

**THE BODA BODA TRANSPORT SYSTEM AND THE WELFARE OF THE
OPERATIONS IN THE KAMPALA CENTRAL DIVISION**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Boda boda transport services have grown from small beginnings in the 1960s to now an approximately 30,000 just in the Central Business District (CBD) of Kampala. Unfortunately, although the industry is expanding, there is no evidence or documentation on the effect of *boda bodas* on the welfare of its operators and society. This study sought to explore effects of *Boda boda* transport industry on the wellbeing of operators and society in Kampala Central Division.

A case study design was adopted combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. Carried out in Kampala Central Division (KCD), data was collected from *Boda boda* operators, management officials and the users, using In-depth interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions. Data was also collected from Kigali, just to understand and compare the Rwanda situation with and the chaos in Uganda.

The *Boda boda* business has clearly contributed to the economic and social wellbeing of operators in mainly creation of jobs and hence a significant source of livelihood. The members and the associations take care of the welfare of the operators in times of emergencies [such as] attending to a sick operator, loss of job or paying damages should an operator plunge into an accident Other contributions were: 1) assistance in formation association 2) increased level of savings; 3) level of access to loan able funds very high and 4) assistance to open up bank account very low.

There are mixed views about the social relationship between the operators and public (users), but, overall, *boda bodas*' is commended for contributing to transport sector e.g by providing a convenient, flexible, affordable and quick means of movement to people and goods. The complaints raised by the public were about the age of *boda boda* operators said to be young inexperienced boys, who ride recklessly with no driving licence and don't follow regulations. Other complaints were that there were too many *boda bodas* in town and that their numbers needed to be regulated. Both the operators and users had fears of theft and murder while using *boda bodas*. Furthermore, the police complained of lack of appropriate structures to ensure enforcement of laws.

The study shows that policies, laws and regulations to ensure safety, health, and security, to control traffic, revenue and discipline exist. Some of these have to do with registration, taxation and mandatory use of helmets for both operators and passengers. However, unlike in Rwanda, enforcement is inadequate and is worsened by political interference leading to resistance of many relevant policies. . In conclusion, *boda bodas* are popular to both the operators and the users. Both operators and users acknowledged the risky nature of business but applauded its importance to survival and quick movement. In recognition of the proliferation and popularity of *boda bodas* and the risks involved, the study recommends that: 1) : There should be enforcement of policies and regulations; 2) political patronage and interference should be minimized and 3) authorities should come up with a policy aimed at limiting age of motorcycles coming in the country and number of *boda bodas* in the city centre.