



## JOE WALKER AND FRIENDS

Kampala to Mbale road safety walk Report 2023.

**Theme:** Creating awareness about road safety and a healthy lifestyle as a tool for social economic transformation.



# Summary Report

## The problem

More than 12 people are killed per day in road traffic crashes in Uganda, translating to more than 4,534 deaths annually. The majority of the victims are pedestrians and boda-boda riders. Traffic officers attribute many of these deaths and injuries to the careless road behaviour of riders, cyclists and drivers. These fatalities and injuries can be reduced greatly if awareness is constantly created and if the state of the roads are improved. This is why Joseph Beyanga aka Joe Walker, has been on a mission since 2018 to get the stakeholders involved, to play their part, using the Joe Walker and Friends road safety campaigns.

These walks are geared towards supporting the national and global effort to reduce road traffic death by 50% by 2030 as declared by the UN General Assembly in September 2020. The campaigns that have been carried out so far include:

- The “**Stay in Your Lane**” campaign, which sought to hold road users in Kampala accountable through pictorial naming and shaming of errant road users in 2018.
- The “Joe Walker and Friends - **Safe Roads, Save Lives**” campaign where Joe Walker and his friends walked 342km from Kampala to Bushenyi to create awareness about road safety in 2022.
- The **#TooYoungToDie** campaign which was a walk from Kampala to Mbale, covering a distance of 240 km and which focused on identifying the main causes of road crashes in the eastern region.

## Kampala to Mbale walk: #TooYoungToDie

The latest walk was done among other things, to facilitate active exchange of information among participants, and provide a platform for various stakeholders to brainstorm on how to improve road safety. During the walk, various stops were made along the towns and trading centres in Kampala, Namataba, Jinja, Iganga, Namutumba, Budaka and Mbale. Joe Walker interacted with boda boda riders, roadside communities, school-going children, taxi drivers, traffic police and other road users in a bid to share knowledge and create awareness, as well as listen to the problems faced by the people on the roads.

Among the activities that the Joe Walker team carried out was, giving out copies of the Highway Code (both in English and Luganda), painting Zebra Crossings on particular



roads, giving out reflector jackets, and providing tips and advice. While many of the road users had differing complaints, the main ones that cropped up included the following:

- Reckless driving by motorists on the road including speeding, overtaking at blind spots and not following road signs
- Overloading of passengers especially on boda bodas and taxis
- Poor roads that are narrow and have potholes
- Roads that have little to no markings and signs

### **Recommendations**

From the interactions with people along the way and what the Joe Walker team was able to observe, below is a summary of the recommendations on what can be done to improve road safety.

- Teach the Road and Traffic laws and guidelines to children to instill road discipline at an early age.
- Install appropriate road signage and have inbuilt enforcement structures on the roads.
- Have clear leadership structures and systems for all public transport sectors.
- Review and standardise the process and cost of driving permits for both cyclists and drivers.
- Provide strict measures to enforce speed limits especially in urban settlements.

### **Conclusion**

When using public roads, there are general rules one must follow. This is in order to make the roads safe and usable for all. These include, being legally allowed to ride or drive on the roads; knowing, understanding and respecting the road signs; and remaining cognizant of other road users. When road users follow these rules, it will go a long way in improving the current situation, as reports show most of the crashes are caused by careless and reckless behaviour. Making the roads more navigable and providing proper signage will also help improve road safety.

Joe Walker and friends are out to spread the message on these issues as many people are ignorant of them. Going by the impact the walks have managed to create including increased awareness, renewed strict law enforcement of traffic laws, and crackdown on errant drivers and boda-boda riders, we believe that with more support from various stakeholders, we will see a much-needed change and save lives.



## Contents

Summary Report .....	2
Background.....	5
Objectives of the walk.....	6
Kampala-to-Mbale walk Architecture.....	7
Day 1: Kampala to Namataba .....	8
Day 2: Namataba to Jinja .....	10
Day 3: Jinja to Iganga .....	12
Day 4: Iganga to Namutumba .....	14
Day 5: Namutumba to Budaka .....	15
Day 6: Budaka to Mbale.....	17
Recommendations from the walk. ....	18
Annex.....	19
Conclusion .....	232



## Background

More than 12 people are killed per day in road crashes in Uganda, translating to more than 4,534 deaths annually. The majority of the victims are pedestrians and boda-boda riders. The acting traffic Director, Lawrence Niwabiine has attributed the high number of fatalities and injuries to the behavior of riders, cyclists and drivers who tend to see pedestrians as less important people. Secondly, the need for mindset change among Uganda's majorly young population is imperative for them to be aware of the need to be safe and also observe healthy living.

With that in mind, Joseph Beyanga aka Joe Walker, created the “**Stay in Your Lane Campaign**”, which sought to hold road users in Kampala accountable through pictorial naming and shaming of errant road users in 2018, in both mainstream and social media. Joseph is known mostly for his comments on life issues, photos, and jokes on social media, especially Twitter. That is a space in which Joseph has gained a following and where he has conversations almost daily with people from different walks of life.

On 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022, Joe Walker and his friends walked 342km from Kampala to Bushenyi in a road safety awareness campaign walk dubbed “**Joe Walker and Friends - Safe Roads, Save Lives**”. The impact of the walk showed increased awareness, discussion of road crashes on media platforms, renewed strict law enforcement of traffic laws, and crackdown on errant drivers and boda-boda riders. This year, Joe and his friends took the road safety initiative walk to Mbale on a 240km stretch across 6 days, dubbed **#TooYoungToDie**. During the walks, which were widely covered by the media, the team engaged different categories of road users including boda-boda riders, roadside communities, school children, law enforcers and policy makers on issues of road safety. The team also painted some zebra crossings along the route.

The “Joe Walker and Friends” road safety walks are geared towards supporting the national and global effort to reduce road traffic death by 50% by 2030 as declared by the UN General Assembly in September 2020. The World Health Organization has also reported that more than 20% of Uganda's population is overweight, underlying the need for a national emphasis on healthy living. The combination of the two make the walks meaningful for both personal health living as well as advocacy for safer road usage.



*Joseph Beyanga aka Joe Walker*

## **Objectives of the walk**

- To facilitate active exchange of information among participants with a view of mobilizing community participation in road safety and healthy living.
- To provide a platform where various stakeholders can brainstorm on how to make Uganda better for all Ugandans and what more needs to be done to make our country safer and healthier for future generations.
- To come up with resolutions that will enable policy makers to formulate population-friendly strategic decisions regarding road safety and health.

## Kampala-to-Mbale walk architecture

The methodology of the second edition was focused on identifying the primary causes of road traffic crashes in the eastern region. This was to be deducted from interviews with the walkers, the traffic officers along the route and the different road users including drivers, riders, and pedestrians who all pointed out their different challenges while they use the road.

Road safety is a crucial aspect of transport systems in any country, and Uganda is no exception. With a significant number of people losing their lives due to road crashes, there is an urgent need for action to be taken to ensure that road safety is enhanced. And so in a bid to raise awareness and encourage action towards road safety, the team embarked on a road safety walk from Kampala to Mbale, covering a distance of 240 km over a period of six days. The walk, which started from the Independence Monument in Kampala on February 6, 2023 and ended at the Post Office in Mbale on February 11, 2023 was aimed at highlighting the challenges faced by pedestrians and drivers in Uganda and covered an average of 40km daily.



Safe Roads, Save Lives

#TooYoungToDie  
#StayInYourLane  
#JoeWalker



*Joe Walker and the team are flagged off by the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon Thomas Tayebwa, in the presence of Winstone Katushabe, Commissioner of Road Safety and Public Transport; Paul Kavuma, CEO of Jubilee Allianz; and Joe Walker's daughter Adela Kentare.*

### **Day 1: Kampala to Namataba**

On Monday February 6, 2023, the team started on the Mbale trek, flagged off by the Rt. Hon. Thomas Tayebwa, the Deputy Speaker of Parliament at 6:30am at the Independence Monument. Walking from the monument along Speke Road and down past Serena Hotel, the team joined the main Kampala-Jinja highway through the Yard onto Wampewo Avenue.

At Nakawa market where retailers were purchasing groceries in bulk in the morning dew, Joe Walker distributed some reflector jackets to the boda-boda riders that were packing the heavy material on their motorcycles. It was a hurdle as people almost ended up fighting for them. He also had a chat with the market vendors about what causes crashes in the place often.

The team then manoeuvred through Kyambogo onto the congested area of Kireka. Here, the eager crowds kept asking about the campaign and Joe Walker had conversations with them on the reasons for road safety. He had a live radio interview with Brian Mulondo and Faiza on the D 'Mighty Breakfast on 933KFM.

At Kireka market, walking on the road is tough as many trucks park side by side, making the passable road narrow. It also gets very busy as many vendors are purchasing and selling their groceries for the day. There are also many riders but no road signs and no presence of any traffic officer. Schools like Good Daddy Primary and Nursery School and Martin Luther High School in the neighborhood has many children crossing the road. The road around KFC- Banda is in a bad state as the tarmac has been eaten up by the stagnant water which is caused by rubbish from the market. The poor disposal of rubbish by the market vendors has been a major problem to the road.

The team then covered 22 km which got them to Mukono, where breakfast was served. At this point, a team introduction was done to understand what everyone does but also to know each other's names because we were going to be a family for the next few days. Those that had braved the distance to this point were Bakobereki Boaz, Aruho Tevin, Kamoomo Billy, Lucky Ninsiiima, Kyomuhendo Richard, Namulindwa Dinah, Samuel Mujuni, Kanyunyuzi Dorothy, Lorna Marriet Mirembe, Andrew Mwanguhya, Nickson Namanya, Ssemwanga Oscar, Nuwagaba Blair, Sheeba Tushemereirwe, Dorcus Magoba, Mwesigwa Joel, Pastor Rwothomio Micah, Sarah Nalule Walakira, Mark Peter Ssegiriinya and Kisakye Elizabeth.





Joe  
Walker

After the breakfast stop, the team started to trek again. We walked another 10km. There was a sprinkle of rain, but the team walked through it until Namawojolo where we docked for lunch. At Namawojolo we noticed the roadside vendors were reckless, they kept running after every car that attempted to stop, without caring about the other trucks or cars following closely. We spent the night in Namataba.



*The Kampala-Jinja highway at Kireka market where many riders and trucks stop to sell or purchase goods, making it difficult for other road users.*

Safe Roads, Save Lives

#TooYoungToDie  
#StayInYourLane  
#JoeWalker

## *Day 2: Namataba to Jinja*

The second day started as early as 6am in the morning with a word of prayer from Pastor Micah to grant us energy for the day. On this second day, the team's goal was to get to Jinja. We observed that the roads were still narrow and crowded, majorly around trading centres like Lugazi and all the markets along the road for example in Najjembe. The state of the roads was generally better except for the part through Mabiira which had many potholes and other hazards making it difficult for drivers to navigate the roads safely.

Road safety is meant to be done for both users and the community, but this is violated as the team observed that markets along the route were closed for the duration of the walk, highlighting the inconvenience that road closures can cause to local businesses and residents.



*Joe Walker interacts with vendors at Najjembe, at a roadside market in Mabira Forest area.*

Safe Roads, Save Lives

#TooYoungToDie  
#StayInYourLane  
#JoeWalker



It was also observed that both motorists and road users lack an understanding of the rules of traffic and vehicle users have a lack of discipline or neglect and do not respect traffic rules, thus causing crashes leading to loss of life, and property, as well as causing injuries. The canopy along Mabira Forest protected us from the heat and gave us energy to walk even as the skies were clear with the sun out and temperatures high. On entering Jinja, the team interacted with boda-boda riders around the Amber Court market. They were given copies of the Highway Code in both English and Luganda – which copies had been given to us by Uganda National Roads Authority. They spoke about the overly priced driving permit which has impeded many from getting them. They also attributed the rampant boda-boda crashes to riders without identified stages, boda-bodas who drive on the highway without proper training, and those who load excess passengers.

Jinja was overall a tidy city. We had an engagement with students of Jinja Secondary School and gave them copies of the Highway Code. The team also spoke with taxi drivers in the taxi park who shared their plight while on the road, including the exorbitant bribes solicited from them by the traffic officers who they claim accuse them falsely. The team was also able to paint two zebra crossings in the city, one along Nile Avenue as you head for Kampala Road because it's vital for traders as it's centrally located between many commercial plazas, and another around Rippon to serve the school-going population in the area. We were assisted by the Jinja Scouts Association and the traffic police from Jinja City and the paint was proudly provided by Plascon Paint. The night was spent in Jinja.



Joe  
Walker



*The team pose for a photo with members from the Jinja Boy Scouts Association as well as staff from Tugende Jinja office, at Stabex Petrol Station, where they also had lunch for the day.*

### **Day 3: Jinja to Iganga**

On the third day, the team continued towards Iganga where we observed that over speeding remained an issue. While driving on the road, people do not consider themselves less than a racer, and overtaking a skill they seem to want to improve. Overtaking is not wrong; the problem is, many overtake carelessly – at blind spots, when oncoming vehicles are very close, at crazy speeds etc. The absence of road signs was also noted, with drivers having to rely on their knowledge of the route to navigate the roads.



Joe  
Walker



*Joe Walker and team paint a Zebra Crossing on Jinja Main Street with the help of the Jinja Boy Scouts Association and the Traffic Police.*

Additionally, the team noted that many of the road signs had been vandalized. There was however an improvement in the standard of the road.

Safe Roads, Save Lives

#TooYoungToDie  
#StayInYourLane  
#JoeWalker



Joe  
Walker



*The team engaged with various stakeholders while in Jinja including students at Jinja Senior Secondary School, Traffic Police officers and taxi drivers.*

Safe Roads, Save Lives

#TooYoungToDie  
#StayInYourLane  
#JoeWalker

### *Day 4: Iganga to Namutumba*

On the fourth day, as usual a word of prayer was given by Pastor Micah to seek protection for the team and strength to make it through the new day. The team set off towards Namutumba. The absence of zebra crossings remained a significant issue. Over speeding was also noted, with drivers overtaking dangerously and ignoring traffic rules and guidelines.

Tirinyi Road is one well done road, thanks to UNRA, however almost all the drivers ignored the speed limit for the road. The team faced many challenges on this route as the sun shone brightest and the UV index was high. There was also barely any shade but the team continued to soldier on relentlessly. There were also very sharp turns on the road that you hoped all the drivers on the road that day were sober enough to navigate. The team made it to the rest point for the night which was Namutumba town.



*During the walk, the team found themselves having to compete with cars and taxis for space on the narrow roads.*

Safe Roads, Save Lives

#TooYoungToDie  
#StayInYourLane  
#JoeWalker

### *Day 5: Namutumba to Budaka*

On the fifth day, the team headed towards Budaka. The road was very beautiful, not a single pothole was observed. However, what we observed were reckless drivers overtaking at bad spots and most motorists driving beyond the given speed limits. Additionally, the team observed that some drivers were not adhering to the road safety measures put in place, such as wearing seat belts. A few drivers were also seen driving while scrolling on their phones. The road had a good number of traffic officers and there were 2 traffic stop points.

Joe Walker and the team handed all the traffic personnel on this route reflector jackets to increase on their safety while on the road. The road didn't have any significant towns so the team had to get lunch and breakfast under trees before embarking on the final leg to Budaka.



*Some roads were clearly marked making it easier for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians to use them.*

Safe Roads, Save Lives

#TooYoungToDie  
#StayInYourLane  
#JoeWalker



## *Day 6: Budaka to Mbale*

On the final day, the team headed towards their final destination. This was the most beautiful stretch. The team was in very high spirits and ready to conquer Mbale. The day started at 6am in the morning with a prayer from Pastor Micah. For the final stretch we were joined by Ethan Musolini of Success Africa and Daniel Joloba a serial entrepreneur, longtime friends of Joe Walker. The team covered approximately 15km before we had the first breakfast stop. Mr. Gawaya Tegulle, a lawyer and columnist, gave the team a pleasant surprise at the breakfast place when he came to meet them. He bought refreshments for the team and wished us best of luck, energizing us further to get to Mbale town which we could now see.

Some massages and muscle stretches were done before we hit the road again. The road to Mbale looked quite safe. Many of the observed drivers were alert, perhaps due to the presence of traffic police along the road. Joe Walker distributed reflector jackets to many cyclists and market vendors in the markets in Mbale. The team was officially welcomed to Mbale City by Robert Kabushenga and his team, #Elgon23 that had just concluded a hike up Mt. Elgon. The celebration led to us dancing to *Kadodi*, the Bugisu traditional dance. The welcome lasted a while after which the team then headed to the market area in Mbale city.



*Team #TooYoungtoDie and #Elgon23 pose for a photo on the outskirts of Mbale City.*

Safe Roads, Save Lives

#TooYoungToDie  
#StayInYourLane  
#JoeWalker



Joe  
Walker

There was an engagement with boda-boda riders on how to use the road safely, and they were also given reflector jackets. The team also observed that some pedestrians were not adhering to road safety measures, such as crossing the road safely. Finally, the team walked to Mbale Post Office which was supposed to be the official stop. Joe Walker and some teammates later had a radio interview on Time FM, and that concluded the Kampala to Mbale #TooYoungToDie road safety campaign.



*The team pose at the sign that welcomes one to Mbale, the post office and the clock tower in the city, after completing the 240km walk.*

Safe Roads, Save Lives

#TooYoungToDie  
#StayInYourLane  
#JoeWalker



## Recommendations from the walk.

- Teach the Road and Traffic laws and guidelines to children when still young so that when they grow up and are driving, road discipline will be second nature to them.
- Install appropriate road signage and ensure there are inbuilt enforcement structures (including speed cameras, speed humps etc.) within the road design.
- Enforce discipline and order in the public transport sector starting with who qualifies to be an operator in the taxi parks and provide specific locations for passenger loading.
- Set clear leadership structures and systems for all public transport sectors including boda-bodas and taxis.
- Review the process and cost of driving permits for boda-boda riders; make it simple and affordable.
- Streamline and standardise the process one goes through to acquire a driver's license and make it measurable, traceable, and predictable to ensure that only qualified people get behind the wheel on the road.
- Whether the road is under construction or not, use signage. We shouldn't have any road without proper signage and markings in this time and age. It's absolutely dangerous.
- Provide strict measures to ensure the road-side communities and pedestrians are protected and speed limits enforced in urban settlements. These should be embedded in every road design.
- Road junctions and intersections need to be made safer; special attention should be given in determining the type and shape of the junctions. Most of them are rather sharp and do not seem well thought out... which is probably why most of the crashes happen at junctions.



## **Annex**

### ***Some of the Media Stories***

<https://www.newvision.co.ug/articledetails/154276>

[https://youtu.be/m5pocUetP\\_A](https://youtu.be/m5pocUetP_A)

<https://nilepost.co.ug/2023/02/06/tayebwa-appeals-to-ugandans-to-improve-road-safety-as-joe-walker-embarks-on-new-campaign/>

<https://www.ntv.co.ug/ug/news/joe-walker-sets-off-for-eastern-awareness-campaign-4113454>

<https://daparrot.com/road-safety-tayebwa-rallies-ugandans-as-joe-walker-sets-off-for-mbale-awareness-walk/>

<https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/magazines/score/reliving-walk-from-kampala-to-mbale-4128618>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qi-HO9QM2ys>

[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=pfbidow4xNsGkwGvquH72KTCumBp3xtwKDRBrbj2VgUBYzywfeN94xpWf9fbrvkyUPo6ZPl&id=100064882658883&sfnsn=mo&mibextid=RUbZ1f](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbidow4xNsGkwGvquH72KTCumBp3xtwKDRBrbj2VgUBYzywfeN94xpWf9fbrvkyUPo6ZPl&id=100064882658883&sfnsn=mo&mibextid=RUbZ1f)

Safe Roads, Save Lives

#TooYoungToDie  
#StayInYourLane  
#JoeWalker



Joe Walker

...the same research was published by the World Health Organisation, to solve medical/public health problems (AIDS, TB and malaria). The research takes a lot of resources and time. It should not be left to gather dust yet it can help in solving critical socio-economic and development challenges.

# We are too young to die on the road

Joseph Beyinga has been walking again – so say “Hallelujah!” Last Monday he put on his Uganda flag cape and turned into the superhero “Joe Walker”, then set off for Mbale. Joe Walker is a hero not just to the Ugandans who follow his brave exploits, but to all of us. He started out many years ago with #StayInYourLane only on Twitter, and has now established his influence physically on the road with more than only hashtags. He takes serious personal risks when he embarks on these lengthy walks to bring attention to road safety in Uganda. Besides the risks to his health from exertion and dehydration, especially under the blazing tropical sun, so gifted are we by nature, there is the ironic risk of being on the road. On this trip, he had very many near-misses, as is expected because our highways do not provide adequate walkways, let alone the various other safety features we dream of. At one point, he and his entourage actually witnessed a hit-and-run take place metres ahead of them. Still, Joe Walker refuses to sit. He walks hundreds of kilometres to bring attention to a public health issue so that he can help save your life. Our risks on the roads are too many – even within small, fairly contained suburbs. We do not recognise them often enough, which, therefore, makes us a major component of the risks. I walk round my general neighbourhood a lot, as I have confessed before. The challenges I face increase every passing day. Sometimes it is pedestrian walking carelessly without a concern for even motorists racing down a narrow road with seemingly murderous intent. There are people I personally know who live in Luzira and Fort Bell, but drive through Bugoloti and Mungwano as if they are trying to eliminate people like me and

**SIMON KAHERU**  
JOURNALIST

...sense when on the road – “The 3 Cs of Road Safety”. Right from the smallest things like hooting at pedestrians – stop it. Seriously. You lose nothing if you let the pedestrian go first – you will still get where you are going before we do anyway. Rich people and senior government officials in big cars with or without sirens; what, exactly, is your problem? Were you raised in the type of home where your father insisted on eating before his children and served the largest portions, leaving you to drink the remaining bean soup? You are already doing better than the majority because of your big job and your big car, so why do you feel the need to push other motorists off the road? Which reminds me – we also need more therapists in this country to help with this road safety issue, because I am certain the poor behaviour we see is rooted deep in the psyche of some of these people. Road Safety is not just a Kampala or Uganda issue – it is included in the Global Sustainable Development Goals: “Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”. But, rich people and senior government officials in big cars with or without sirens; what, exactly, is your problem?

...road safety and URF for designated agencies. In terms of budget performance and absorption, on average, during the last four FYs (2018/19 – 2021/22), 88% of the budgeted funds for road safety were released by the MoPRED, and all (100%) the released funds were spent. The road safety budget performance and absorption were better than that of the roads subsector, which averaged 85% for releases and 90% for spending during the same period. The Global Plan under the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 adopted the Safe System Approach and recommended that countries work within the five pillars of action, which are: Road Safety Management, Safer Roads and Mobility, Safer Vehicles, Safer Road Users and Post-Crash Response. Though there were no detailed budget allocations towards these pillars, this study found that most of the funding was under road safety management, followed by safe road infrastructure and safe road use. However, there was minimal or no explicit funding for vehicle safety and post-crash response. This study found that Rwanda allocated the highest share of the country's national budget towards road safety, averaging 0.8% among the four EAC countries. Also, Rwanda registered reduction in road crashes between



**Road safety is not just a Kampala or Uganda issue – it is included in the Global Sustainable Development Goals: “Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”. But, rich people and senior government officials in big cars with or without sirens; what, exactly, is your problem?**

www.ksksharu.com @ksksharu

...innovations through the development of a well-coordinated STI eco-system. emerging global issues: Harvester harvesting and treatment, and improvements in drinking water, sources that are prone to contamination.

# Restructure budget to reduce road injuries, fatalities

Last week, the Agency for Transformation team and the broader membership of Road Safety Coalition of Uganda visited Joe Walker (Joseph Beyinga) for a walk from Kampala City to Mbale City to yet again highlight the challenge of safety on our roads. The number of crashes and cash fatalities on the roads in Uganda remains unacceptably high, with an estimated 18,035 road traffic crashes reported in 2021. According to the latest World Health Organisation (WHO) data published in 2021, road traffic death rate was 29.4 per 100,000 population, which ranks the country number 30 in the world. Road crashes were estimated to cost the Ugandan economy more than sh4.4 trillion (sh1.2B), which is 2% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per annum in terms of loss of productivity, property damage, medical and administrative costs. This excluded annual expenditures on road infrastructure, equipment, personnel emoluments and road safety awareness campaigns to ensure safe mobility on roads. According to the WHO and World Bank reports, road traffic injuries and their associated burden are largely preventable, when proven measures are adopted, enforced and sustained. The Uganda Road fund estimated that for every sh1b invested in road safety, road crashes will reduce by 0.3% of the current fatality rate. However, road safety has not benefited from the increased funding of the roads sub-sector, which in recent years has been in the range of 12% of the total national budget. For several financial years, road safety allocations have remained at less than 1% of the roads sub-budget. The Agency for Transformation (ATF) undertook a study with the objective of reviewing and analysing Uganda's budget allocations towards road safety over the last five years and found out the following: The road sub-sector is funded through several agencies, which include those under the works and transport sector and other ministries, departments and agencies. The budget allocations to the road sub-sector declined by 8% from sh4,255 in 2018/18 to sh3,908 in 2022/23. As a share of the total national budget (excluding domestic re-finance and external debt amortisation), the roads sub-sector budget also declined from 1.9% in 2018/18 to 1.4% in 2022/23. According to the Uganda Road Fund (URF), designated agencies are required to allocate up to a maximum of 5% of their road maintenance budget towards road safety activities.



However, apart from the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT), this study found no explicit budget for road safety by all other roads implementing agencies. The roads safety budget increased from sh119 in FY2018/19 to sh232.75 in 2021/22, but declined to sh19.8 in FY2022/23. However, spending was lower, averaging sh37.5b during the last FYs (2018/19 to 2021/22). As a share of the roads sub-sector, spending on road safety averaged 1% during the four financial years. Nearly two-thirds of spending on road safety was under the MoWT for support to computerized driving permits, and transport regulation. The other was under Uganda Police Force for traffic regulation

...2018 and 2020, from 5,735 to 4,203 casualties. Although there is a relationship between funding towards road safety and reduction in traffic accidents, the study was not able to ascertain causal relationship between cause and effect since there are many factors that can lead to reduction of road crashes. There are number of opportunities, which can be used to advocate for increased funding towards road safety in Uganda. These include, among others, availability of information to road existing policy, legal and institutional frameworks; International good will in road safety; active and informed road stakeholder accessibility, especially the legislative arm of government, and active participation of civil society organisations. However, there are still challenges which need to be addressed, such as low prioritisation of road safety leading to ineffective implementation of planned funding for road maintenance; limited appreciation of road safety by the executive arm of government and inadequate road safety data collection. Read the full version at: www.newvision.co.ug

The writer is the Chief Executive Officer, Agency for Transformation. A think tank based in Kampala.

Safe Roads, Save Lives

#TooYoungToDie  
#StayInYourLane  
#JoeWalker

Road safety. According to police reports, between December 23, 2022 and January 7, 2023 alone, more than 120 people died and scores sustained serious injuries due to road accidents across the country. This is one of the main reasons Joe Walker is happening - to increase road safety awareness.

BY ANDREW MWANGUHA

"I'm doing this. All in" I declared on the Daily Monitor sports WhatsApp group on the morning of January 6, exactly a month before the long walk to Mbale, some 240 kilometers from the starting point in Kampala.

My declaration came with a tweet by Nation Media Group Uganda's head of Radio, Joseph Beyanga, when he was promoting up his upcoming walk to Mbale from Kampala in a road safety awareness drive.

Many colleagues applauded my resolve to join Beyanga, who - for the second year running - was walking under the Joe Walker moniker.

"Safe Roads Save Lives" and "Too Young To Die" are the slogans.

But one man - whose journalistic acumen to dismissively contest everything you sometimes lose your patience - could have none of this.

Not even after Beyanga and friends had walked a whole 30km from Kampala to Bushenyi the previous year.

That man is an old online foe, Seaman Obonyo who is so good at his job he even edited this piece, including the previous two paragraphs... ha ha.

Just do it

"I don't believe that thing" was Seaman's brief, sharp and dismissive response to my excitement of attacking Mbale on foot. "Go, take your ride at night." His last line not only left me in stitches, it disabled my desire to do it. Seaman doubted down, too. "Maybe I'll ride along and see."

I told him not to worry. "I'll walk and write the story I promised. This is good," he responded. "I will be here."

I had, a few years back, taken on a deliberate decision to be more intentional about my fitness and overall well-being to combat other health challenges by taking on working out as a lifestyle.

And just two years earlier, out of an argument with colleagues, myself and some others had - without any training, which later came to haunt us - walked to Entebbe from Daily Monitor's headquarters in Nansana.

So mentally, I was up for Mbale - although that would mean an equivalent of a walk from Kampala to Entebbe six times in so many days.

Yet deep down, I needed help. Mbale was an uncharted territory that I had Joe Walker and Joe Walker had the Bushenyi walk experience. Besides, this was his forte and he surely knew better.

Beyanga shared a month-long training program with myself and other friends and as they say, he's not a history.

To be fair to Seaman, I knew that not everyone who starts the walk might intend, walk the entire distance - fully.

High testosterone. The writer (below) takes ahead of the rest of his team in one of the sections during the walk. Right, the group after completing the walk in Mbale City. PHOTOS: ADEL MWESIGWA



SUB-EDITOR: JACOBS ODONGO SEAMAN

# Reliving the walk from



Injuries, tiredness, body giving way and other factors will always interfere with the programme and the affected will definitely get help along the way.

But also I know there are - indeed - people who walk every step from start to finish, because a good number of my colleagues and I did to Mbale. Perhaps, what Seaman and a few doobies should be humble enough to do is stop and applaud the decision to start.

Again, fair play to him. "These guys walked from Kampala to Mbale, some 240 kilometers in just six days. Seaman walked after we conquered Mbale last week, adding in his job as well."

As Beyanga always reminded us, the best way to do it was to just "put your next foot forward."

I had bought two new pairs each of light, sporting shirts and shorts, shoes (although one pair was enough in the end), vaseline to apply on areas susceptible to friction and sunscreen, among other basics.

So from a readiness perspective, I was set, yet - even with the preparations, there was some nervousness the night before the morning of February 6.

But this had to be done.

Day one

On D-day I rode with the chief walker, Beyanga, in his car with his wife, Carol, and young daughter, Adela Kentato, to the starting point at the Independence Monument outside Sheraton.

After a few encouraging words and calls to Ugandans to be more careful on the road, the time-keeping Deputy

Speaker of Parliament, Thomas Tayebwa, flagged us off at 4pm.

The walkers included those that did one day hikes along the way or attacked the final day's remaining 100 miles.

But of the about 30 that set off from Kampala, 20 - including seven ladies and 60-year-old Pastor Mutah Beshumio of University Community Fellowship, Kibiro - probably made it to the final point at Mbale Post Office six days later.

And of the 20, at least six walked every step of the approximately 240km journey with everyone of the group pushing through the discomfort and lumps to put in significant mileage - every day.

As Beyanga always reminded us, the best way to do it was to just "put your next foot forward."

As we snaked out of the city past settees disappeared out of sight as others made pace with traffic, cars, congested roads and complaining bodies.

We battled for space with taxis and boda bodas, who could stop anywhere and at any time, resting cars, breakneck speeding, government vehicles and heavy load trucks.

Meanwhile, Beyanga, or Joe Walker as most knew him now - draped in a Uganda flag while waving another, could not keep up with pace-setters as he had difficulty engaging the roadside community.

Fortunately, I had some young, vibrant boys for company up front, and there we went. I saw our friends was at a break-fast stop in Mukono town, where my colleague George Katagala was on hand to

The daunting Mbale forest

Within a few minutes I had walked Mbale, or so I thought!

That small stretch of forest cover was just an introduction to Mbale. When the real Mbale emerged, it enveloped me for over 10km.

Towards its end, Boaz - who was battling blisters - was dropped next to me by the service van.

When we finally got out of Mbale, Towards its end Boaz - who was battling blisters - was dropped next to me by the service van.

When we finally got out of Mbale, Towards its end Boaz - who was battling blisters - was dropped next to me by the service van.

When we finally got out of Mbale, Towards its end Boaz - who was battling blisters - was dropped next to me by the service van.

offer support.

I later came to learn from Beyanga that as we approached Mukono, two of us had given in to the demanding conditions and were seen on boda bodas back to Kampala. They did it first.

From Mukono, we traversed the scorching sun for about 13km to our lunch station at Naramwajala. The skies did brief fly open after Mbale but we traversed on until Nansana for the night.

Day two

From our hotel in Nansana to Jinja, which includes the daunting Mbale Forest, 40km looked demanding. By 8am we were on the road. Our first stop was at Bannu Cafe in Nansana for a cup of tea to warm us up.

But when we stopped again for another quick bite just before entering Lugazi town, I just told Mark Peter Siegrin, who, alongside Sarah Nalule, Eliza - both Kikuyu and our service van driver Oscar Semwanga formed the best support team you could ever get, that I was not stopping.

"You guys have your meal. I'm good. My phone is on, just keep in touch."

I attacked Lugazi town with my wife, Beth, my body and spirit were in full cooperation. Plus, our amazing service team would be keeping tabs with water supplies, apples, bananas, glucose and ORS.

They seemed to always be there when you needed them, and that is on top of securing our accommodation well in time. So, although solo on this stretch, I knew they would look out for me.

# Kampala to Mbale



Contrast: Beyanga leads. Below, the writer takes a rest. PHOTOS: MWESIGWA

Meanwhile, I was so looking forward to Mbale Forest. Before I entered it, I bought four gaities (moist plantain), just in case I still had one and a half-litre Borestan mineral water bottles.

Within a few minutes I had walked Mbale, or so I thought! Yet, that small stretch of forest cover was just an introduction to the greater Mbale. When the real Mbale emerged, it enveloped me for over 10km.

Towards its end, Boaz (Kakobekere) - who was battling blisters - was dropped next to me by the service van.

"It's tough but I'm pushing on," Kakobekere assured me, painful discomfort visible in his steps.

I don't know if this was a ploy to protect me by slowing me down or not.

When we finally got out of Mbale, it's like I had walked there for two weeks. Everyone of my colleagues took a similar tale of Mbale.

The service van got ahead of us carrying some walkers that needed help and poached a stretching and resting camp.

I felt it! I was pushing on, Kakobekere assured me, painful discomfort visible in his steps with them and speed of gait. We met again outside Jinja where - as a team - we walked the remaining kilometers to the city - led by the district boy scouts and Uganda boda boda riders.

A suspicious dinner at Stubb's Star Cafe in Jinja, courtesy of Beyanga's good friend Paul Harem, who paid the bill for us all, was the perfect reward for the day's shift.

## ROAD SAFETY

Recklessness, narrow roads

The Jinja-Iganga stretch is narrow with road markings yet motorists are reckless.

Trinity-Mbale Highway is however well demarcated.

Day three

The journey from Jinja to Iganga started an hour late, 11:30 to be precise, because of morning activities including a visit to Jinja SS to speak to students, a conversation with taxi drivers in the park as well as painting a rebel crossing on Main Street.

This Jinja-Iganga stretch was the most draining because of narrow and unmarked roads, endless heavy trucks, carelessly speeding taxis and private cars, plus boda bodas.

Legs had also started giving way, for most of the team members.

I developed a mild headache towards Iganga because of delayed emptying of the bowel but two paracetamol changed me forward I completed the remaining kilometers alongside my teammates Sam Muturi, who also walked on with a bloated stomach.

"All I wanted was to reach our hotel," said Muturi, who indeed went missing on a relieving mission once we checked in at Hotel Karamoja in Iganga.

Young Billy Karamoona and Kevin

The weather was good the first part of the day a pattern that generally continued up to Nansana, where we rested for the night, with some of the most interesting lodging you will find.

Tough days five and six

The above days were unlike the first five which either had a drizzle or a gentle cloud cover.

Trinity-Badakia-Kamukondi to Mbale was a surefire made to make us pay for the first four-day favourable weather.

"If your walking goal left you by aim, you were done," warned Beyanga. "You either had to call them to wait for you or simply wait for the group behind you."

But even in this extreme heat, walker Blair Mwangabi's golden heart still shines through as he removed his shoes and handed them over to a young, bare-footed schoolgirl.

"I looked at this girl on the hot tarmac and it was too much for me," said Nwagaba, who walked the remaining distance banded until he got another pair from our next stretching stop.

Beyanga tried to manage the group, ensuring everyone was okay by taking their water, regulating the pace and ensuring no one was left to walk alone behind the main group.

For some reason, despite the harsh weather, I always felt I needed to see how much hardship my body could take. So often I would struggle between staying in the rest or tearing away.

The former slightly edged it, but adrenaline would soon take over. At this point almost everyone had some form of injury with a number settling for the service van for some distance and later emptying re-energised.

Our support squad had also become a mobile medical team - administering first aid, giving massages to help the muscles alive or simply ensuring a constant supply of refreshments.

Some members suffered from sleep-walking but because we kept a close eye on each other we noticed that and had to immediately take a timeout -

der the next tree shade to allow the body rest and build energy levels again.

We slept in Badakia, where friends Daniel Juleba and Ethan Musoliri joined us for the final onslaught on Mbale on Saturday morning.

Beyanga's sweetheart, girlfriend, best friend and wife, Carol, also provided the perfect tonic when she joined the trek just before Kamukondi.

"I was surrounded by enough love and support the heat and blisters had nothing on me," declared Beyanga.

For this final day the weather had an invincible in Beyanga's baby sister Lucky Ninsiima, with whom we literally fell to Mbale.

It was us, then, some day night, and then the rest of the superstars including Beyanga and his boys, the girls - Memebe, Dorcas Magoha, Dorothy Kanyinyuzi and Dnah Namulimba, among others.

"You fire, I'm good," Ninsiima kept assuring me when I worried whether she was well up to the pace. "I trained well, using Joe's programme."

As we entered Kamukondi, Sunday Mutorochia's Tom Gwasa Tegula, who had promised to welcome us into his area code, was on hand to receive us.

If you saw the way he treated us you'd think he owned both the hotel and town, ensuring everyone was comfortable, had the right drink, and was refreshed enough for the final assault on Mbale.

Welcome to Mbale

Our arrival in Mbale saw us encounter another team led by veteran journalist Robert Kabushanga and our counterpart Anon Welera returning from his own Mount Elgon.

A Kadodi dance ensued. Later we spoke to boda boda riders and completed our walk with a visit to Mbale Post Office.

According to Nalule, the Joe Walker team managers "sues raised from the community will be presented to police and lawmakers so that they are addressed." "They ought to

amwanguha@ug.nationmedia.com



SUB-EDITOR: JACOBS ODONGO SEAMAN

#TooYoungToDie  
#StayInYourLane  
#JoeWalker



## Conclusion

There are a lot of general and basic rules that one must follow when they drive vehicles or use public roads in general. The first rule is to know the signals and pay attention to them rigorously. This applies to both the driver as well as the pedestrian. It is also necessary for those who are walking to use the sidewalks and pedestrian crossings.

It is also essential to be aware of all the rules and laws of the state and abide by them. This way the crashes on the roads could be curbed.

We acknowledge all the partners and sponsors for the 2023 Joe Walker walk from Kampala to Mbale including **Uganda National Roads Authority, Uganda Police, Uganda Communications Commission, Coca-Cola, Jubilee Allianz, Nation Media Group, Road Safety Advocacy Coalition Uganda, Plascon, Nicole Foundation, Jinja Scouts Association, and Time FM**, among others for supporting this cause.

Thank you for supporting this cause.



Safe Roads, Save Lives

#TooYoungToDie  
#StayInYourLane  
#JoeWalker