

July 2024

# Quarterly Boda Report



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

This quarter we added a few key questions around the lifecycle of pikipikis (a term that, by the way, has been used in Uganda since at least the 1920s), along with a look at perceptions and benefits of electric ⚡ bodas.



**1 out of 3**  
riders are using TikTok



**40%**  
of riders wearing reflector jackets

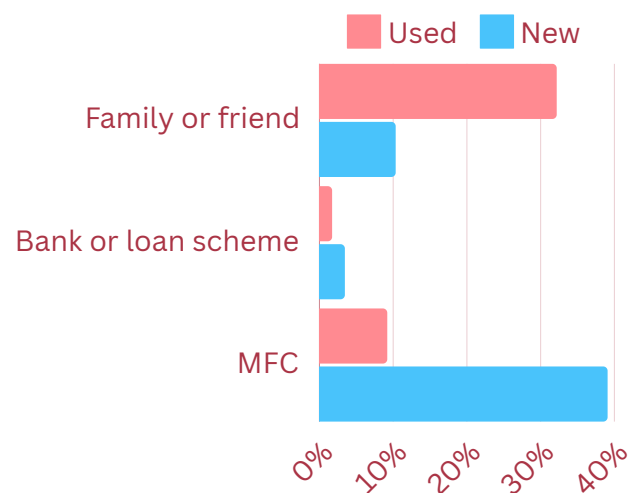


**58%**  
of bikes on the road are second-hand

## Used and New Bikes On Loan

Most boda boda loans are coming from two sources in Kampala: motorcycle finance companies (MFCs) like Watu, Tugende, or Mogo (48% of loans) or from friends or family (42% of loans).

**Our take:** this helps illustrate the path many motorcycles take in Uganda, being sold new by MFCs, then resold and paid for with loans from family and friends.



From the Blog: **Stage Signposts Face Resistance**

In May, the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) began installing signposts for *gazetted* boda stages around the city, with support from some members of Kampala boda boda leadership.

But many boda riders report never being consulted on this - some signs, for example, implied that the stages needed to move fifty meters down the street - and **riders quickly vandalized the signs. Others are simply ignored.**

Read the full article by Geoffrey [here](#).

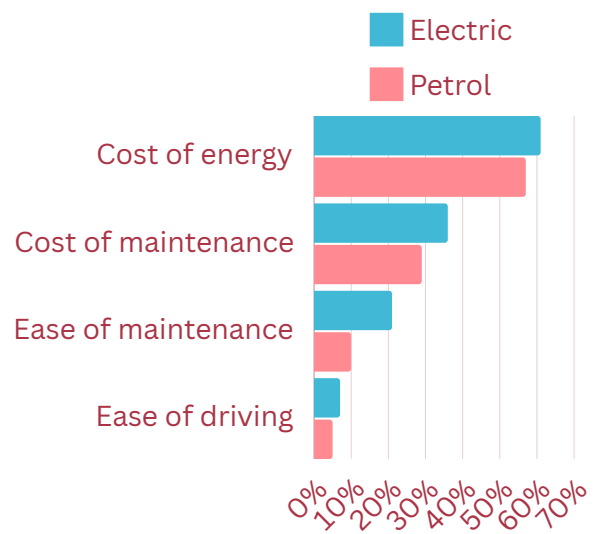
## Electric ⚡ Bodas

Although startups have been testing e-bodas in Kampala for over 6 years, it is only in the past year that numbers have more than tripled to around 3,000. Companies and groups like UEMA and AfEMA have begun to advocate for them, and the government has passed incentives to boost them - but **what's in it for the riders?**

### What Riders Like About Electric Motorcycles...

Of our sample of boda riders interested in electric pikipikis, there's a few differences in what it is exactly they like about them. Both current petrol riders and electric riders **think the cost of energy is lower**, but **current electric riders also point to cheaper & easier maintenance**.

**Our take:** Reduction in maintenance is a key, under-used message in outreach to boda riders to switch to electric. Advocates for e-bodas should emphasize this point more.

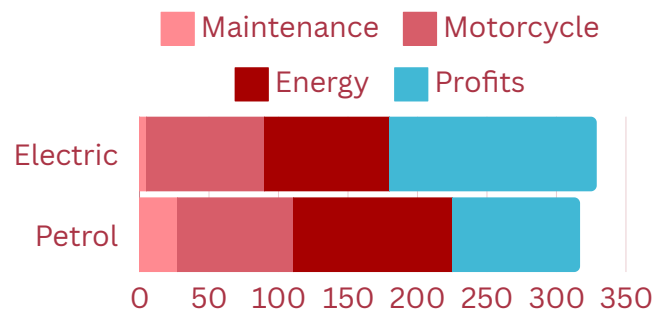


*Reasons electric v petrol riders like electric bikes.*

### ...And What They Earn On Them.

By reducing the money they spend on maintenance weekly (from 27k to 5k) and on energy (from 114k to 90k), **electric boda riders earn around 50% more than petrol boda riders.**

**Our take:** Electric boda riders know what they are talking about (see graph above). Electricity is indeed much cheaper than petrol, even if companies need to offset the high price of batteries through charging more for battery swapping over charging at home. However, these numbers are not likely to remain stable: maintenance costs will rise slightly as the mostly new e-motorcycles age.



*Weekly finances for electric & petrol boda riders.*



*An e-boda rider stunting. 📷 Tom Courtright.*



## Moving from Two Wheels to Four

Kalungi James

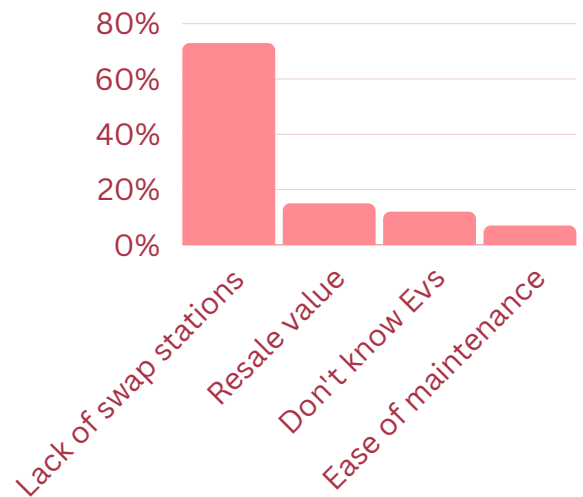
A few months ago, I took a decision to switch from being a boda rider to a “special” taxi driver (car taxi) in Kampala. It was something that I dreamt of for years and made several attempts to attain it but failed, until finally it became a reality a few months ago. But I still face challenges. Clients ask for a bigger and newer car yet I still drive an old Toyota Vitz. I work longer hours during the night than I did as a boda rider. During my second week of work I received a “warm welcome” of 40k penalty fees for parking in a reserved lane at Kampala road. But all these challenges are bearable, because from all the research we have done, I have seen that boda riding is a very risky job since the driver acts as the “body” of the machine. Many bodas change their job after working tirelessly for many years but registering very few achievements, so I’m glad to get out while I could.



## Why Petrol Riders Don’t Switch to Electric

Geoffrey Ndhogezi

Petrol boda riders who prefer to stay with petrol bodas were clear about why: there are not enough swap stations. E-boda drivers like myself face the challenge of having passengers who want to go places that do not have swap stations when we have a low battery, and we sometimes have to reject trips because of this. The swap stations are growing, but we need many more to give the convenience a petrol rider has.



**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 July 1-14 by Geoffrey and Kalungi. You can download all past reports [here](#).

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