



Grace Nyambura Wahome's story

Transport Consultant, Nairobi, Kenya

Grace Nyambura Wahome is a transport consultant born and raised in Nairobi, Kenya. With a background in communications and public relations, Grace fell in love with research: "I love communities. I love working with people. I'm passionate about supporting people and seeing them thrive."

Grace works alongside Transaid on the National Helmet Wearing Coalition in Kenya, which was formed in 2021 to improve safety for the country's 2.3 million motorcycle taxi riders and their passengers. Motorcycle users made up 35 percent of all Kenyan road deaths in 2023, with low helmet prevalence and limited access to quality helmets representing major factors of road deaths.

Grace is responsible for stakeholder engagement, bringing the government, private sector, motorcycle taxi rider associations, and non-governmental organisations together to improve motorcycle safety.



"One of the biggest aims of the Coalition is to reduce deaths by ensuring that riders are wearing not just any helmet, but a good quality helmet so that they can avoid head injuries and hopefully more lives will be saved."

Grace explains that the reasons for not wearing a helmet include perceived high costs of good quality helmets, hot temperatures, hygiene, and not wanting to hide or ruin their hairstyles.

"Yet, you will find some riders who have experienced a crash and will do anything to purchase a quality helmet because they now know better. I wish they had not found out the hard way, but at least they know now."

With the growth of the motorcycle taxi industry in Kenya, more women are joining the sector as riders. Grace explains that these women can face many challenges,

such as disapproving husbands and concerns around safety: “To have female riders now step up and say, ‘I want to ride’, has not been easy because they often face criticism from family members. Husbands might not allow their wives to do this job because they might be carrying male passengers.”

“Kenyan roads can be very aggressive. People are not polite, for any motorist. Other drivers will push you around just because you're female. Sometimes you might carry passengers who are targeting you as a female.”

Nevertheless, Grace hopes that the work of the National Helmet Wearing Coalition will influence policy and regulations to make female riders more comfortable and able to thrive in the industry.

“Through sensitisation, education, and awareness, family members can now embrace women joining the sector.”

Looking to the future, Grace says, “We need enforcement, enforcement, enforcement. If the government can help the sector by enforcing new rules around helmet wearing, then we can have safe roads for every user. That is my desire.

“If I could see implementation, I would be happy, and I would know that what the Coalition aimed to achieve has been achieved.”

The National Helmet Wearing Coalition, funded by the FIA Foundation, is now in its third phase. Following the publication of [a report](#) by the Coalition detailing the health costs of motorcycle taxi crashes in Kenya in 2024, the Coalition is now looking to establish one of the first helmet testing laboratories in East Africa, strengthen enforcement of helmet wearing, and advocate for a regional focus on motorcycle safety in East Africa.

In 2024, Grace was shortlisted for Transaid’s Victor Simfukwe Award in recognition of the passion and energy that she brings to all that she does and for improving the lives of others.

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