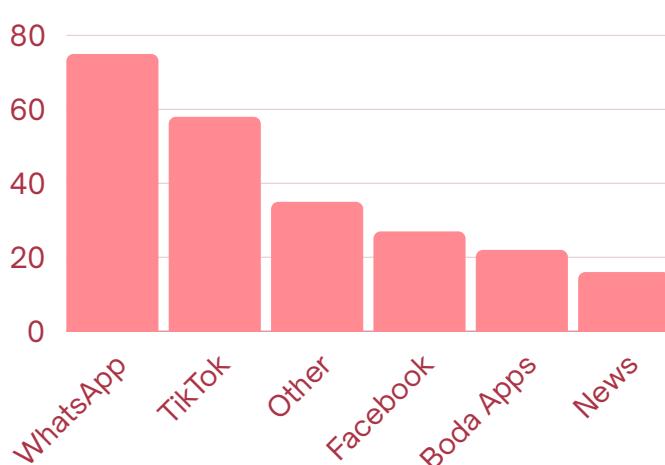


Most recent data purchases by boda riders.

### Purchasing Data

Boda riders tend to buy small amounts of data at a time - half of their purchases are 1k (\$0.28). This can buy bundles worth 165-170 MB on MTN, Airtel and Lyca, the country's three active mobile network operators.

**Our take:** This mimics the same purchasing patterns boda riders have with fuel and other goods - a small amount at a time, just enough for a few jobs.



Percentage of riders using each application

### Internet Usage

We found that at least three-quarters of boda riders with smartphones are using WhatsApp, the most important chat app in Uganda. TikTok has also long overtaken Facebook as a primary social media.

**Our Take:** TikTok videos tend to also be shared via WhatsApp, increasing their viewership further. The “other” category will be explored in more detail in the next survey, as it covers betting, searches, YouTube and more.



## Riding Through the Rain

Kalungi James

We carried out the survey during the rainy season; we often had light showers especially during the afternoon and evening hours, while conducting the observations and interviews. I was surprised to see some bodas holding the helmets but not putting them on even when it's raining, at least to protect them from the rain. I also thought rains would significantly reduce the number of passengers that jump on bodas, but observations showed this wasn't the case.

Another interesting part of the April 2024 survey was that boda guys who have smart phones spend on data almost daily for leisure like enjoying Tiktok videos, Facebook and betting. They also use it for arranging with clients through WhatsApp or receiving orders through boda digital platforms, like I reported on recently.



## Riders Straddling City and Village

Geofrey Ndhogezzi

For boda riders who are members of multiple stages, it is common to be maintaining membership in their village of origin. For example, a boda rider who is a member of a stage in Kawempe is at the same time the chairperson of another stage in Iganga, his home town from which he started working.

This mainly happens because these boda riders expect better earnings in the city. Continuing as members of their village-stages could be a strategic move, especially considering the ongoing threats against stage membership in Kampala city.



**5,600**

Bodas observed



**336**

Riders interviewed



**8**

Divisions of the GKMA

The report was designed by Tom Courtright with input from Kalungi James, Geofrey Ndhogezzi, Dr. Paul Mukwaya, and Peter Kasaija. It was carried out from April 2-15 by Geofrey and Kalungi. You can download all past reports [here](#).

Interested in sponsoring a report? Reach out to [tomrcourtright@gmail.com](mailto:tomrcourtright@gmail.com).