



Orpah Kerubo Siko

## Orpah Kerubo Siko's story

### Boda boda (motorcycle taxi) rider in Nairobi, Kenya

Oprah, known as Oprah to her friends, is 31 years old, married, and has two children aged five and eight years old. Oprah is new to being a boda boda (motorcycle taxi) rider, having only started her training in 2024. She completed her training and successfully passed the National Transport and Safety Authority's exam, picking up her licence to ride at the end of 2024.

Oprah says that her motivation to become a boda boda rider was to prove that women can thrive in the male-dominated industry, saying:



**"We women, we can."**

Her husband, a mechanic, has been supportive of her decision to ride motorcycles and coached her through her final exams. Oprah is resilient, and recounts that although she failed the first time, she kept working hard to obtain her licence.



**"I failed the first time, I didn't give up. I went again. I failed. I will never give up. I went again and I passed with flying colours."**

Oprah is no stranger to working in transport. She has been a certified conductor on Nairobi's notorious matatus (minibus taxis) for more than five years, a job which demands long hours for low wages, and frequently puts her in harm's way due to harassment from male co-workers and passengers.

While Oprah is now qualified to be a boda boda rider, she admits that she lacks confidence on the roads, which she is working hard to overcome. She would prefer to ride her motorcycle instead of working on the matatus as it would give her more control over her earnings and the opportunity to be her own boss.

Her preference is to deliver packages rather than passengers to their destination. While she currently earns up to US \$10 in a day, she anticipates earning more as a delivery rider. But riding a motorcycle brings with it many risks to her personal safety, with 35% of the total road traffic fatalities on Kenya's roads being linked to motorcycle users in 2024.\*

Oprah is still getting used to the feeling of vulnerability when riding a motorcycle, a feeling which is heightened on the busy highways which are hard to avoid when travelling around Nairobi. She knows that she'll overcome these fears.

Despite these challenges, Oprah is hopeful for the future. She is a member of several 'chamas' - savings groups - and she plans to put down a deposit to own her own motorcycle.

With riders like Oprah, who have successfully passed the National Transport and Safety Authority's exam, Kenya's roads will be much safer for the 22 million boda boda journeys undertaken every day.

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.

To make the boda boda industry more inclusive, Transaid is also working with women to ensure that they are supported to gain the skills they need to become commercial motorcycle taxi riders. Transaid works with Kenya Riders and Owners (KRO) Boda Boda SACCO, a cooperative of over 3000 riders in Kibera, Nairobi, to engage with women riders to better understand the challenges that women face working in this industry.

Visit [www.transaid.org](http://www.transaid.org) to find out more about the Kenyan National Helmet Wearing Coalition and other programmes.



A boda boda rider in Nairobi

\*Kenyan National Police Service, 2024.