

REPORT  
**PRELIMINARY IMPACT STUDY**  
THE USE OF SAFE BODA FOR WOMEN'S  
IMPROVED MOBILITY AND EMPOWERMENT IN  
KAMPALA

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Report Document

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## Executive Summary

This report details findings from a mixed-methods study exploring the preliminary impacts of SafeBoda on women's mobility and empowerment in Kampala, Uganda.

SafeBoda - a commercial motorcycle-taxi service in Kampala, Uganda - launched in late 2014 as a way to innovate the motorcycle taxi (boda boda) industry in Uganda. A 'community of professional, trained' boda boda drivers, SafeBoda offers a 'safer experience to passengers'. In February 2017 an app version of the service was launched.

The report draws on data from a demographic survey of 57 male and female SafeBoda customers, trip data of 151 female SafeBoda customers, interviews with 19 female SafeBoda customers and 10 female non-users of SafeBoda, and two Focus Group Discussions (one with 5 female SafeBoda customers and one with 6 female non-users of SafeBoda).

### Main Findings

**All women who had used SafeBoda spoke highly of the organisation and its riders.** Women customers gave it an average score of 4.9 out of 5. In a city where a lot of dangers come from using boda bodas, this high regard of SafeBoda is commendable.

**Women customers interviewed in Kampala for this study mentioned the value of SafeBoda to their everyday lives.** This included reducing the time taken to travel to and from work, feeling safe with their daily movements – particularly in the evening between the hours of 7pm and 10pm (drivers stop working at 10pm), as well as the movement of their products, and saving travel costs.

**Women experience and use transport differently to men.** There is considerable evidence that men and women's distinct social roles and economic activities lead to significant differences in mobility and transport usage. For example, women often take shorter trips, more often, against a backdrop of sexual harassment and violence. A product such as SafeBoda, which caters for women and recognises their specific needs, is essential for women's mobility.

**SafeBoda is addressing women's unique transport needs and the invisible barriers that women face in using transport, and particularly bodas, in Kampala** in a number of ways:

- **Concerns about safety and security while travelling through the city:** Women reported feeling much safer travelling by SafeBoda as their riders are linked to a trusted institution, and drivers can be identified and tracked using the app and the identity numbers.
- **Feeling intimidated by rude drivers who don't listen to women and quarrel with passengers:** SafeBoda's training in customer service has helped make drivers more approachable to women. Interviewees said they feel comfortable around SafeBoda drivers who they trust and considered to be professional, respectful, and polite to women.
- **Cost – women tend to spend a greater proportion of their income on transport and are concerned about high and unpredictable fares:** Women highly value the option to preload their SafeBoda account with 'credit' (i.e. to pre-pay), which is convenient, safe,

and helps them manage their money. There is also some evidence that regular bodas can be twice as expensive as a SafeBoda for the women users interviewed, so women save money by using the service.

- **Feeling uncomfortable negotiating fares and worries about being overcharged because they are a woman:** Women SafeBoda customers said they no longer worried about being 'cheated' and SafeBoda's fixed price for services based on the distance of the trip means they can avoid the stress of bargaining.
- **Challenges of women taking complicated, multi-purpose trips a day** (whereas men typically go to work and back): Being able to use one SafeBoda driver for multiple errands (i.e. taking many sub-trips in one main trip) is considered by users to be a 'great addition' that helps improve their mobility, saves time, and is more cost-effective.

**Women - whether younger or older, in education or in employment (formal or self-employment) – all perceived the same benefits from using SafeBoda** (i.e. increased safety and security, reduction in time spent travelling, reduction in amount spent on travelling and increased mobility). Younger women placed greater value on SafeBoda's fixed prices as they were more likely to face difficulties negotiating fares with regular bodas and feel they are being overcharged. All women appreciated the time saved by taking SafeBoda; married women with families mentioned that time saved on their commute to and from work meant they had extra time to spend with their children and partner. Younger, single women with no children were able to stay out later after work with friends, or do extra study.

There are encouraging signs from this small preliminary study that **SafeBoda is having a positive impact on the lives of women**, although further research would be needed to confirm this. For example, women interviewed in this study observed that SafeBoda is:

- **Improving employment and income opportunities**, by reducing the time for women to get to and from work, meet clients, deliver goods and products to customers safely, and work later shifts or stay later as they can return home safely.
- **Freeing up time for other activities, such as education and leisure**, for example customers said they had extra time to take classes and go out with their friends. Several women interviewed requested that SafeBoda consider extending their opening hours beyond 10pm as they felt unsafe getting home late at night. However, SafeBoda drivers do not operate late at night due to the risks and potential to compromise the safety of passenger and driver.
- **Increased confidence** in being able to negotiate for prices if they have to use regular bodas as they are aware of standard prices. Women's positive experience with SafeBoda drivers has increased their expectations and they now are more likely to 'speak up' if they are not happy about the way a regular boda is driving.
- **Increased financial inclusion by using mobile money to pay for SafeBoda journeys** - this innovative financial tool helps women manage their monthly budgets, particularly important as transport costs can be as much as half of women's income in Kampala.

# 1 Introduction

*'I feel movement should be productive. If I have a SafeBoda guy it makes my life easier'*, a 27-year-old SafeBoda customer explained when asked about her experience of using SafeBoda<sup>1</sup>. She spoke at length about her jobs – one of which was as an innovator within the public health sector, and how prior to SafeBoda her daily commute to and from work by car would take many hours. Before using SafeBoda, she used to have to leave work at 3pm in order to *'miss jam [stand-still traffic]'* to be able to get back home at a reasonable hour. For this young innovator, *'SafeBoda has helped in reducing the time taken to get to work and home'*



*The SafeBoda Orange Helmet.*

**SafeBoda launched in late 2014 as a way to innovate the growing motorcycle taxi industry in Uganda.** SafeBoda is available daily – from around 7am until 10pm and currently operates in several areas in Kampala.<sup>2</sup>

**A 'community of professional, trained' boda boda drivers, it offers a 'safer experience to passengers'**.<sup>3</sup> Becoming a SafeBoda rider involves a rigorous recruitment process: drivers need to have been a boda boda rider for at least 2 years, have a stage, come with a recommendation from the stage chairman, and undertake an interview and five day training on safety, customer care and geography. Once SafeBoda drivers pass the test, they get reflectors and helmets in the striking orange colours that are increasingly recognisable across Kampala. In February 2017, an app version of the service was launched.

## 1.1 Improved Mobility for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

**There is growing evidence that unreliable, inadequate and poor quality public transport** are major barriers for working women as they try to balance economic and household responsibilities.<sup>4</sup> Women have different transport needs to men<sup>5</sup> and often face 'invisible barriers'. For example, women spend more time on household duties and childcare and less time on leisure than men, with the result that women make more frequent but short trips. Women also often have complex trip-scheduling and chaining (multiple trips a day).<sup>6</sup>

**Investments in accessible and affordable transport that are designed and delivered in ways that fit into women's lives can unlock women's economic potential** by addressing barriers that constrain women's mobility, including:<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A commercial motorcycle-taxi service in Kampala the capital city of Uganda offering a safer experience to passengers

<sup>2</sup> SafeBoda currently operates in: Kisaasi, Ntinda, Bukoto, Kyambogo, Kamwokya, Naguru, Kololo, Nakawa, Mbuya Bugolobi, Makere, Kisugu, Kabalagala, Muyenga, Nsambya, Kansanga and Central business district

<sup>3</sup> SafeBoda website <http://www.safeboda.com/home/who-are-we/>

<sup>4</sup> Jobes, K., Limbu, S.T. and Joekes, S. (forthcoming) 'Infrastructure and Urban Development: a Game-Changer for Women's Economic Empowerment. Towards a Transformative Approach', ICED What Works Series, ICED: London

<sup>5</sup> Kang, I (2006) Excluded Women's Transport Needs: The Case of Johannesburg, South Africa, DPU Working Paper 129.

<sup>6</sup> Uteng, P (2011) Gender and Mobility in the Developing World, World Development Report 2012 Background Paper

<sup>7</sup> Op. cit. note 1.

- **Reducing time poverty** by decreasing the time women spend waiting and traveling on public transport, or walking to destinations, which in turn frees up time for income earning economic activities.
- **Improving women's mobility** by designing more efficient transport options that address women's complex daily travel patterns, such as women's tendency to make shorter, more frequent trips to multiple destinations – also known as 'trip chaining'.
- **Providing affordable and accessible transport solutions** as women's lower disposable income and the high cost of transportation limits women's entry into employment and education. The accessibility and cost of public transport is also a key factor for homebased workers and market place vendors, who commute to markets on a regular basis to buy raw materials and other goods.
- **Improving women's safety**, by addressing both perceived and actual risks of violence, harassment and assault, at and around transport hubs, and on transport facilities. Fears about safety when using public transport can limit women's access to schools, markets and jobs.<sup>8</sup>

Although there is growing evidence that transport investments can accelerate women's economic empowerment, there has been **little research conducted to date on the impact of innovative for-profit transport businesses that serve women.**

This study therefore provides a valuable contribution to this evidence gap, by exploring the experience of SafeBoda - an innovative and high-potential transport solution that aims to provide a safe, cost-effective and convenient motorcycle-taxi experience.

## 1.2 Objectives of Study

This current study explores **the actual and potential impact, if any, SafeBoda has on women users in Kampala.** Key study objectives include:

1. Explore whether SafeBoda has led to changes in women's use of transport services and its implications for women's mobility and other related benefits; and
2. Explore the perceived benefits of using SafeBoda by different groups of women and different categories of workers.

## 1.3 Methodology

Addressing these objectives involved **a mixed-methodology**, which drew on various sources of data. Specifically:

- A **desk-based review** of the literature on gender and transport, with a focus on commercial motorcycle taxis, ride-hailing motorcycle taxis, shared transport and other modes of transport usually used by women. This desk-based review also focused on the transport sector in Uganda and the boda boda industry.

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<sup>8</sup> Biswas, S. and Mohun, R. (2016) Infrastructure: A Game-Changer for Women's Economic Empowerment. A Background Paper for the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment. London: ICED

- **Analysis of two sets of quantitative data:** trip data of completed trips undertaken by 151 female SafeBoda customers between February and August 2017 and a demographic survey of male and female SafeBoda customers conducted in July 2017.
- **1-week qualitative research in Kampala in October 2017**, which involved individual in-depth interviews with 19 female SafeBoda customers, 10 female non-users of SafeBoda and two focus group discussions (one with 5 female SafeBoda customers and one with 6 female non-users of SafeBoda).

## 1.4 Section Outline

Following this introduction, Section 2 discusses women's use of boda bodas and SafeBodas in Kampala, and includes analysis of quantitative data sets. Section 3 presents the findings from the interviews and focus group discussions to explore some of the barriers that women face in using transport in Kampala, and identify how SafeBoda is addressing these barriers. Section 4 provides some initial findings from the qualitative research on the impact of SafeBoda on women's daily lives. Section 5 provides conclusions.

## 2 Women's use of Boda Bodas in Kampala

### 2.1 Boda bodas in Kampala

Boda boda – motorcycle taxis – are a common form of transport across many East African countries, particularly Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The boda boda business could become the second largest mode of employment in Uganda after agriculture, according to a 2013 report by the Pan-African banking group Standard Bank.<sup>9</sup>

**Boda bodas filled a transport void** left by the collapse of formal urban bus networks in Kampala.<sup>10</sup> The main mode of transport shifted to minibuses, operated by individual private operators and managed by an association. However, private buses have not been able to meet the growing demand and substantial unmet demand remains, particularly in the outlying areas and during off-peak periods. This has led to a growth in non-conventional means of transport, the most dominant being the motorcycle – boda bodas.

**Boda Bodas are highly convenient** - able to easily navigate traffic, access remote locations where private buses and taxis cannot go,<sup>11</sup> and transport passengers directly where they want to go. Taxis often do not find it profitable to go to more remote areas due to insufficient demand. Equally they physically cannot use the footpaths and tracks that provide access to many low-income urban settlements. Boda boda operate from 'stands' in towns, in trading

*Taxis and boda boda's are the most common form of public transportation in Kampala*

centres, and at the passenger service stops along main roads providing access to feeder routes.<sup>12</sup>



**Estimates of the number of boda bodas in Kampala vary, likely upwards of 60,000 boda boda riders and 10,000 stages (stops)**, according to the Kampala Capital City Authority in 2014. Boda bodas serve an urban population that has doubled in the last 20 years to an estimated 1.5 million people in Kampala (2014 census).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Poon, L. (2016) The Love –hate Relationship Between East Africa and Its Two-Wheeled Taxis, City Lab. Found [here](#)

<sup>10</sup> Kumar, A. (2011) *Understanding the emerging role of motorcycles in African cities A political economy perspective*, Washington DC: World Bank.

<sup>11</sup> Howe, J and Davis, A. (2002). *Boda – Boda – Uganda's Rural and Urban Low- Capacity Transport Services*.

<sup>12</sup> Raynor, B. (2013) *Informal Transportation in Uganda: A Case Study of the Boda Boda Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection. Paper 1923*.

<sup>13</sup> The World Bank - Publication (2015) *Getting Ugandan Cities to Work: Achieving Efficient, Inclusive and Sustainable growth*. Found [here](#). [Kampala population size](#) from the August 2014 national census, as documented in the final report of November 2016, by the [Uganda Bureau of Statistics](#) (UBOS). See: <http://www.ubos.org/2016/03/24/census-2014-final-results/>

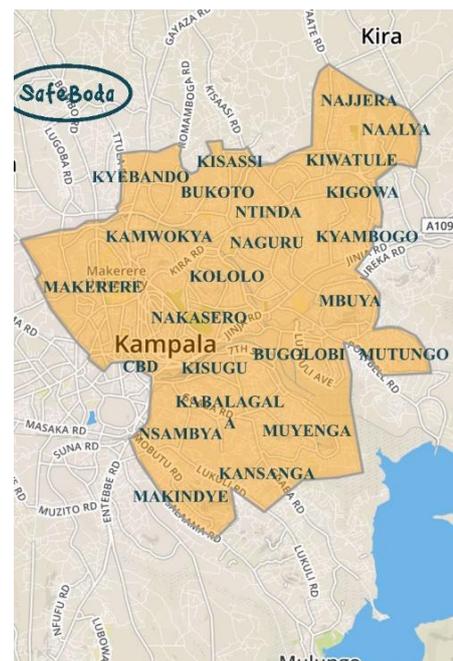
## 2.2 Women's use of boda bodas in Kampala

**Women are regular users of boda bodas in Kampala.** A 2007 survey of boda boda drivers<sup>14</sup> in Kampala estimates that six out of every ten passengers are women.

**Boda bodas' speed and convenience are helping improve women's mobility.** Over 90% of women users of boda bodas in a 2002 study reported significant changes in lifestyle after starting to use a boda, by increasing the range and number of the activities in which they engage. 38% of female users said that use of boda boda services resulted in increased income, by saving them time, increasing their mobility, and making activities easier.<sup>15</sup> Boda bodas can also greatly enhance personal welfare and women's access to education and social activities.<sup>16</sup>

**However, both women and men face dangers in using boda bodas,** particularly from motorbike accidents. The death toll on Uganda's roads is twice the average across Africa,<sup>17</sup> and motorcyclists are among the most vulnerable road users. In Uganda, motorcyclists contribute 41% of all road traffic injuries.<sup>18</sup> The number of injuries is increasing, with an estimated 20 boda-related cases at Mulago National Referral hospital in Kampala every day.<sup>19</sup>

**Women also face barriers to using bodas, which are specific to women.** These barriers will be explored in Section 3 of this report, and include fear of assault or harassment, feeling intimidated by rudeness of drivers, and less disposable income which compounds worries that they may be overcharged. To mitigate concerns, women typically use bodas that are known to them. A 24-year-old non-user of SafeBoda explained how the driver she regularly uses is at the boda stage near her home – *'he is someone who picks me and takes me to and from work. He knows the time I need to leave for work and the time I return from work.'* However, women cannot always rely on their known drivers being available and this research found that SafeBoda provides a reliable and trusted option.



Map of Areas SafeBoda Operates In

<sup>14</sup> Kisaalita, W. & Sentongo-Kibalama, J. (2007) 'Delivery of urban transport in developing countries: the case for the motorcycle taxi service (boda boda) operators of Kampala', *Development Southern Africa*, 24:2, 345-357

<sup>15</sup> Prominent among these are traders in bricks, chickens, fish, food, and waragi (local alcoholic spirit). Howe, J and Davis, A. (2002). *Boda – Boda – Uganda's Rural and Urban Low- Capacity Transport Services*

<sup>16</sup> Based on a study in rural southern Uganda. Gamberini, G. (2014) 'Boda – Boda: The Impact of a Motorbike Taxi Service in South Uganda'. *The Journal of Politics and Society*.

<sup>17</sup> Fallon, A. (2013) 'Uganda Motorbike Deaths: Concerns Grow Over Silence Killers'. *The Guardian*, 13 August 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Tumwesigye, N. Atuyambe, M and Kobusingye, O. (2016) 'Factors Associated with Injuries among Commercial Motorcyclists: Evidence from a Matched Case Control Study in Kampala City, Uganda'. *US National Library Medicine*, National Institute of Health.

<sup>19</sup> Fallon, A. (2013) 'Uganda Motorbike Deaths: Concerns Grow Over Silence Killers'. *The Guardian*, 13 August 2013.

## 2.3 Women's use of SafeBoda

**4 out of 10 SafeBoda users are women**, according to a demographic survey conducted in July 2017. A number of women who know of, and use, SafeBoda first heard about the service due to promotional campaigns in late 2014/early 2015. They also seem to work or live within areas where there is a concentration of SafeBoda riders, such as Lumumba Avenue, Acacia mall, Ntinda Complex and Village Mall in Bugolobi. There is, however, a general lack of awareness of SafeBoda in Kampala – particularly among non-users who also live and work within SafeBoda's operational areas.<sup>20</sup>

*'I saw them and the safety jacket and thought – this might be interesting. The bright orange was catchy'*

(25 year old, SafeBoda user describes first time she saw SafeBoda).

**3 out of the 10 female non-users of SafeBoda interviewed, and 2 of the 6 FGD participants (also non-users) had heard of SafeBoda.** Of the 5 women non-users who had heard of SafeBoda, 1 knew a rider that was a friend, 2 had only recently heard of SafeBoda from neighbours or friends and the remaining 2 had seen the SafeBoda orange reflectors and helmets. The vast majority of non-users – even those that had heard of the service – were also not clear on how the service worked.

### How Female SafeBoda Customers Found Out About the Service\*

	Number of women
SafeBoda Promotional Campaigns	5
Friends and Family	9
Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)	3
Other**	2

\*Data based on in-depth interviews with 19 SafeBoda customers.

\*\* This includes spotting the orange SafeBoda visors and helmet and being curious about the service

**While women may hear about SafeBoda through various promotional campaigns or social media, women interviewees said that they only really felt comfortable using SafeBoda after it had been recommended by someone they trust**, suggesting the value of word-of-mouth marketing campaigns through SafeBoda users. One regular SafeBoda user said she was previously a nervous boda user until a friend recommended she switch to SafeBoda: *'A friend of mine sent the app to me because she knows how cautious I am. I found out about 3 months ago from that friend and now I use it 4 times a week'*. Although social media remains a key strategy for SafeBoda to attract customers, **offering an incentive to SafeBoda customers to recommend the service** is likely to prove cost-effective (e.g. a discount or free gift in exchange for referrals). Research shows that women

*'You feel valued as a customer ... I've preached SafeBoda to all my friends'*

(25 year old, SafeBoda user).

engage more in word-of-mouth advertising than men; with statistics showing women have about 10% more conversations about brands than men. Women are also more strongly impacted by word-of-mouth advertising and their advice is considered more influential by women and men alike.<sup>21</sup>

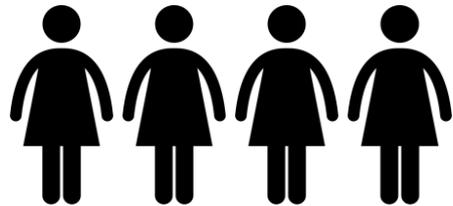
<sup>20</sup> Due to the small number of non-users interviewed for this study, the findings are an indication of the perceptions of the women interviewed and not representative of all female non-users of SafeBoda in Kampala.

## Who uses SafeBoda?

(Based on analysis of demographic survey of SafeBoda users conducted in July 2017)



6 out of 10 SafeBoda users are men (61%)



4 out of 10 are women (39%)

**Women are more likely to use SafeBoda at off-peak times.** Analysis of demographic data shows that women tend to use SafeBoda more during the day (67% of passengers are women), but less during the morning and evening commute (29%).

### SafeBoda's women users: key statistics

Analysis of trip data of 151 SafeBoda female customers (February – August 2017) is provided in the table below. It shows that **SafeBoda provides a highly valued service for women in Kampala, with women users expressing high satisfaction levels.**

**Women's use of mobile money suggests that the SafeBoda app is helping increase women's financial inclusion.** Mobile money is widely cited as a 'game-changer for financial inclusion', but recent studies have shown that across Africa women are consistently less likely than men to use mobile financial services.<sup>22</sup> In Uganda, only 25% of women use mobile money compared to 39% of men.<sup>23</sup>

**Drivers' fast response to requests is not only convenient and saves time for women users, it is important for women's safety** so they are not waiting outside for a long time, feeling vulnerable to harassment or assault. With safety being the foundation of the company, the next chapter explores how SafeBoda is addressing barriers for women in using transport in Kampala.



### Women report high satisfaction levels with SafeBoda

- Female customers rate SafeBoda highly with 60% of customers scoring 5 out of 5
- Average score of 4.9 out of 5



### Women mostly pay through mobile money and fares are low

- 6 out of 10 female customers pay using mobile money, either pre-loaded onto the app or from promotional activities (60%)
- Trips cost on average 4,863 UGX (approx. £1)
- The majority of trips cost between 1,001 to 5,000 UGX

<sup>21</sup> Fay, B. and Keller, E. (2012) The Gift of the Gab: Women and Word of Mouth Advocacy, Forbes Magazine, August 10 2012.

<sup>22</sup> GMSA (2016) Women and mobile money Insights from Kenya <https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Connected-Women-Women-and-Mobile-Money-Insights-from-Kenya-Nov15.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Survey by Financial Inclusion Insights (2016): Uganda Quicksights Report Fourth Annual FII Tracker Survey (November 2016) <http://finclusion.org/uploads/file/reports/2016%20Data%20at%20a%20Glance%20Financial%20Inclusion%20in%20Uganda.pdf>

### Drivers have fast response times



- Drivers take an average of 18 seconds to accept ping requests
- Drivers take an average of 4.58 minutes to arrive at the customer
- Drivers take an average of 2.39 minutes to begin the trip after arriving
- Trips start an average of 7.55 minutes after the customer submits the ping request

### Women SafeBoda users are highly mobile



- Female customers used SafeBoda in 72 parishes in Kampala
- Women take the most trips in: Kansanga – Muyena (7.3% of trips), Nakasero II (7.3%), Bukoto I (7%), Nakasero IV (6.4%), Kololo I (5.4%), Civic Centre (5%), Ntinda (4.9%), and Kololo II (4.2%)
- The majority of trips last 13 minutes
- Female customers on average travel 5.6km with SafeBoda

## 3 How SafeBoda is addressing women's transport barriers

This section explores some of the barriers that women face in using transport in Kampala, and discusses how SafeBoda is addressing these barriers.

### 3.1 Concerns about safety and security

*'Using regular bodas is risky'*

(25 year old, SafeBoda user)

#### **Women reported feeling unsafe and worried**

**about being harassed or attacked while travelling through the city.** A 2013 survey in Kampala found that 80% of adolescent girls and young women (aged 11-23 years) do not feel safe in public spaces or moving through the city – when using public transportation, when walking, and when using passenger taxis and regular boda-bodas.<sup>24</sup> Women's security concerns on public transportation are particularly critical since it is women, rather than men, who most depend on public transport to meet their mobility needs.<sup>25</sup> A 25 year old FGD participant described her discomfort and safety fears while using regular bodas: *'You sit on a boda, you're like 'God set me free''*.

**To address these safety concerns, women non-users of SafeBoda mainly use bodas that are known to them;** however these are not always available. Under these circumstances, women described a sense of 'desperation' and 'fear' when they need to use transport urgently but know the option is risky and a 'last resort'. In these cases, women use a set of criteria for assessing which boda to use. A regular boda user, for example, said she looks at a boda rider's general cleanliness and presentation to gauge whether she will be safe travelling with him. One 25-year-old SafeBoda customer explained being *'very particular'* when she used to travel with regular bodas. Her criteria included, *'helmet, is he mature looking (not too happy or eager, young and so more likely to speed, so would completely disregard my safety – that's usually my criteria).'*

**How SafeBoda is addressing women's concerns about safety and security:** SafeBoda's strong comparative advantage is in its **riders being linked to an institution, ability to be identified and tracked through the SafeBoda app and the identity numbers on riders.**

*'SafeBoda was a plus in my life. I use SafeBoda only now ... SafeBoda came in to help me feel safe with my daily movements'*

(27 year old, SafeBoda user who often travels home from work late at night)

The safety and security SafeBoda provides for its female customers often mean that it becomes the main mode of transport women use to get around Kampala. For example, a 26-year-old SafeBoda customer explained how she takes more trips and moves around Kampala more easily than before – prior to that she would either use her private car or taxis and would find herself spending most of her time in traffic.

<sup>24</sup> Plan International (2013) Adolescent Girls' Views on Safety in Cities Findings from the Because I am a Girl Urban Programme Study in Cairo, Delhi, Hanoi, Kampala and Lima <https://plan-international.org/publications/adolescent-girls%E2%80%99-views-safety-cities>

<sup>25</sup> World Bank (2016) Preventing Violence against Women in Transport Systems

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/03/08/preventing-violence-against-women-in-transport-systems>

### 3.2 Feeling intimidated by rude drivers

**Women users reported that they occasionally felt intimidated by rude and unpredictable behaviour of regular boda drivers,** particularly drivers they have never used. In one of the focus groups, women described how regular boda drivers could be 'trouble' and sometimes 'they quarrel' with passengers. One 50 year old interviewee described a recent incident on a regular boda who was overtaking and in the process her body hit a car: *'I felt threatened, but then I didn't want to fight him on the boda. It happened again and when he stopped I got off, walked to the other side of the road and told him to come and get your money, and when I looked at his face he was drunk. I didn't look at his face [when I first got on the boda]. Now, I will start looking at the face. I usually look at the boda, the size, is it clean. Regular bodas drink, are rude, no customer care.'*

*'You find a guy [regular boda driver] and he's just thinking about money ... you need one interested in customers'*

(24 year old, non-user)

During an FGD with non-users, one respondent explained how they felt uncomfortable with regular bodas who don't listen to women and are not female-friendly. One participant said she never takes regular boda's when she has to go to a particular part of town: *'... traffic lights at Wandegeya – I've seen 3 or 4 guys die because boda boda don't obey lights and so when I have to go to Wandegeya I walk because they don't listen.'*

**How SafeBoda is addressing women's feelings of intimidation by rude drivers:** Women interviewed said they feel more comfortable around SafeBoda drivers because they are polite, courteous and listen to women: *"really respectful to girls. Not rowdy, nothing of a sexual nature – they are polite"*. Another Safeboda user observed that *"SafeBoda's are professional, they are courteous, cautious and clean and obey traffic lights"* (33, SafeBoda customer).

*'My experience of using SafeBoda has been great – the riders are polite, those who drop me home, they even ensure I get in before they ride off'*

(22 year old, SafeBoda user)

**SafeBoda's driver training has helped make them more approachable to women,** and amenable to feedback from their customers. Drivers are all trained on customer service - in stark difference to a traditional boda driver. This training means that women can trust, talk to and feel more comfortable with a SafeBoda driver compared to a non-SafeBoda driver: *'I find it nice largely. The guys are polite ... I love how they like the community'* (25, SafeBoda user)

### 3.3 Cost – women have less disposable income

**Women tend to spend a greater proportion of their income on transport, and therefore higher fares have greater impact** on what they can afford to spend on other activities/items. For example, a 2008 survey in Kampala found that 18% of female respondents reported that they spent over half their income on transport, compared to only 6% of men.<sup>26</sup> Women users expressed various concerns about the cost of regular boda journeys, including how expensive they were, and the inconvenience and danger of carrying around loose change. In addition, regular boda drivers often charge different prices, especially for irregular distances, which often make them more costly to use and leads to concerns about being overcharged (see next section).

*'It's much better than a boda boda ... and it's (SafeBoda) much cheaper'*

(28 year old, SafeBoda customer)

**How SafeBoda is addressing women's cost concerns:** SafeBoda offers users the option to **preload their account with 'credit'** (i.e. to pre-pay) – an option which is highly valued by women users for its convenience and safety in not having to transport lots of money around. *'There's a huge difference in using mobile money – I don't have to look for change'* (25, SafeBoda customer). Another SafeBoda user described the convenience and safety of using mobile payment: *'I like that they introduce credit payment as I usually don't have cash on hand or a driver doesn't have change and we have to stop at a petrol station to get change'* (25, SafeBoda customer). One user suggested that SafeBoda consider adding the option of sharing credit with someone: *'If you don't have credit, I can bail you out with 10k so you can go wherever you want to go'* (25, SafeBoda customer).

There is also some early evidence (albeit based on a small sample) that **SafeBoda is saving women money - regular bodas can be up to twice as expensive as a SafeBoda for women users**. For example, a 25-year-old non-user explained how she spends between UGSh5000 (US\$1.40) and UGSh8000 (USD\$2) on an individual trip. In comparison, all SafeBoda customers, who travel similar distances mention spending UGSh2500 (USD\$0.70) to UGSh6000 (USD\$1.65) on average per trip.

### 3.4 Reluctance to negotiate fares

**Overcharging of women users by regular boda bodas is a major concern** among the

*'Regular bodas are weirdly hiked – their prices are way higher than SafeBoda. I think they give you what they feel like giving'*

(24 year old, SafeBoda user)

women interviewed; a vast majority of women interviewees perceive that boda's charge them more than men. A 24-year-old SafeBoda customer, for example, explained how in the past she would only get on boda's after male friends or colleagues had negotiated a fare for her.

<sup>26</sup> Tanzam, N. (2008) 'Gendered motilities in developing countries: the case of (urban) Uganda', Chapter 11 in Creswell, T. (Ed). 'Gendered Mobilities', Abingdon: Routledge.

**Women often expressed feeling uncomfortable negotiating** with regular boda drivers: *'You try to negotiate with them and they will tell you 10,000 when it is probably 4k.'* (24, SafeBoda customer). Women complained how regular bodas varied in price, depending on factors out of their control. For example, in a FGD with non-users of SafeBoda, one woman explained how a journey from Kyaliwajjala to the downtown area of Kampala would normally cost UGSh5000 (USD\$1.40), but when there's jam or rain, a boda could end up charging as much as UGSh10,000 (USD\$2.80). Similarly, another FGD participant explained how her regular boda price increased over the weekend as there was a carnival, which led to a surcharge.

**How SafeBoda is addressing women's feelings of discomfort negotiating fares:** Women SafeBoda users welcomed the **fixed price** for services based on the distance of the trip, meaning they did not have to negotiate prices. One 27 year old user said they felt much more comfortable using SafeBoda and no longer worried about being cheated: *'I hated bargaining [with other bodas]'*.

### 3.5 Challenges of taking multiple trips a day

**Women reported that they regularly make complicated, multi-purpose trips in a day.** Women users and non-users of SafeBoda discussed taking multiple trips a day – to get to and from work, to run multiple errands during the day, to get to school, to socialise – and often having to pay multiple fares in the day. Women also use a practice known as 'trip chaining',<sup>27</sup> whereby users take many sub-trips in one main trip. High fares or a fare structure based on individual trips can be financially burdensome. Using different boda drivers or transport options for multiple trips is also time-consuming and inconvenient.

**How SafeBoda is addressing women's challenges around taking multiple trips:** Being able to **use one SafeBoda driver for multiple errands** helps improve women's mobility, as does knowing how much the fare will be in advance (even with the stops). One 26-year-old SafeBoda customer discussed *'another great addition'* from SafeBoda: *'before when you take a SafeBoda and want to stop and retake it again it will end the trip and now the driver can stop and wait. You can do errands all day and have one driver for the day. Now they have a stop button and he waits for you.'*

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<sup>27</sup> Mahadevia, D (2015) Gender Sensitive Transport Planning for Cities in India, UNEP. [https://smartnet.niua.org/sites/default/files/resources/UNEP\\_Gender\\_Report\\_For\\_Upload\\_Med\\_Rez.pdf](https://smartnet.niua.org/sites/default/files/resources/UNEP_Gender_Report_For_Upload_Med_Rez.pdf)

### *Experiences of Different Women Users of SafeBoda*

The women SafeBoda customers interviewed were aged between 21 and 45, seven were married, twelve were single and the remaining women did not disclose their marital status. Additionally, four are undergraduates with the other women interviewed engaged in a range of different types of employment. While all women interviewed identified similar benefits of using SafeBoda (see above), there is emerging evidence that SafeBoda varies in its impact on women's lives depending on their different identities. The two areas the evidence points to is around activities undertaken with the extra time saved and the reduced need to negotiate.

One area is in **what women are able to do with the time saved from taking SafeBoda**. Married women with families mentioned SafeBoda provided them extra time to spend with their families – particularly those who used to spend many hours commuting to and from work. On the other hand, younger, single women with no children discuss SafeBoda giving them opportunity to stay out a little later after work to be able to socialise with friends and colleagues – something they used to do less as they worried about getting home later in the evening using regular bodas or taxis.

A second area is around **negotiation and money saved** - something that was particularly important to undergraduates and women under 25. While the vast majority of women said they like the fact they did not have to negotiate (see above), younger women were more likely to say they faced difficulties negotiating fares with regular bodas and feel they are being overcharged when they use regular bodas. Fixed prices and the reduced need to negotiate could be more important for younger women and women still in education as they have less disposable income and even less transport opportunities.

## 4 SafeBoda's impact on the lives of women users

The research finds that **women SafeBoda users are more mobile as a result of the increased safety and security, convenience and reduced time to travel, and cost savings**. 11 out of 19 women SafeBoda customers used the services four or more times a week, with 4 women using it on a daily basis, usually to get to and from work, or to move around the city during the working day.

### How Often Female SafeBoda Customers Used the Service\*

	Number of women
Once a month or less	1
Once a week	5
2 – 3 times a week	2
4 or more time a week	7
Daily	4

\*Data based on in-depth interviews with 19 SafeBoda customers.

**Women's increased mobility as a result of using SafeBoda is starting to have the following positive impact on the lives of women:** (1) increase in productive activities; (2) access to education and increased opportunity for leisure; (3) increased confidence; and (4) increased financial inclusion. Although this preliminary study is relatively small-scale and further research would be needed to confirm these promising trends, it has nevertheless revealed encouraging indications that SafeBoda has the potential to improve women users' lives.

### 4.1 Increase in productive activities

**SafeBoda helps increase women's access to employment and income** by reducing the time taken for women to either get to and from work, or enabling them to transport their goods and products to customers safely and securely. A 26-year-old SafeBoda customer explained how she '*stopped using [other] bodas with SafeBoda*'. She finds it convenient, as she is able to be at her desk and do her job and simultaneously have packages delivered to clients without having to be with the boda driver – '*I can even see the driver using the GPS ... and can easily track [his movements]*'.

Similarly, a 24-year-old customer was able to set up her own marketing agency as she was **more mobile and able to meet clients easily**. She explained how prior to SafeBoda she rarely used bodas as she knew a number of people who had been in accidents. While she owned a car, it was extremely difficult to meet clients and navigate due to the traffic.

**Women's increased feelings of safety using SafeBoda mean that they can work later,** either by staying at work later or doing later shift patterns. For example, one SafeBoda user said that her working life is much easier and she can achieve more by staying late or doing later shifts.

*'I usually work late in Bukoto. If I know a SafeBoda can pick me up [from work] it makes my life easier. I [used to] end up sleeping at work for safety.'*

(25 year old, SafeBoda user)

**SafeBodas are also used to deliver parcels and goods** – both work related and personal – particularly as customers are able to track the riders through the app. For example, a 33-year-old SafeBoda customer who used to mainly deliver her products to clients by taxis, as they were safer than regular bodas noted that there were always *'delays depending on the time of the day'*. She explained how these delays initially lost her a lot of clients, but now she mainly uses SafeBoda to deliver her products on time and in good condition to her clients. Another SafeBoda user who owns a small business observed that she uses SafeBoda to deliver packages to clients, saving her time to focus on other work: *"I don't need to go. I can track the driver without being there. It's like a portable DHL."* (26, SafeBoda customer)

## 4.2 Increased time for education and leisure

**The time saved by using SafeBoda frees up women's time to take up other activities, including education and leisure**, such as a 27-year-old customer that was now able to take up French lessons with the extra time she now had – she used to travel 4 to 5 hours a day to get to work and had no time to do anything else, or a 20-year-old customer who explained worrying less about getting to and from classes or missing classes as a result of being wary of taking bodas for fear of harassment, risky driving or getting into an accident.

SafeBoda are used less for leisure activities, largely because SafeBoda is not available after 10pm. However, some younger respondents mentioned using it to go out in the evening, although they felt vulnerable returning home using other options: *"I use it a lot when I'm going to town – most of us we go out [for fun] late at night [with only regular bodas or taxis as options] and we want to be safe [getting there]."* (21, SafeBoda customer).

SafeBoda's absence after 10pm means women often use risky methods to get home late at night. Several women interviewed requested that SafeBoda consider extending their opening hours beyond 10pm. However, there are specific reasons why most SafeBoda drivers do not operate at night, due to the risks and potential to compromise the safety of the passenger and driver.

## 4.3 Increased confidence

**Women customers discussed feeling more confident** in negotiating for prices if they have to use regular bodas as they are aware of standard prices set by SafeBoda, but also being able to speak up if drivers are not driving or acting appropriately. SafeBoda's driver training means that women users are increasingly likely to have positive boda experiences, which in turn increases their expectations that a boda driver should listen to women: *"The security and safety detail of SafeBoda has certainly influenced how I use and which boda boda I use. I speak up when I see he is not riding in secure manner"* (FGD participant, SafeBoda user).

## 4.4 Increased financial inclusion

**Women's use of mobile money to pay for SafeBoda journeys is an indicator of increased financial inclusion.** The ability to pre-load accounts with credit was highly valued by women SafeBoda customers and this innovative financial tool helps women manage their monthly budget, particularly as transport costs can be as much as half of women's income in Kampala. One woman interviewee observed, *'I like that you can load credit [on the app] at the beginning of the month and it lasts for 3 weeks'* (25, SafeBoda user). There is evidence from elsewhere that to achieve full financial inclusion today, women need a range of mobile financial tools that are designed and delivered in ways that fit into their lives and go far

beyond loans and banking.<sup>28</sup> SafeBoda's ability to pre-load accounts and help women control their transport budgets is a useful contribution in this regard.



*A SafeBoda parked in SafeBoda's offices in Kampala*

## 5 Conclusions

**SafeBoda ranks high with women users interviewed for time saving, security and safety, customer care and to a degree the cost of its services.** SafeBoda's strong comparative advantage is in its riders being linked to an institution, ability to be identified and tracked through the SafeBoda app and the identity numbers on riders. SafeBoda is comparatively cheaper in terms of cost – a user compared a distance of about 5 km (from Makerere Kikoni to downtown) that ordinary bodas charge between UGSh2500 to UGSh3000 (USD\$0.70 - USD\$0.80), yet SafeBoda will charge UGSh1500 (USD\$0.45). The riders are also professional and obey traffic rules, which put women customers at ease.

**Both SafeBoda users and non-users speak positively about SafeBoda as a unique service** which will continue to thrive in Kampala due to the strengths mentioned above.

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<sup>28</sup> MicroFinance Gateway (2016) What does financial inclusion mean for women and girls today?  
<https://www.microfinancegateway.org/library/what-does-financial-inclusion-mean-women-and-girls-today>

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