



Call to Action: Walking and Cycling as Sustainable Mobility Options for the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area

Africa is the least safe place to walk and cycle in the world as 261 pedestrians and 18 cyclists are killed every day (UN Habitat, 2022). The consistent lack of essential infrastructure makes the experience of walking and cycling difficult, unpleasant, and incredibly dangerous.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) Global status report on road safety (2018), non-motorized transport accounts for more than 40% of daily trips and is mainly used by low-income households who cannot afford motorized public transport and private cars. In Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Zambia, road safety, particularly of pedestrians and cyclists, remains a major issue, ranking among the top 50 worst countries globally in relation to road traffic deaths per 100,000 people.

Uganda has a National Non-Motorised Transport (NMT) Policy (2012) whose primary objectives are to, among others, increase the recognition of walking and cycling in transport, planning, design, and infrastructure provision; to provide safe infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists; to mainstream resources for walking and cycling in agencies' financial planning; to develop and adopt universal design standards that provide for access to all sectors of the community; and to improve regulation and enforcement to enhance safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

The National NMT policy (2012) sets out the various responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in the provisioning and fostering of NMT as a viable mode of transport to ensure that NMT provision is rendered in an appropriate manner.

However, its implementation on the ground has lagged since 2012, as illustrated by the poor provision of pedestrian and cycling paths in the current transport system. In addition, existing pedestrian walkways do not accommodate the needs of people with disabilities (SEI, 2021).

According to the NMT Policy, an unrecorded proportion of Urban Roads have raised footways, on one or both sides of the road. In addition to the road network, there are the countless rural footpaths that connect rural people to the road network, and also to their water sources, fields, forests and local facilities.

During the COVID19 pandemic period (2019 – 2020), the relationship between transport and health sectors became more vivid as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) restricted use of public transport including buses, taxis and *bodabodas* (commercial motor cycles). This presented an opportunity for scaling up walking and cycling as mobility options both rural and urban areas in Uganda including the Greater Kampala Metropolitan area (Kampala, Entebbe, Mukono, and Wakiso). This scenario highlighted a need to fully implement Uganda's NMT policy (2012).



Unfortunately, the resumption of public transport with vehicles operating at full capacity in the post COVID 19 pandemic period has once again relegated walking and cycling as a mobility option due to, among others, lack of safety due to road accidents as increasing motorization, combined with some inadequately maintained infrastructure, has made non-motorized transport unsafe, in both urban and rural areas.

Hence, according to the UN Habitat, urban space needs to be rethought in order to optimize flow of traffic, but also to increase and encourage the use of non-motorized transport, such as pedestrian movement or cycling. Streets need to be adapted with walkways, crossings, and cycling lanes. Furthermore, investing in low-carbon transport options like walking and cycling not only offers low-income and vulnerable transport users an affordable means of getting around, it also helps reduce local air pollution, congestion and road safety (SEI, 2021)

A second opportunity to fully implement Uganda's NMT policy has recently come up due to the global hike in fuel prices as a result of the Russia / Ukraine war. , According to the Daily Monitor (February 24, 2022), In January, there was a fifty percent fuel price surge, with a litre of petrol reaching Ug shs 12,000 (USD 3.2) in some towns, but on average the price was Ug shs 6,620 (USD 1.6), a jump from Ushs 4,490 (USD1.2) before. This sharp rise in fuel prices led to an increment in the prices of basic commodities as well as transport fares across the country. This second scenario (also an opportunity) has again ignited debate on the role of walking and cycling as sustainable mobility options for the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area as well as the entire country.

Furthermore, as 15 more cities are expected to be in operation in the next 4 years in Uganda, it is important that policies, programmes and projects are designed to accommodate Non-Motorized Transport needs. This will lead to a more sustainable transport as well as providing a strong impetus towards improved urban environments. For example, there is need for transport junctions to be established that create connection points between different transport modes, thus facilitating access to and extending the range of a public transport system on both the macro level – the city, the region and beyond – and micro level – the neighborhood.

In light of the above 2 scenarios: COVID 19 and the current impact of the Russia / Ukraine war impacts on transport, Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD); Joint Energy and Environment Projects (JEEP) and JEEP's Green Ambassador's Club (as members of INFORSE East Africa); and Training, Education and Empowerment for Neighborhood Sustainability (TEENS), acknowledge the steps taken by the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT) as well as Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA) to ensure that the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorized transport are fully considered in regulating and enforcing the use of all existing transport infrastructure in Uganda.



However, in light of the drawbacks to the NMT policy intervention, the 4 Organizations would like to provide the following six proposals as a way forward to secure that walking and cycling and NMT needs in general, are not routinely omitted from the designs of road improvements in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area, as well as in those of the recently created 15 cities.

1. **KCCA, the Ministry of Works & Transport and Non State Actors should increase public awareness and education about the Non-Motorized Transport Policy (2012), in order to secure buy-in and support popularize cycling and walking as a viable mobility option by expansion of NMT within gazetted zones with clear lanes, through open days and campaigns. For example, during the car free days, open streets, the road safety week, etc.**
2. **The Ministry of Works & Transport should regularly convene stakeholders (Non state actors, Government depts) in different thematic working groups to finalize and fast track the implementation manual of the NMT policy (2012) to cater for the mobility needs of ALL road users**
3. **KCCA, the Ministry of Works & Transport and the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD) should continue to map NMT infrastructure and buffer zones leading to improved safe walking and cycling access in Kampala City and its neighborhoods, to demonstrate an effective future public transport for cities.**
4. **The Ministry of Works & Transport, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development and Development Partners should incorporate road designs that facilitate walking and cycling in ALL transport infrastructure project budgets as well as strategic climate finance plans (for example when implementing sector specific aspects in Uganda's revised Nationally Determined Contributions).**
5. **The Ministry of Works & Transport, should enhance the technical capacity of transport planners in Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area (and the new 15 Cities) to understand the climate risks and measures that can address these and accommodate NMT needs.**
6. **The Ministry of Works & Transport should work with other actors to ensure compliance of the blueprints (universal road designs) and the implementation with the NMT regulations by continuous monitoring. For example, *bodabodas*, taxis and other motorists continue to misuse Kampala's pilot NMT corridor that is meant to promote the use of non-motorized means of transport (walking & cycling) in the city.**



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