



JOE WALKER BODA-BODA WALK REPORT 2026



Safe Roads Save Lives

JOE WALKER BODA-BODA ROAD SAFETY WALK 2026 REPORT

Background

The Joe Walker Boda-Boda Road Safety Walk 2026 was organized as part of the Joe Walker Foundation's ongoing national road safety campaign aimed at promoting safer road usage, responsible riding behavior, and protection of livelihoods within Uganda's boda boda industry. This comes at a time when Uganda continues to experience rising motorcycle-related road crashes and fatalities, with boda boda riders and passengers accounting for a significant percentage of road accident victims nationally. According to statistics, which were discussed during the walk, Uganda recorded over 5,383 road crash deaths in 2025, with boda boda riders and passengers contributing approximately 47% of all fatalities. Vulnerable road users, including riders, pedestrians, and cyclists, account for over 94% of road crash victims nationwide.

The walk was therefore designed not only as a public awareness event, but also as a direct engagement platform where stakeholders could interact with boda boda riders, understand their realities, discuss challenges affecting road safety, and encourage behavioral change. The event brought together boda boda riders, road safety activists, police officers, corporate organizations, cyclists, community leaders, media houses, and members of the public in a collective effort to advocate for safer roads in Kampala and Uganda at large.



Campaign Messages

One of the strongest campaign messages throughout the walk was: “Ssente Tesiinga Bulamu” (Money is sweet, but life is more precious.)

This message became the emotional centerpiece of the entire road safety campaign, directly addressing the growing culture of rushing, speeding, and reckless riding practices often driven by economic pressure and the need for boda boda riders to maximize daily earnings. Throughout the walk, participants carried and raised highly visible placards containing powerful road safety messages that were intentionally designed to be simple, relatable, emotionally impactful, and easy for riders and pedestrians to immediately understand. The placards became one of the campaign’s most effective sensitization tools, transforming the walk into a moving public awareness exercise that continuously engaged riders, traders, passengers, motorists, and communities across different parts of Kampala.



Several of the messages focused on reminding riders about the human consequences of reckless riding. Messages such as “Avoid Speeding: Your kids need a parent” emphasized the reality that road crashes do not only affect riders themselves, but also families, children, and dependents who rely on them for survival and support. Similarly, “Afudde

Tagasa – Genda Mpola” (The dead are of no help – move slowly) encouraged riders to understand that no financial gain is worth losing one’s life.

Other messages focused specifically on protective gear and rider safety. “Wear a Helmet; your head has no spares” reminded riders that helmets are not simply law enforcement requirements, but life-saving tools capable of reducing severe head injuries and fatalities during accidents. The Luganda message “Beera Steady, Yambala Helmet” further reinforced the importance of responsible riding and proper safety gear in language that riders could easily connect with.

The campaign also addressed dangerous riding culture and misuse of public road spaces. Placards reading “Stay In Your Lane; walkways are for pedestrians” and “Tekaawo Line Asibira Mu Ntaana” (Reckless speeding leads to the grave) targeted the growing “Teekawo” culture associated with speeding, riding against traffic flow, and dangerous overtaking habits commonly observed within the city. Another message, “Safety is more than arriving FAST,” reminded riders that arriving safely is more important than saving a few minutes on the road.

The use of both English and Luganda messaging made the campaign highly relatable and emotionally impactful. The simplicity and directness of the messages also helped bridge communication gaps between authorities, campaign organizers, and riders as the messages used language and expressions familiar within boda boda riders and everyday urban transport experiences. Many riders stopped to read, photograph, discuss, and respond to the placards, creating organic conversations around helmet use, speeding, discipline, and respect for human life.



Pre-Walk Campaign

To support mobilization, public awareness, and participation ahead of the Joe Walker Boda-Boda Road Safety Walk 2026, the organizing team implemented a targeted multi-platform awareness campaign designed to maximize visibility and community engagement around the initiative. A dedicated online registration link was created and hosted on the website to streamline participant sign-ups, improve coordination, and track engagement ahead of the walk. This digital approach made it easier for interested participants, partners, cyclists, riders, and members of the public to register and receive updates about the campaign activities.

The awareness campaign was further amplified through strategic media partnerships, particularly with Next Media platforms including NBS Television and Sanyuka TV, which played a major role in extending the campaign's reach through television mentions, interviews, and promotional coverage. In addition, Joe Walker conducted radio engagements on Galaxy FM Uganda and Power FM Uganda, where discussions focused on the rising rate of boda boda accidents, responsible riding behavior, the importance of road safety awareness, and the broader objectives of the 2026 Boda-Boda Walk. These media engagements significantly increased public awareness and strengthened community interest and participation in the campaign.



Route and Major Stops

The 10-kilometre road safety walk officially commenced from Sheraton Kampala Hotel at approximately 8am after pre-event engagements and media interactions. Over 100 participants joined the walk. The walk moved through key parts of Kampala and Rubaga Division, targeting high boda boda activity zones and transport corridors for direct rider engagement and sensitization.



Sheraton Kampala Hotel – Flag Off Point

Participants assembled early at Sheraton Kampala Hotel where registration, networking, media interviews, and stakeholder engagements took place. The walk was officially flagged off by the Deputy Executive Director of Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), who reaffirmed KCCA's commitment to creating safer and more inclusive urban transport infrastructure within Kampala.

At the flag-off point, organizers and speakers highlighted:

- The alarming rate of road crashes in Uganda.
- The need for responsible riding behavior.
- The importance of road discipline and enforcement.



After the flag-off, participants walked down Kampala Road before connecting onto Entebbe Road. Along this stretch, participants engaged members of the public and boda boda riders while carrying road safety messages and awareness placards.

The first major stop was at the boda boda stage near Nakivubo Blue Primary School gate. This became one of the most interactive sessions of the walk. Boda boda riders operating at the stage, together with others passing through the area, stopped to listen and later joined the campaign walk. Riders received Joe Walker branded reflector jackets as part of the sensitization exercise.

At this stop, the road safety engagement focused on encouraging boda boda riders to adopt safer and more responsible riding practices. Key messages delivered emphasized the importance of proper helmet usage, respecting traffic regulations, avoiding reckless riding, and consistently using reflective safety gear to improve visibility on the road. Riders were also reminded of their responsibility towards passengers, pedestrians, and fellow road users, with speakers stressing that every decision made while riding directly impacts human life and public safety.

The engagement was addressed by several key stakeholders including the Deputy Executive Director of KCCA Benon Moses Higenyi; the Traffic Police Spokesperson Michael Kananura, and Joe Walker. The speakers emphasized that road safety begins with personal

responsibility, discipline, and behavioral change among riders. They encouraged boda boda operators to prioritize life over speed and income, while reinforcing the message that safer roads require collective effort from both riders and the wider community.



The second major stop was in Katwe along the ring road near one of the boda boda repair stations, where the engagement extended beyond riders to include motorcycle mechanics, spare parts dealers, local transport operators, and stage leaders. Discussions at this stop focused heavily on motorcycle roadworthiness and the critical role proper bike maintenance plays in preventing accidents and saving lives. Participants observed several motorcycles operating in poor mechanical condition, including worn-out tires, missing side mirrors, faulty braking systems, and damaged protective gear. The interaction also exposed the economic hardships faced by many riders and mechanics, with several acknowledging that financial pressure often forces riders to continue operating unsafe motorcycles despite being aware of the risks involved.



The walk continued along the Ring Road toward Kabaka Anjagala Road, with another stopover outside City Parents School where the focus shifted to public sensitization on speed limits, pedestrian safety, respect for traffic signs, and shared responsibility among all road users. During this engagement, participants observed several boda boda riders riding against traffic flow, encroaching on pedestrian walkways, and ignoring traffic guidance and road regulations. These observations reinforced the urgent need for stronger enforcement, continuous public education, and behavioral change to complement ongoing road infrastructure improvements within the city.



One of the most impactful stops during the walk was near the petrol station opposite Mengo Hospital, where riders were addressed from a medical perspective on the realities of motorcycle-related road crashes. The session highlighted the severe injuries commonly caused by accidents, including permanent disabilities, loss of limbs, long-term rehabilitation challenges, emotional trauma experienced by families, and the overwhelming medical costs associated with accident treatment. The engagement had a visibly emotional impact on many riders as the discussion moved beyond statistics to the real human consequences witnessed in hospital wards every day. The session reinforced the importance of wearing proper helmets, avoiding speeding, riding responsibly, and prioritizing the safety of both riders and passengers at all times.



Another stop was at the Jaguar Bus Terminal area within Kampala's Central Business District, where organizers conducted another engagement session with boda boda riders focusing on discipline on the road, responsible riding behavior, passenger safety, respect for traffic laws, and the dangers of riding under the influence of alcohol. Discussions also centered around the growing "Teekawo line" culture associated with speeding and reckless riding habits among some riders, with participants emphasizing that while risky riding may save time or increase trips, it significantly raises the chances of serious injury and loss of life. The engagement concluded with a strong call for riders to prioritize human life over speed, pressure, and daily income targets.



The final stop of the walk was at the boda boda stage along Luwum Street next to the police station, located at the entrance and exit of the non-motorized transport corridor where large numbers of pedestrians access boda bodas after shopping downtown. This stop was particularly significant because of the heavy interaction between riders, pedestrians, street vendors, and motorists within the busy city center. We used this engagement to emphasize discipline within crowded urban spaces, proper use of designated transport corridors, pedestrian safety, and respect for traffic regulations. Riders were reminded that areas with high human traffic require extra caution, patience, and responsibility to reduce accidents and improve safety for everyone using the city center.



Key Observations

- **Poor Safety Gear Usage:** Many riders were found using damaged or ineffective helmets, while others carried broken helmet shells merely to evade traffic enforcement officers. Very few riders had proper reflector jackets or protective footwear.
- **Overloading:** Overloading remained common, with riders carrying multiple passengers together with luggage on a single motorcycle.
- **Poor Motorcycle Condition:** Several motorcycles observed during the walk were mechanically unsafe, including worn tires and absence of side mirrors.
- **Alcohol and Substance Abuse:** Some riders appeared intoxicated or under the influence while operating motorcycles, posing serious risks to passengers and other road users.
- **Weak Understanding of Traffic Laws:** Many riders demonstrated limited understanding of road safety regulations and safe riding practices.
- **Abuse and Distrust Around Enforcement:** Riders repeatedly raised concerns regarding harassment, extortion, and inconsistent enforcement practices by some security personnel.
- **Infrastructure Challenges:** Despite improvements in road infrastructure, misuse of non-motorized transport corridors and pedestrian spaces remained common, highlighting the need for stronger enforcement and public education.



Key Takeaways

1. Road safety is a shared responsibility requiring action from riders, authorities, businesses, and communities.
2. Infrastructure alone cannot solve road safety challenges without proper enforcement and behavioral change.
3. Economic pressure continues to influence risky riding practices among boda boda riders.
4. Public sensitization remains critical in changing rider behavior and attitudes.
5. Riders respond more positively to engagement and education when approached respectfully and directly.
6. Partnerships between government, civil society, and the private sector are essential for sustaining road safety campaigns.

Recommendations

- **Strengthen Road Safety Education:** Continuous sensitization campaigns targeting boda boda riders should be expanded across Kampala and other urban centers.
- **Improve Rider Training:** Government and stakeholders should support formal road safety training and certification for boda boda riders.
- **Enhance Enforcement:** Traffic law enforcement should be strengthened while ensuring professionalism, fairness, and accountability among enforcement officers.
- **Expand Safety Gear Distribution:** More efforts should be made to increase access to quality helmets and reflector jackets for riders.
- **Improve Motorcycle Inspection:** Regular mechanical inspections should be encouraged to remove unsafe motorcycles from the roads.
- **Promote Infrastructure Protection:** Authorities should strengthen enforcement around proper use of non-motorized transport corridors and pedestrian walkways.
- **Address Social and Economic Challenges:** Stakeholders should recognize the economic realities affecting riders and explore programs that support safer livelihoods within the boda boda sector.

Conclusion

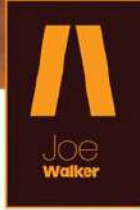
The Joe Walker Boda-Boda Road Safety Walk 2026 was a highly impactful initiative that successfully brought together communities, riders, government institutions, corporate organizations, and road safety advocates under one common mission: saving lives on Uganda's roads. Beyond the physical walk itself, the campaign created meaningful conversations around rider behavior, infrastructure, enforcement, public responsibility, and the human cost of road crashes.

The event highlighted the urgent need for sustained action in road safety awareness, rider training, infrastructure development, and enforcement reform. It also reinforced the importance of empathy and collaboration when engaging boda boda riders, many of whom operate under difficult economic and social conditions. Most importantly, the walk reminded all road users that every decision made on the road carries consequences and that protecting human life must always come before speed, convenience, or financial gain.

Safe Roads Save Lives.

MEDIA LINKS

1. <https://chimpreports.com/kcca-commits-to-safer-better-city-as-joe-partners-walk-to-curb-rising-boda-boda-crashes/>
2. <https://share.google/gV7Yak8VB3yNeTBVD>
3. https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/news/road-safety-activists-sensitise-bodaboda-ride-NV_233740_052026
4. <https://ugandaradionetwork.net/story/activists-join-road-safety-walk-to-combat-boda-boda-crashes-in-kampala>
5. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D6hjzaOgzfND1OmnfXo4www7tqdgMq9K/view?usp=sharing>
6. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ELLHrICyONQohojDEA8oyoYNUEHRjycv/view?usp=sharing>
7. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/11v8gFBV9RnH-fAv93qv4cYMEZBhPMS-z/view?usp=sharing>
8. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1m86JLIKHOExM82HDoSdKbrqoMbfjsE5j/view?usp=sharing>
9. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-ltB4TfQCTRA_r-sTNPB9DxJyALYoDp/view?usp=sharing



A BIG THANK YOU

to JoeWalker partners and fellow walkers for your participation in the Boda Boda Walk Kampala 2026.



Safe Roads Save Lives