

SAFEBODA

Business that participated in Cohort 3 of SPRING

SPRING is a business accelerator programme funded by DFID, USAID and DFAT. It works with businesses to develop products that impact girls' lives in 9 countries.

Coffey is the independent evaluator of SPRING. Coffey's Business Performance Evaluation is part of the overall evaluation and examines the effects of SPRING on business performance. It also looks at how businesses are reaching adolescent girls.

Many people in Kampala use boda-bodas (motorbike taxis) regularly to get around the city. Traditional boda-bodas have poor reputations and road safety records.

The company offers an app-based ride hailing service for boda-bodas that aims to be safer and more secure than traditional boda-boda hailing. Drivers are trained in road safety, first aid, bike maintenance and customer care, and are equipped with a spare helmet for customers.



SafeBoda's HQ is in Kampala, Uganda

SafeBoda is also planning to expand to **Nairobi, Kenya**

SPRING Prototype and Business Goals

SafeBoda's app was already in the market before SPRING. The SPRING prototype did not entail developing an additional product or service for girls, instead, it focused on improving their product to attract a higher number of customers. SafeBoda joined SPRING to:

- Increase girl client safety and the number of girls using the service.
- Increase client trust. Drivers now wear personalised vests with their name. The app's 'Pair Feature' allows girls to choose their preferred driver, who they know and trust.
- Improve their messaging and branding by enhancing a number of customer care features.

SPRING Support



Business Focused Support

SPRING supported Safeboda in planning their expansion into Nairobi, and in developing a targeted communication and marketing strategy with new branding.



Financial Support

Prototype Development Funding went towards developing and launching new app features such as the 'Pair Feature', sharing arrival time, and sharing credit.



Girl Focused Support

SafeBoda did not target girls before SPRING but recognised the increased risk faced by girls when using boda-bodas. Safeboda now:

- Trains its drivers on gender and sexual harassment.
- Provides passengers with driver information, such as their name and contact details.
- Allows girls to share trip details and report issues to the call centre.

Use of Human Centred Design

The introduction to Human Centred Design (HCD) was crucial. In applying HCD, SafeBoda:

- Better understands their service's context to tailor their product.
- Now has a call centre, as people prefer speaking to a person rather than only using an app.
- Found that to feel safe, girls care more about trusting the driver than using safe equipment, such as a helmet.

Girl Insights and Emerging Signs of Impact

It is hard to reach girls through a smartphone app.

Only a small segment of this market have smartphone access.

SafeBoda does not use the app to collect age or gender data.

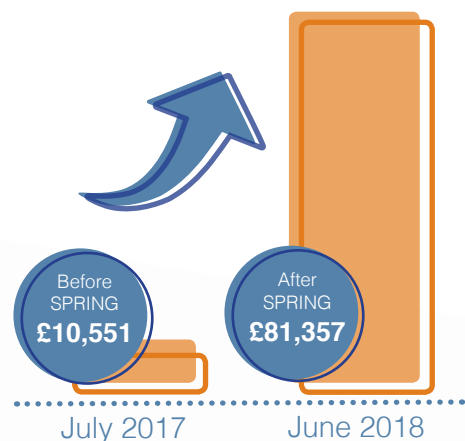
This means Safeboda needs to plan more research to understand its users.

It was hard for SafeBoda to change social norms, such as using helmets.

Girls and parents report that SafeBoda was safer than traditional boda-bodas.

SafeBodas are rarely involved in road accidents and have created more trust with customers.

SafeBoda's total revenue earned in one year



Impact Beyond Prototype

Imitation is already occurring

To compete with SafeBoda, Taxify and Uber Boda (two similar companies), are required to mimic some of SafeBoda features, such as having reflectors vests, identification vests, and carrying helmets for their passengers.

Positive behavioural change among drivers

Boda-boda drivers not tied to SafeBoda are now respecting girls more and have safer driving habits.

Going Forward

SafeBoda is growing quickly and is gaining trust in Kampala. It is currently focusing more on increasing its number of drivers than improving the app. The company remains interested in girl-focused growth, but only after achieving scale. **Some challenges** Safeboda faces are: competition with two other

international ride-hailing apps moving into the Ugandan market; limited smartphone coverage and slow network connections outside Kampala; as well as a small market beyond Kampala. To partially address these, SafeBoda is planning to expand to Nairobi, Kenya.

Further Reading

Coffey (2019). Case Study Report – SafeBoda. SPRING Evaluation, BPE – Cohort 3